

Managing Your Time for Success

You can learn to manage your time skillfully. By following a few simple rules and acquiring good time management habits, you can:

- Get things done on time.
- Avoid last minute rush jobs.
- Feel prepared and confident.
- Have time left over for yourself.
- Get the most out of each day.

How Do You Spend Your Time?

Do an inventory of yesterday's activities. Write down everything you did and show the amount of time you spent doing it. Now go back and look at how much time you truly utilized and how much time you squandered. Label activities with an "I" (important), "S" (semi-important), or a "U" (unimportant). If possible, do an inventory like this for every day for a week. Look for patterns. For example, what parts of the day do you tend to waste time? Use this information to devise strategies for eliminating time-wasters.

Set Goals

To manage your time well, you have to figure out what you want to accomplish. In other words, what are your goals? The trick is to set deliberate goals in areas that count, like:

- the grade you will work for in each subject or class
- the number of books you will read during the year
- your specific role in various school groups or teams (speech, science, sports, music, drama, etc.)

To complete the picture, you may also need to set goals in areas unrelated to school, such as leisure activities. Things like piano lessons and martial arts classes are important—and they can take a lot of time.

Some goals are short-term. These can be accomplished in a few hours or days. Examples are passing a test, writing a report or reading a particular book.

Make a list of your goals.

School/learning goals:

- Long-range—
- Short-term—

Non-school goals:

Long-range—

Short-term—

Now go back and prioritize your goals. Write an A, B, or C next to each one to show its relative importance.

Plan and Prioritize

Now that you have your goals, list the specific steps or activities required to reach them. Since you can't do everything at once, number the steps or activities in their order of importance or sequence. Do at least one activity each day from your lists. Concentrate on the most important goals first. Check off the activities when you have completed them.

Carry a Planning Calendar

A planning calendar is the most effective time management tool you can use. Carry one with you and use it to record all the things you must do—class schedule, homework assignments and due dates, special school events, field trips and meetings. Record personal things, too, such as birthdays, appointments, lessons, work schedules and chores.

Write every assignment in the calendar as soon as you know about it. At least once a month check your calendar against your family's schedule to make sure there are no conflicts.

Make To-Do Lists

Each day (or the night before) make a to-do list. Copy any appointments, meetings and due dates from your calendar, and add anything else that needs to be done that day. Prioritize your list so that the most important things get done first. Refer to your list several times a day. It's a lot easier than trying to remember everything.

Use Assignment Sheets

It's a good idea to keep a master list of school assignments. Record homework assignments, reports and special projects on an assignment sheet as soon as you get them—even before putting the dates in your planning calendar. Keep one in the front of your notebook.

Follow These Time Management Tips

- Record your assignments before you leave

class. If you don't understand an assignment, ask.

- When you get home from school, check your planning calendar or to-do list. Do whatever it tells you to do. Don't let yourself get side-tracked by phone calls, TV, computer games, etc.
- If you have a cell phone, turn it off while studying.
- Do the toughest part of an assignment first. Get through the most difficult parts while your energy is high.
- Don't procrastinate. Try this:
 - * Break down tasks into smaller parts. Keep breaking down the parts until you see the first step.
 - * Break down difficult tasks into "mini-jobs" that you can complete in 10 minutes or less.
- Get everything ready for school the night before. Put your things in the same place every night.
- Get up early and review for tests before going to school.

