

Organisation and Time Management

Something that all successful individuals have in common is effective time management. Everybody wishes that they could have more time in their day, as they struggle to balance school or work, leisure, and sleep. However, the problem isn't the number of hours in the day, but how you spend those hours in the day, otherwise known as time management. Those who effectively manage their time can accomplish more work than everybody else, while still having time to spend with friends and family, and enough relaxation and sleep. Everybody has the ability to practice good time management; it just comes down to organisation and determination.

Here are ten tips that will help you manage your time more wisely:

- | |
|---|
| 1. Make yourself a written to-do list every day. This will get you more focused on what you have to do. These goals can include finishing a project for a class, reading twenty pages in a book, or cleaning your room. By writing these goals down, you will have a clearer image of what needs to be done, which in turn makes them easier to accomplish. |
| 2. Don't procrastinate. If a task takes less than five minutes, do it immediately. Otherwise, you will be stuck having to complete fifty miniscule tasks that when combined, are actually very time consuming. |
| 3. Use a watch instead of a phone to check the time. It's common to check our phones to see the time, but then we end up wasting 20 minutes browsing Facebook or texting friends which could be avoided. Use a watch to ensure fewer distractions. |
| 4. Utilise short periods of time. In some instances you will have five minutes to spare in which you are unsure of what to do. During school, you might arrive to class five minutes early, or your teacher might be late for registration. In spare moments, check your bag to see you have all of the homework materials you need, jot down ideas for an essay to write later, or quickly look through some vocabulary revision or school forms you need to complete. Maximising short periods of time is crucial in the business world, as meetings may run back to back, or presentations take place all day. So grabbing any five spare minutes and making the most of them is really important as you can complete short tasks such as responding to emails, posting letters, making appointments. Use them! |
| 5. Get a good night sleep. In order to finish coursework or revision, many students stay up later than normal, and in extreme cases will not go to bed at all. While you may get some work accomplished with this method, it does come at a cost. Your next day's quality of work and ability to absorb new information will suffer as you struggle to stay awake, leaving you more unproductive than normal. Do not fall into this pattern! |
| 6. Give yourself breaks. The human mind isn't capable of working for long periods of time without getting distracted. To counteract this, allow yourself mini breaks in between periods of study or work time. For instance, give yourself the goal of working for 30 straight minutes without any interruptions, and then reward yourself with a five minute relaxation break. These breaks will keep you focused and prevent you from burning out. |
| 7. Prioritise your goals. Don't overwhelm yourself with an abundance of activities, just to be disappointed when you don't finish them all. This will just discourage you, and overlook all the hard work you did complete. Instead, be realistic when it comes down to what you want to accomplish. By prioritising your goals, you will complete what is really important, leaving you with less stress and more time. |

<p>8. Take advantage of your travel time. In London especially, we spend a great deal of time on the tube or bus. Instead of just sitting there, use that time in a productive manner. This can include reading a book for class, reviewing notes for a test, or responding to emails.</p>
<p>9. List events and deadlines on your calendar or diary as soon as you find out about them. That way, you won't have any surprises when you look at your diary. It is always a good idea to keep checking your diary up to a month in advance. This way you will know of any deadlines or events well in advance, giving you plenty of time to prepare.</p>
<p>10. Verbalise your plans/goals to a friend, colleague, or mentor. If you aim to finish an assignment by a certain time, you are much more likely to succeed if you let someone know about your plans. Verbalising your goals will hold you accountable for your work since you don't want to fail in someone else's eyes. As a result, you will be more efficient with your time, and less likely to waste it on something trivial.</p>

Time Management Challenge 1

With your students, complete the following activity that will give them practise on prioritising a busy schedule. Give the students the following scenario:

Below you will find a list of activities that you would like to accomplish between getting home from school until the time you go to bed. Rank these activities in the order of importance that you see fit. The goal is to create the most balanced schedule, combining work and relaxation. Once you have made your schedule, talk with your mentor about why you made these decisions. Ask for feedback to see if they would alter any of your plans.

Here are the activities that you would like to accomplish before you go to bed:

- Read 10 pages in your history textbook that is required for the next day's lesson
- Eat a snack
- Watch an episode of your favourite TV show
- Complete 30 maths problems that are due the next day
- Go for a bike ride
- Help look after your younger siblings
- Go on Facebook
- Practise playing a musical instrument
- For English class, read 5 chapters in the novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, because you will have a test on this section in two days time
- Help prepare and eat dinner
- Watch YouTube videos online
- Play a game of football with some of your friends
- Clean your room, which your parents have been asking you to do for a week now
- Research for a science project that is worth 20% of your GCSE grade and is due in two weeks
- Read your favourite magazine

Please rank them below in the order of their importance with 1 being most important, 15 being the least:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

Time Management Challenge 2

After having completed the first challenge, your student should fill out the tasks that they do from the time they get home from school, to the time they go to bed, with timings. This will be a very personalized list, since the student will be filling out tasks that are unique to his or her day. Discuss why the student does things in the order that they choose, look at areas where they could spend more or less time in order to improve their time management.

Please note your typical activities after school, in order, with timings:

Activity:

Time:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

How to Study Independently

It is essential that students gain independent study skills as they advance into higher stages of learning. Many students are spoon fed information at GCSE level, and don't consider how to research on their own or be proactive with their studies. However, this lack of independent study skills will become a problem when students move on to further and higher education as they are expected to produce work with little teacher guidance. Dropout rates for Tower Hamlets students in post-16 and university education are at 30%, partially due to poor independent study skills.

Discussion Activity

- With your mentees, ask them to describe their current study skills. How much time do they devote to studying per week? Where do they like to study best? Do they do any outside research, or do they just use the resources their teacher presents to them?
- Now ask your mentees to describe how they think a successful university student studies. Why do they think those study skills make a student successful? What are the differences between how a GCSE student studies, and how a university student studies?
- How do your mentees plan on changing their study habits as they proceed into the higher levels of their education? What are the predicted effects of this change?
- Do your mentees have any upcoming projects or coursework? How do they plan on preparing for them? Do they think they will be successful? Have they been successful in the past using the same preparation and research techniques? If they had extra time or extra knowledge about available resources, how can they imagine their project could be even better than they are planning?

Throughout the discussion, feel free to interject any suggestions or tips that you have found helpful in the past when you were in education. By acknowledging as early as possible the changes in study habits that students will need to have when they move to further education, students are already starting to prepare themselves for it.

Here are some additional tips to help students study independently:

- Read books, newspapers, and magazines on your own, without it being a requirement from school. This allows the student to formulate his or her own ideas about current affairs, ethics, politics, culture... A very useful habit for university particularly.
- When working on a project, do a good amount of outside research. Don't just rely on the information the teacher presents when it comes to research. The internet is a great resource to research practically any topic. Don't think that Wikipedia is the only possible source out there, this is simply not true, and it can be unreliable. Look for websites that end in ".org" or ".gov.uk" or which are the nationally recognised bodies on the issue you are researching, as these sites tend to be more credible and objective.
- Figure out how you learn best. Everybody has a preference as to how they learn, whether it be visually, verbally, or kinaesthetically. There are a variety of tests out there to find out which method is best for you, some of which can be found on the internet for free. There is also a whole unit available on learning styles through the business mentoring website, called 'Revision Skills': <http://www.thebp.org/bmres.htm>

How to Make the Most Out of Work Experience

Preparing for a Work Experience placement can be both exciting and nerve-racking for students. On one hand, students may be thrilled to finally get a glimpse of the “real world”, and get a first taste of independence. On the other hand, students will be nervous about whether they will understand the processes they need to do, what their colleagues will be like and how well they will perform in their placement. Students will often have little guidance from home about how to prepare for a work experience placement if their parents are not currently in the work force.

Here you will see some suggestions on what students can do before, during, and after Work Experience in order to maximise their learning and future benefits from the placement.

Before Work Experience

- 1) Research the company that you are working with by going on their company website. Things to know about the company can include:
 - What the company actually does, how does it make money?
 - If the company has multiple locations
 - How many people work at the company
 - Who are the company's competitors
 - How long has the company been established
- 2) Make sure you have the proper clothing for your placement, check this in advance.
- 3) Plan a travel route too and from the company in detail, and time it takes in rush hour.
- 4) Ask yourself what you want to get out of your Work Experience, and make it your main aims to achieve these goals. Goals can include:
 - Increase in confidence
 - Better understanding of responsibilities at work
 - Learning new skills particular to that job (eg, in an office job: franking post, photocopying in different formats, setting meetings via Outlook, dialling in for a conference call, taking minutes, using databases, filing records, greeting clients).
 - Reflecting on whether you would like to work in that sector or role in the future
- 5) Reflect on what your strengths are, and what skills you can already offer an employer. This will give you confidence as there are some skills you will already be good at.
- 6) Write down a list of questions that you would like to ask the people you will be working with, in an effort to better understand the careers and industry you are working in. Ask your manager if you can book 5 minute slots with members of the team in different roles to learn about their experiences. Examples of these questions can include:
 - What do you do on a daily basis?
 - What type of qualities do you look for in your colleagues?
 - What is your favourite part about your work, and why?
 - How far did you go in your education studies? What type of education is required for this type of job?
 - Are there promotion opportunities within the company, and if so, how do you get promoted?

During Work Experience

- 1) Make an effort to become acquainted with everybody that you are working with. Work will be much more enjoyable if you can converse with several members of the staff. Take part in communal tasks like making tea, eating lunch in the staff dining area, etc.
- 2) Don't use your mobile phone or Facebook during work, unless you are on your lunch break. Your work is your only priority during office hours, so it is unacceptable and rude to contact friends. Students in the past have been sent home from companies for spending too much time texting. It is best to just KEEP YOUR PHONE IN YOUR BAG!
- 3) Be proactive about your work, and always show enthusiasm when given a task to complete. There will be times when you might find your work boring, however this does not mean you can act as if you are bored. Everybody has to do boring tasks at work sometimes, which is why people who work get paid! Try to mix boring tasks with more interesting ones if possible.
- 4) Be respectful and friendly to everyone in your workplace. Word spreads fast in companies and colleagues will gossip about poor attitude. So if you are rude to a receptionist or colleague, your manager is likely to find out and will not be pleased.

At the End of Work Experience

- 1) Update your CV to show the main tasks that you did, and what you learned during your Work Experience. Do not wait more than two weeks after your Work Experience is finished to do this, or you will forget many of the best points to include on your CV. Ask your mentor to help you with this.
- 2) Send thank-you emails to everyone who helped you during your placement, stating how much you appreciate the time they took to help you and how you have developed.
- 3) If you really enjoyed your Work Experience, then keep in touch with your manager or colleagues. You never know what they could do for you in the future, so it's always beneficial to maintain connections for future summer work, part time jobs, or jobs in their partner organisations.
- 4) Ask for references for your CV. These references can be very influential in getting you hired for your next job, so make sure you take advantage of them. If possible take a work email address and also your manager's personal email address, in case they move organisations.

Work Experience Activity

Has your Work Experience placement been confirmed? Having read all the tips on the previous page, please come up with a more specific action plan on how to make the most of your placement with your mentor. Please fill out the following questions:

My top 4 goals for my Work Experience placement are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Questions I would like to ask my colleagues in my Work Experience placement:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Rules that I should set myself in order to appear professional and make the best impression:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Things that I am worried about in Work Experience: discuss with your mentor what actions you can take to eliminate your worry in advance, or reduce it if it does come true:

<u>Worry</u>	<u>Possible Actions to Take</u>
Example 1: <i>I get lost on the way to the organisation's office.</i>	In advance: <i>Do a practise run of the route on the weekend or one afternoon after school. Know which bus stops or tube stops are nearest, and the route to walk from the stop to the office. Time the journey and add some more time to this for travelling in rush hour.</i> On the day: <i>If you get lost as you can't remember the route exactly, ask nearby passersby if they can direct you to the office. In worst case scenario always have the telephone number of your manager and the office address. Ring them if you are going to be late and need directions. This may be embarrassing but is much better than arriving even later!</i>