

## LONG-TERM PAPER/PROJECT PLANNING TOOL

The best way to make sure you'll complete a long-term assignment by the deadline is to break it into interim deadlines so that you can stay on track and work consistently over time (rather than all at the last minute). I suggest planning to complete your assignment two days before the professor's due date. This way, you have a little extra cushion in case you get sick or have to sacrifice time for some other assignments.

Before you get started, grab your calendar. You may want to put the deadlines you're about to create on the blank calendar on Page 3 and then transfer them to your actual calendar. It is also a good idea to complete the College Time Management and Study Scheduling Tool ([http://www.ldadvisory.com/time\\_management\\_tool](http://www.ldadvisory.com/time_management_tool)) before you start this process so that you know how many hours a day you have available to work on your paper/project.

Before you get started, keep these things in mind:

- You may have to be flexible with your initial plan if parts of the process take longer than you expect. For instance, if research takes more days than you thought it would, you will need to adjust the remainder of your plan to make sure the work will get done in the time remaining.
- *If you want feedback on any of your drafts* - before you make your plan you need to ask the person who will provide it when s/he needs to receive the draft and how long it will be before you can expect to get that feedback. You want to make sure that your plan accounts for this.

### Step 1 - Setting your personal due date

1) What is the assigned paper/project due date:

2) Count two days back from that date. What is that date?  Mark this date on your calendar as the due date for your assignment.

### Step 2 - Measuring your remaining time for research

3) How many days are left between today and your personal due date?  Keep that number in mind.

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### Step 3 - Planning your research period

4) What date is in the middle between today and your personal due date?  Mark this on your calendar as "Complete research/start draft."

5) How many hours do you think you need to gather all of your research?

Using this number as your target number of hours spent doing research, make a plan.

Consider:

- the minimum number of hours you think would be useful to do in one sitting (one hour may seem a little short)
- how long can you work before burning out? If you think you'll be too tired to work on this paper/project after completing your daily assignments, you may want to plan longer research periods on the weekend .

On your calendar, assign yourself research periods on the days when you think you can realistically get work done given your other commitments (write "research" on those days). Make sure to write down how many hours you plan to work, too. The total should match the number you put in for Question 5. See Page 3 for a sample calendar.

### Step 4 - Planning to complete your drafts

6) How many days are left between your research completion date and your personal due date?

7) Do you want to have someone review your first draft before you start your final draft?  Yes  No  
(If no, jump to Question 10.)

8) If yes, what is the date by which you need to have someone's feedback so you have time to polish your final draft?

9) By what date will you need to give your first draft to that person so that you can get feedback?  Mark this date on your calendar as "complete first draft." Also mark this date with "email/ deliver paper to professor." If you have to attend office hours to get your feedback, put this note on the day your professor is in the office.

10) How many hours do you think you need to write your first draft?

11) Between your research completion date and your date for completing your first draft, make a schedule of writing periods on your calendar. Each day you choose as a work day should say "write draft" and say how many hours you plan to work. The total number of hours should equal your answer for Question 10.

12) Do the same for your second/final draft, marking your calendar for the days you plan to work and the number of hours you plan to work on those days.

Remember – if you miss working on a day you had planned to, adjust your schedule to make up that time.

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Blank calendar for planning

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Sample calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>4</b> 1 hr. research	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 3 hrs. research	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 2 hrs. research	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 4 hrs. research	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Complete research/ start draft	<b>14</b> 1 hr. write draft	<b>15</b> 2 hr. write draft	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 4 hr. finish draft
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Office hrs. – turn in draft	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 2 hrs. work on final draft	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 2 hrs. finish final draft
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Personal due date	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Actual due date	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>