



Lucy Cavendish College
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Time Management

Working with time

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What do you hope to gain from this session?



What's your relationship with time?

- a) I don't really think about it
- b) Generally good but when it gets busy, I don't know what to do
- c) Generally good but I have a bit habit of double/triple booking myself!
- d) I never have enough time for the things I want to do!



What we'll be addressing today

- ❖ Why time management matters
- ❖ How to think about time
- ❖ Rituals and schedules and 'working to time'
- ❖ Working with and through distractions
- ❖ Prioritising tasks
- ❖ Understanding and handling procrastination



What do you find the biggest challenges when managing time?

- a) I don't really think about time management
- b) Prioritising my work!
- c) Productive procrastination
- d) Managing perfectionism – it's hard to begin
- e) Social media and similar distractions
- f) Other (please share in the chat or to the group, if you're willing)



Why time management matters

- ❖ Time is a resource, not an enemy
- ❖ Good things in life take time – including friendships
- ❖ Life is more than study
- ❖ Humans work in cycles: we must work *and* rest
 - ❖ **We need to sleep!** Sleep enables neural communication and may play a 'housekeeping role' in removing toxins that build up in our brain while we are awake (*Science* vol. 342, issue 6156)
 - ❖ Memory consolidation likely requires both non-REM and REM sleep: c.f. Rasch and Born, 'Sleep's Role in Memory', *Physiological Reviews* 93.2 (2013)



Counting unscheduled time

Draw an approximate timetable for your week from c. 8:00am – 9:00/10:00pm. **INCLUDE:** all classes; co-curricular activities; regular social events/shows.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8:00am	Head to school	Co-curricular activity					
9:00am	Class 1						
...					
3:00pm	Finish school/head home						
4:00pm							
5:00pm							
6:00pm							
7:00pm							
8:00pm							



Working with unscheduled time

- ❖ Factor in downtime
- ❖ Schedule study sessions
- ❖ Know when to protect unscheduled time from both study and online/screen-related distractions



Knowing my time - planners

Do you own a calendar or a weekly planner?

Do you use your calendar or weekly planner?

Tips on using planners:

- ❖ Look at your schedule ahead of each week / month to visualise your days ahead: don't be surprised by events!
- ❖ Put everything in the one calendar
 - ❖ Colour code for formal events / social events / due dates / assessments

Using time wisely



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- ❖ Build **ritual** and **repetition** into your days
 - ❖ Demarcate times protected from study (e.g. 10:30pm – 5:30am)
 - ❖ Keep one day of the week 'free' from study - use it for cultural, religious, and social self-development, household chores, etc.
 - ❖ Where possible keep scheduled study times/days for specific subjects
 - ❖ Work in timed study/break sessions
 - ❖ 90 minutes of work followed by a 30-minute break / 1 hour meal break
 - ❖ 75 minutes of work followed by a 15-minute break
 - ❖ 'Pomodoro' technique: 25 minutes work / 5- minute break
- ❖ Use the breaks as real breaks!



Working 'to time'

- ❖ Greatest temptation: working 'to goal'
 - ❖ Examples: "I will write this essay and take a break"; "I will finish X problems"
 - ❖ Danger: if you encounter obstacles, it's easy to become frustrated and lose focus while growing in anxiety or frustration
- ❖ Be disciplined and methodical!
 - ❖ Break your goal into small chunks
 - ❖ Focus on realising smaller 'mini' goals
 - ❖ Use your breaks to *have a break!*
- ❖ Be realistic
 - ❖ Don't write weekly schedules or commit to tasks thinking of yourself always performing at 100% capacity: factor in an extra 25% - 50% time



Working through distractions

- ❖ Associate study with specific physical spaces or tangible décor changes
- ❖ Time lock your phone!
 - ❖ Good apps: forest, or the 'screen time' app built into iPhones and Androids
 - ❖ Approximate time limits: lock most apps (especially social media apps) before 8:00am and after 10:30pm
- ❖ Break the 'big goal' into smaller goals
 - ❖ Don't just aim to 'write the essay': work out that writing any essay involves reading, planning, writing, and editing
 - ❖ Work methodically through small tasks



Final 'study schedule' notes

- ❖ Set regular working hours
- ❖ Set regular breaks
- ❖ Write these down in a weekly planner!
- ❖ Be flexible but realistic with your schedule
 - ❖ If your schedule regularly bears less than 65%-70% commonality with your day to day schedule ... design a new, more realistic schedule



Prioritising tasks.

Matrix 1: The Eisenhower Matrix

- ❖ Urgency and importance are relative and distinctive matters! Important things may not be urgent; urgent things may not be hugely important.

	Important	Non-important
Urgent	1 st priority!	See if you can delegate this; if not, do it as efficiently as possible
Non-urgent	3 rd priority -> plan how you will begin working on this before it becomes urgent	Dismiss



Priority Matrix 2

Urgency: higher to lower

Impact: higher to lower

Must do (important and urgent!)			
Need to do (urgent)			
Should do (important but not urgent)			
Could do (or could delegate/not do!)			



Using prioritisation aids

- ❖ Update the priority matrix on a monthly or fortnightly basis
- ❖ Use in conjunction with calendars and/or weekly planners
 - ❖ Weekly planners help you track your meetings, assessments, assignments, social outings
 - ❖ Monthly planners help you see important social or administrative events
- ❖ Colour code!
 - ❖ This will help you differentiate school classes from homework tasks from assessment dates, from social events
- ❖ Build false deadlines in if you know you struggle to keep to deadlines (mark these in pencil; mark the real deadline in in a different colour)



Perfectionism and procrastination

- ❖ Understand the issues
- ❖ Often these two go hand in hand!
- ❖ Perfectionism: when you visualise a task and how it will look and berate yourself for not reaching that imagined outcome
- ❖ Procrastination: delaying an action, usually because you are not sure how to begin, or because you are not convinced you can do the job adequately
 - ❖ May look like: mindlessly letting time pass
 - ❖ May look like: Working on something that is important but not urgent, or something that is neither important nor urgent



Perfectionism and Procrastination: moving forwards

- ❖ When you don't know where to begin
 - ❖ Break the task down: what are stages involved in the task?
- ❖ Procrastination and perfectionism:
 - ❖ *Reframe your thinking*
 - ❖ You are more than your results – you don't need to produce brilliant results 100% of the time!
 - ❖ Any given assignment/piece of homework need not be a masterpiece
 - ❖ Main goal: produce the best work you can in the conditions in which you're working
- ❖ Working through productive procrastination: balance out important but not urgent tasks with the important and urgent tasks



Realistic expectations

- ❖ Don't look sideways at friends or siblings, or insist to yourself you must always get a certain result
- ❖ Focus on improving on your own results!
- ❖ Expect that sometimes you will struggle to meet a deadline
- ❖ Expect that you will sometimes procrastinate
- ❖ Expect that you **can** improve on your results
- ❖ Expect that you can manage your non-scheduled time



Working with time

- ❖ Break large goals into smaller goals
- ❖ Be methodical!
 - ❖ Work out a timeline of deadlines. These are markers of what is *urgent*. They are also, in all likelihood, somewhat *important*.
 - ❖ *Delegate* papers and tasks: if it helps, set aside a specific day (or two) to prepare for specific subjects
 - ❖ Use a calendar/planner!
 - ❖ Be disciplined with breaks



Principles of working with time

1. You are more than your study!
2. Humans are made to work and rest in *cycles*
3. Know how much time you actually have
4. Be disciplined with your breaks
5. Your work will never be perfect. Just make it the best it can be in the time and circumstances that you have.
6. Importance and urgency are not always the same thing
7. It's ok to feel apathetic about your work. Just keep working methodically in timed sessions
8. If your ritual or schedule slips, don't (always) give in to the urge to 'make up' for lost time; just keep moving forward