

# But I don't have time!

## Have you ever said:

- I can't do it!
- I'm busier than other people.
- I haven't got time to plan.
- I'm too busy to be organized.

Select three problems that fit you, then find possible solutions — you may find more than one for each problem! Match the letter of the problem with the appropriate numbers of the solutions.

## Problems

- A. I keep getting interrupted.
- B. I'm always in a rush and I just seem to leave things to the last minute.
- C. I can't concentrate.
- D. I keep putting things off.
- E. I want to get going, but I've got so much to do I don't know where to start.
- F. I start lots of things but I can't seem to finish them.
- G. If a piece of work begins to drag on I get tired of it.
- H. If I've left something for a week or so, I seem to lose the thread. Sometimes I can't find the work I did, or I can't work out where I'm up to.

## Possible solutions

1. Decide on priorities for yourself. Make a list of tasks then write beside each:
  - Urgent
  - Important
  - Can wait
2. Look at how you are spending your time now. Compare this with your priorities.
3. Spend five minutes each evening planning your next day's work. This allows you to sleep on things and saves time in the morning.
4. For most people the morning is the best time to work. Plan your leisure activities at other times. It's said that 80% of your real work is done in 20% of your time.
5. Make a planning system that works for you.
6. Decide what you need to do then do it.
7. Most people want to do their work to the highest possible standard, but you can't always achieve perfection.
8. If you can, do one task at a time. You could start with the most important or the quickest. You'll feel a lot better for finishing something.
9. Vague ambitions won't get you far. Set some definite goals. These will stop your ambitions from simply being daydreams. Clear goals give you confidence and a sense of direction.
10. Make realistic and achievable goals. You should be able to measure how close you are getting to achieving them.
11. Find somewhere quiet to work. Tell people you're going to do some work now, but will see them at such and such a time.
12. Set deadlines.
13. Work in short bursts and plan breaks so you don't have to concentrate for long periods.

# How do you spend your time?

- Do you have trouble getting down to work?
- Do you rush your work to meet deadlines?
- Are your study sessions as effective as you'd like?

A planner will help you to meet your study targets. First you must look at how you spend your time **now**. Fill in the planner below as accurately as possible. Leave out school lessons, but do put in:

*Private study and homework*

*Activities and commitments:* e.g., sports, reading, household jobs, TV programs, clubs, hobbies

*Free time*

Color code your chart like this:

**Red — Study, homework**

**Blue — Activities and commitments**

**Black — Free time**

## STUDY WEEK PLANNER 1 How you spend your time now

	7–9a.m.	9–11a.m.	11–1p.m.	1–3p.m.	3–5p.m.	5–7p.m.	6–9p.m.	9–10p.m.
<b>S</b>								
<b>A</b>								
<b>T</b>								
<b>S</b>								
<b>U</b>								
<b>N</b>								

	7–9a.m.	9–3p.m.	3–5p.m.	5–7p.m.	7–9p.m.	9–10p.m.
<b>M</b>		<b>LESSONS</b>				
<b>O</b>						
<b>N</b>						
<b>T</b>						
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<b>E</b>						
<b>W</b>						
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<b>F</b>						
<b>R</b>						
<b>I</b>						

# Evaluating your time management

Now that you can see how you spend your time, please complete this table.

	Hours, minutes a week
Study/homework	
Activities and commitments	
Free time	

## Are you making the best use of your time?

Things I didn't have time for

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How much time did I waste? On what?

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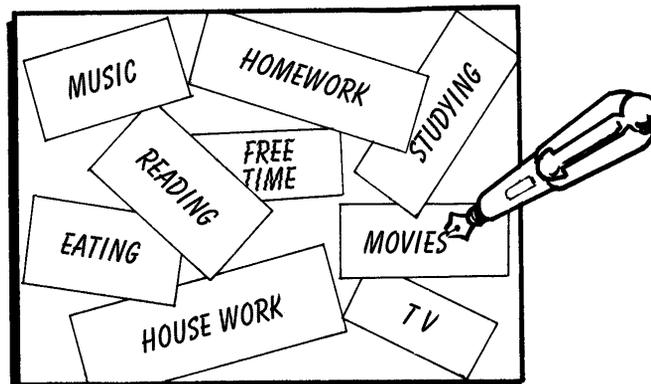
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## A study timetable

1. Gives you a target to aim for
2. Spreads your study throughout the week
3. Saves time in decision making, and lets you get down to things
4. Helps you to establish a routine for study
5. Encourages you to keep up with your work.

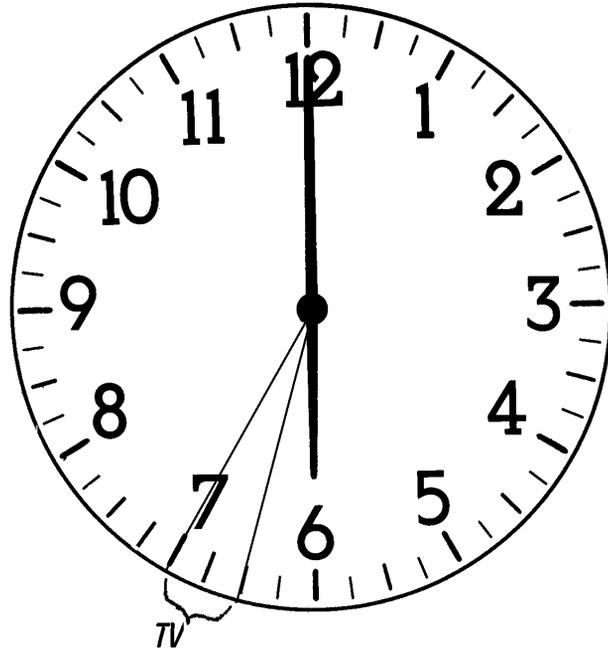


# Time planning practice

## Plan Claire's evening

- Claire has a chapter of a history book to read: 45 minutes
- a science problem: 30 minutes
- an English assignment: 30 minutes
- Claire wants to phone her boyfriend: 15 minutes
- see two TV programs, 6:30–7:00, 9:30–10:30
- do her fitness training: between 30 minutes and an hour.

Dinner is over by 6:00 p.m.  
Her parents like her to be in bed by 11:00 p.m.  
Divide up Claire's evening so that she can do all these things.



Check off these points as you prepare to work on the next activity, *Planning your time*.

1. Note things that you must do.
2. Plan at least 8 hours study/homework over 7 days (12–15 hours at exam time)
3. Study periods of less than 10 minutes aren't of much use.
4. Planned breaks are essential to successful study. You should not study for more than 45 minutes without a 5 minute break.
5. You study best when you feel fresh. Avoid late hours. Working late makes you a tired learner.

# Planning your time

## STUDY WEEK PLANNER 2 The future

Mark in first on this planner your permanent commitments. If you are unsure what to add next, make a list of tasks so that you can work out in what order to do things.

	7-9a.m.	9-11a.m.	11-1p.m.	1-3p.m.	3-5p.m.	5-7p.m.	7-9p.m.	9-10p.m.
<b>S A T</b>								
<b>S U N</b>								

	7-9a.m.	9-3p.m.	3-5p.m.	5-7p.m.	7-9p.m.	9-10p.m.
<b>M O N</b>		<b>LESSONS</b>				
<b>T U E</b>						
<b>W E D</b>						
<b>T H U</b>						
<b>F R I</b>						

If you persevere in making a weekly planner you will soon establish the habits of:

- planning ahead,
- using your time effectively,

and these will become part of your approach to study.

After just a few weeks you will know your best times for study. You can then reserve these times for your most important work.