

## INTRODUCTION TO TIME MANAGEMENT

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The use of a planner can help control time management anxiety. Once the planner(s) has been selected and Xeroxed (if necessary), information may then be recorded. Consider what types of information will be entered on the planner, and what abbreviations will be used. Check course syllabi for due dates of assignments, and break large tasks into several smaller ones before putting them on the schedule. One may wish to color code the different activities on the planner. For example, write classes in black ink, assignments in red ink, and social events in blue ink. Or, write the activities in one color and use different highlighters to distinguish among types of tasks.

In order to be an effective time management strategy, planners must be checked every day or every few days. Make this part of one's routine. Additionally, it is often necessary to update and revise the planners as due dates change or as new tasks are assigned.

### SEMESTER PLANNERS

The purpose of semester planners is to give the student an overall idea of when major school projects and social events are scheduled. Semester planners give an overview of the major commitments one has during the course of the term.

Semester planners are useful because they help the student to see when he/she will be the busiest during the term. Detailed plans then may be made ahead of time to complete all the assignments and activities in a timely manner. Another benefit of semester planners is that they help to reduce the tensions associated with procrastination. Finally, semester planners give the student a sense of control over his/her academic and social affairs.

#### *Directions for Creating Semester Planners*

- Buy a large calendar or desk blotter. Or make a homemade template to meet personal requirements.
- Write in the dates and times for major school projects, including
  - examinations and quizzes
  - speeches
  - research papers
  - lab assignments
  - class projects
  - field trips
- Write in the dates of important social events that can't be missed. Be selective, you can't do everything!
  - major athletic events
  - weddings
  - school dances
  - club meetings and events
- Put the calendar in a prominent place in your room where you may refer to it often.

## MONTHLY PLANNERS

Monthly planners are similar to semester planners, except that they allow one to plan academic and social events in more detail. More types of information and events can be organized on monthly planners.

This time management technique is useful because it encourages the student to divide major tasks into smaller parts and to develop a schedule for completing each part. Another benefit of monthly planners is they help to reduce the tensions associated with procrastination. In addition, monthly planners are portable, unlike most semester planners. Finally, monthly planners give the student a sense of control over his/her academic and social affairs.

### *Directions for Creating Monthly Planners*

- Buy a portable, notebook-sized monthly calendar with boxes that are large enough to hold several pieces of information. Or make a homemade template.
- Look at the major academic assignments listed on the semester planner (or course syllabi). Break each task into smaller parts. For example, a research paper may be divided into these activities: choose topic and clear it with the instructor, library research, write first draft, type first draft, have first draft proof-read, make revisions, and print final draft.
- Develop a schedule for completing each task. Make one's own due dates for each part and write them on the monthly planner. Using the research paper example: topic by week 2, research by week 6, first draft by week 8, type by week 9, proof-read by week 10, turn in final draft by week 11.
- Regularly evaluate one's progress on the tasks against the due dates on the monthly planner. A good time to do this is every Sunday night. Treat yourself when a major assignment has been completed according to the schedule.

## WEEKLY ACTIVITY GRIDS

The purpose of weekly activity grids is to plan activities in a very detailed manner in order to make the most of one's time. The strategy is particularly useful during finals week, when one has "a million things to do" in a short period of time.

When recording upcoming activities on the weekly grid, be as specific as possible. Each entry should identify two things. For students, these are the topic to be studied and how it will be studied. Examples are: library research for speech, write first draft of sociology paper, read physics chapter 7, do accounting problems 1-5, start ceramics project, and identify memory aids for marketing test.

Weekly activity grids may be arranged in one of two formats. They are usually blocked out in one-hour chunks of time. Each one-hour block may begin on the hour (8:00-9:00, 9:00-10:00, etc.) or on the half-hour (7:30-8:30, 8:30-9:30, etc.), depending on the school's class schedule or the employer's schedule. A less common but perfectly acceptable format is by the half-hour. For this type of weekly activity grid time is blocked out as follows: 7:00-7:30, 7:30-8:00, 8:00-8:30, etc. The half-hour style allows one to record activities in more detail, but the hourly format takes up less space.

## *Directions for Creating Weekly Planners*

Directions for completing weekly activity grids are given below.

Design a weekly activity grid to meet personal requirements, or purchase a bound planner. Arrange the grid blocks on an hourly or half-hourly basis. Label the days of the week, starting with Sunday or Monday.

- The first thing to record on the grid is those regular activities whose times do not change week to week. For homemade planners, record this data before xeroxing the chart for future use. Examples of regular activities are
  - meals
  - sleep
  - classes
  - club meetings
  - work
  - tutoring sessions
  - athletic practice, games or exercise
- Record all other activities that are not regular events. Consult the monthly planner (or course syllabi) to determine the due dates of all activities, not just the major ones. Break major assignments into smaller tasks, and identify your own due date for each part. Estimate how long it will take to complete each task. If unsure, err on the side of overestimating. Write short descriptions of each activity in the appropriate places on the weekly chart. Examples of activities are:
  - reading assignments
  - athletic games or exercise
  - study groups
  - recopying or reviewing notes
  - relaxation and recreation
  - reorganizing information
  - developing memory aids
  - reviewing notes or readings
  - club meetings or activities
  - review sessions
  - meetings with instructor, coach or advisor
  - library research
  - lab work
- Keep the completed grid, or copies of it, in a prominent place where one may refer to it often. Make it a habit to check the grid periodically, such as every morning or evening.

## **DAILY ACTIVITY GRIDS**

Daily activity grids serve the same function as weekly schedules - to plan in detail the activities to be completed during the day. The only difference between the two is that daily grids show only one day at a time while weekly grids display seven days of activities on one chart.

Time blocks are usually an hour long and start on the hour, but this format may be modified to suit personal preferences. Various types of information may be recorded on daily charts, including school work, social events, appointments, and work duties. Tasks should be described in as much detail as possible; include the subject of the task and the specific activity to be performed.