



Lesson 19: Time Management

This lesson encourages students to look at the ways people manage their time. It also suggests ways in which they could improve their own time management.

Level: Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

Time: 60-90 mins

How to use this lesson:

This lesson is designed to be done in class. However, if time is limited, you could ask them to prepare Worksheet B for homework. If they do it at home, make sure you allow time during the next lesson for discussion (see notes below).

Worksheet A

- This first exercise introduces some of the key vocabulary that students will use in this lesson. To find out first what students already know, tell them to work alone putting the words in the correct sentences. Stress that you do not expect them to finish the task yet, but that they should do the words that they feel fairly confident about. After a minute or so, allow students to compare notes in pairs for a short time. Complete the task by eliciting answers from the class, giving a brief definition or translation for each word as you go. Ask students to give you examples of their own using the target words. Encourage them to note the way the words are used in sentences (for example, involve + *gerund*, achieve *something*, factor *in*, manage *to do something*).

Finally, conduct a class discussion on the usefulness or otherwise of the opinions expressed in the sentences. Students will discuss most of these points later in the lesson so a brief discussion to familiarise them with the topic is all that is needed here.

Answers

- | | | | | |
|-------------|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 schedule | 3 involves | 5 factor | 7 manage | 9 Flexibility |
| 2 effective | 4 achieve | 6 prioritise | 8 interrupts | 10 log |

- Refer students back to item 10 in exercise 1 and elicit or explain that a time log is something you might keep to analyse the way you spend your time (with a view to making more effective use of your time). Explain that, normally, a time log would be something you do as you are working on various tasks. Since this might not be very practical in a lesson situation, tell them that they are going to do it retrospectively.

Working alone, students should fill in five activities *that they remember most about* from yesterday. (If yesterday was a day when they did very little, ask them to write about the previous day. Similarly, if this particular lesson is in the evening, students could fill in details from today.) At the bottom of the table, they should also note down anything which they had planned to do but didn't get round to. They will need up to five minutes for this.

- Ask students to note the numbers if any of the activities they wrote in their tables fit these descriptions. Remind them that some numbers may be used more than once, and that some activities may have more than one number next to them. Give help to any students who are not sure what to do. The task should not take more than 2-3 minutes.

Interpreting the numbers

When students have finished, ask them to report some of the things that they noted and to say what they think it means about their time management skills. Elicit or point out the following:

- ▶ Students who have noted 1 and/or 2 next to an activity were not particularly effective.
- ▶ Students who have noted 3 and/or 4 next to an activity were more effective.
- ▶ Students who have noted 5 next to an activity should consider whether they work better or worse under pressure.

Keep the discussion fairly brief at this point because they will discuss these factors in more detail in exercise 4.



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- Put students in groups of three or four. Tell them to share their tables so that other members of the group can see them. Allow up to five minutes initially for students to talk about the questions (you can allow more time if necessary). Remind students that you are going to ask them to report their findings to the rest of the class.

As groups finish their discussion, ask people to report what they have decided. Remind them to be polite when they make comments about others. You should elicit suggestions along the lines of:

Helen should try to ...

George spent two hours studying French yesterday but he had two interruptions, so ...

Maria should have ... yesterday but she spent too long ...

Stephan had to finish his essay before basketball practice so he did it in under one hour. This suggests that he works better under pressure.

Finally, students might want to try keeping a time log of their own in 'real time'. Those who have jobs can do it at work, while others might like to try it to see how effectively they manage their time on days they have set aside for studying. Tell them that they simply have to keep a record of the time it takes them to do tasks (as in the table in exercise 2), updating the time when they change activities and noting down any interruptions or other comments. If enough students are interested, ask them to bring in their logs for discussion in a future lesson.

Worksheet B

- Use this ranking exercise as an opportunity to practise the vocabulary that has arisen in the lesson so far. Make sure students understand what is meant by each item. Allow them a few minutes to put the items in order and to think of their own suggestions if they have any.

When they have finished, elicit any of their own items that students have added and ask them to explain why they have chosen them. Then ask individual students to tell the class their top three. As items are repeated, write those most frequently mentioned on the board. When everyone has given their top three, go through the items on the board, prompting with questions like:

Why do you think ... is important?

Do you think ... is more important than ...? Why?

During the discussion, remind students to try to use the vocabulary from the lesson. Finally, you could ask students what items they have put at the bottom of their list and conduct a discussion about why they think these things are less important.

- If this is to be done in class, students will need 10-15 minutes to read the passage and answer the questions. Remind them that a lot of the vocabulary in the text is from this lesson, so they should check before they ask about unknown words.

When checking the answers, allow for variety in the way they are expressed, but make sure the answers convey the information accurately. As you go through the answers, point out (or ask students to point out) where in the text the answer can be found.

Finally, ask students whether they agree or disagree with the writer's opinions. They should now have enough vocabulary to make extended contributions to the discussion.

Suggested answers

- Knowing yourself, studying (study skills), prioritising, getting organised, planning, socialising
- Study in the morning / Study when they are at their best
- It will only be effective if the student often gets up at that time.
- Failing to include time for socialising and spending too much time socialising
- That it is important to be flexible with your plan / That you may need to adjust your plans if you have had interruptions / That a revised plan is better than no plan at all
- Not having a plan will lead to failure
- Better planning will cause you less stress, which is an advantage



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7. For the last task, encourage students to think about their own time management. Allow a few minutes for them to note down their answers. Tell them to try to write at least two things in each section, and to refer back to the worksheets for ideas.

Allow up to five minutes for students to complete the table. Invite comments from the class (but be sensitive to students who may not be willing to discuss what they see as personal weaknesses), and aim to get students talking on the theme of time management. Ask students whether they plan to manage their daily lives any differently as a result of the information in this lesson.



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Worksheet A

1. Complete the sentences using the words in the box. Then discuss whether or not you agree with each one.

achieve	factor	interrupts	log	prioritise
effective	flexibility	involves	manage	schedule

- Writing a weekly _____ or a 'to do' list is a good way to get organised.
- You cannot be _____ if you never take a break.
- Good time management _____ following a plan.
- You can _____ much more if you do one thing at a time.
- When planning your time, you must _____ in time to relax.
- If you _____, you can do the most important things first.
- You will never _____ to do everything, so be realistic.
- If someone _____ you, adjust your plan.
- _____ is important – you may need to change your plan.
- It's a good idea to keep a time _____ where you write down how long you spend on each task.

2. Complete the table below with five activities you did yesterday. Don't worry if you can't remember the exact times. At the bottom, note down anything you didn't manage to do.

e.g.

Time		Activity	
from	to		
7.00	7.20	Had breakfast	

Time		Activity	
from	to		
Things I should have done			



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3. Now think about the activities you wrote in exercise 2 and, in the last column, write the following. You can write more than one number next to an activity.

Write:

- 1 if the activity took you longer than necessary.
- 2 if the activity was interrupted by something or someone.
- 3 if you completed the activity in less time than you had expected.
- 4 if you didn't plan to do the activity yesterday.
- 5 if you were under pressure to finish the activity.

4. In small groups, compare your tables from exercise 2. Discuss the following questions:

Who made best use of their time?

Who had the most interruptions?

Who seemed to be under the most pressure yesterday?

How could each member of the group improve their time management?



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Worksheet B

5. Read the time management tips below and number them in order of how useful you think they are, with number 1 as the most useful. You can add any others that you think are useful. Be prepared to explain your answers.

The best way to manage your time

- ☆ Be prepared for interruptions ☐
- ☆ Do the least pleasant things first ☐
- ☆ Be prepared to change your plan ☐
- ☆ Make an action plan for every job ☐
- ☆ Prioritise and do important things first ☐
- ☆ Keep a log of how you spend your time ☐
- ☆ Be realistic about what you can achieve ☐
- ☆ Make lists and tick things off as you finish ☐
- ☆ Think about the best time of day for each job ☐
- ☆ If you have stopped being effective, change activities ☐

☐

☐



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6. Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

Time management for students

Learning to manage your time involves using a variety of life skills together. First of all, you need to know yourself. Only you know whether you are a morning or an evening person, for example. Understanding when you are at your best can help you decide when to do certain things you have to do – like studying. Then, you need to prioritise and decide which things are the most (and least) important. After that, you need to get organised and start planning a schedule, which could include when to study, as well as when to relax. It is important to be realistic when you are trying to manage your time. You need to factor in time to sleep, for instance, and this should be based on your normal sleep patterns – there is no point in planning to study at six in the morning if you have never managed to get out of bed before eight. Many people forget to include socialising, but this is a mistake because it is unhealthy to avoid seeing people, just as it is a mistake to spend all your time socialising while your list of things to do grows longer and longer.

On the subject of lists, it is important to remember that these may have to change. You need to plan for the unexpected – a visit from a friend, for example – and this means that you may have to adjust your to-do list, perhaps crossing out something that is less important. Flexibility is the key here, otherwise you risk becoming extremely disorganised. It is better to have to change a plan than to lose it completely.

Finally, remember the old saying – 'If you fail to plan, you plan to fail'. In the end, managing your time better will help you avoid stress, and that can only be a good thing.

1. In the first sentence, the writer mentions 'a variety of life skills'. Which of the things in the text do you think are life skills?

2. According to the text, what should a 'morning person' do?

3. What point is the writer making about planning to study at six in the morning?

4. In your own words, say which two mistakes the writer refers to at the end of the first paragraph.

5. What is the main point of the second paragraph?

6. What do you understand by the saying, 'If you fail to plan, you plan to fail'?

7. What do you think the writer means by the last sentence?



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7. Based on the information from this lesson, how well do you think you manage your own time? Make notes in the table below.

Time management skills I have	Time management skills I have

Student's Copy



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Student's Copy

STUDY SKILLS