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ADVANCED TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

FOR YEAR 11 & YEAR 12 STUDENTS

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ADVANCED TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES



EXERCISE 1: ASSESS YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Read the following questions and mark whether each one applies to you by selecting the appropriate answer. Mark **YES** when the answer is always yes, or is yes more frequently than not. Mark **NO** when the answer is more often no than yes, or always no.

Your response to the statements will identify your time management issues and then enable you to formulate an action plan to address them.



TIME MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

	Question	YES	NO
1.	Do you undertake work as it appears rather than in order of priority?		
2.	Do you accept unimportant interruptions when working on an urgent task?		
3.	Do you put off tasks which are daunting or uninteresting?		
4.	Do you allow your work surroundings to become disorganised and messy?		
5.	Do you deal with the same material several times, when it should have been dealt with in one sitting?		
6.	Do you maintain an inadequate filing system (can never find things)?		
7.	Do you waste considerable time on unimportant phone calls/social media/web surfing?		
8.	Do you lack certain skills or equipment which could be reasonably acquired and result in considerable time saving?		
9.	Do you have considerable difficulty making decisions?		
10.	Do you work as a “fire fighter” or “crisis” manager, by responding to issues/crises as they arise, rather than taking time to establish goals and creatively seek the best ways to achieve these goals?		
11.	Do you frequently lack the concentration to see tasks through to the end?		
12.	Do you spend an unnecessarily long time drafting written pieces etc because of perfectionist tendencies or fears of inadequacy?		
13.	Do you let your career path just “happen” rather than taking positive steps towards achieving desirable and realistic life goals?		
14.	Are you always on time?		
15.	Do you rush to complete homework/assessment tasks on time?		
16.	Do you leave tasks to the last minute or have to ask for an extension?		
17.	Do you often feel busy but don’t tend to accomplish much?		
18.	Do you often have to put in longer hours to get through your work?		
19.	Do you have difficulty prioritising tasks?		

Count the number of YES responses: _____

Refer to the back of this booklet to discover what your score reveals about your time management skills.

SECTION 1: EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Many people shun time management skills because they think that they don't need it and don't like living life around a schedule. However, living to a set schedule and managing your time more effectively will help you in many aspects of life, including:

- Completing more work in less time.
- Completing tasks to your highest possible standard.
- Meeting goals and deadlines.
- Finding more time to relax.
- Reducing stress and anxiety.
- Developing control over many events and outcomes.

WHY DO PEOPLE WASTE SO MUCH TIME?

- They don't know any better.
- They work in high distraction/noisy environments.
- They don't plan.
- They're disorganised.
- They don't use time management tools.
- They don't use the most effective techniques to complete tasks.
- They feel too overwhelmed by the scope of the task(s).
- They procrastinate.
- They don't have their goals and priorities set.
- They are unrealistic about their skills and time.



STEPS TO EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Step 1: Analyse how effectively you use your time

Step 2: Document how you plan to use your time

Step 3: Prioritise tasks

Step 4: Chip away at the larger tasks

Step 5: Use the available time wisely

Study smarter

Use classroom time wisely

Work with (and not against) your biological clock

Boost your productivity

Optimise your concentration levels

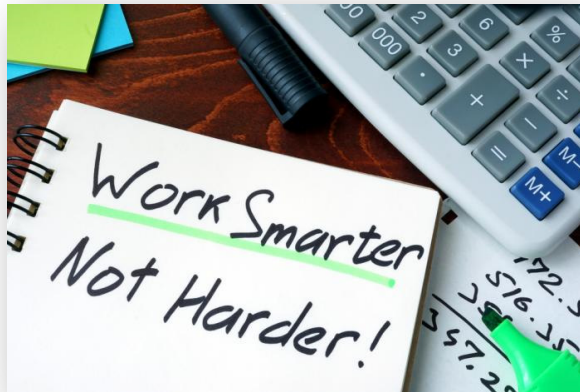
Minimise Interruptions and distractions

Delegate tasks where possible

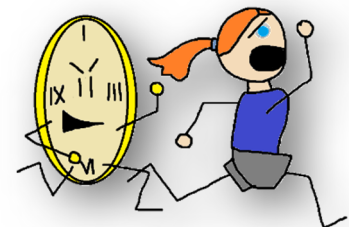
Step 6: Manage procrastination



STEP 1: ANALYSE HOW EFFECTIVELY YOU USE YOUR TIME



- Keep a time log for a few days during a busy period to see how effectively you use your time. Record what you're doing in 15 – 30 minute intervals.
- Evaluate the results at the end of each day. As part of your evaluations, ask yourself the following questions:
 - Did I complete everything I had to do? Why/Why not?
 - Did I have to rush to complete the assigned tasks? Why/Why not?
 - At what time was I most productive?
 - At what time was I least productive?
 - What makes me more productive?
 - What activities, foods, conditions, times etc drain my energy?
 - Did I procrastinate at any stage? Why/Why not?
 - At what times did I procrastinate?
 - Is there a pattern evident in my procrastination regime?
 - What sort of things did I engage in as part of my procrastination process?
 - Which tasks were greeted with the greatest amount of procrastination? Why?
 - How could I make such tasks less tedious?
 - How much time did I waste procrastinating?
 - How much time did I waste talking on the phone or watching TV?
 - How much time did I waste searching for items? Why/Why not?
 - How much time did I waste rebuilding momentum and motivation after being interrupted during study periods?



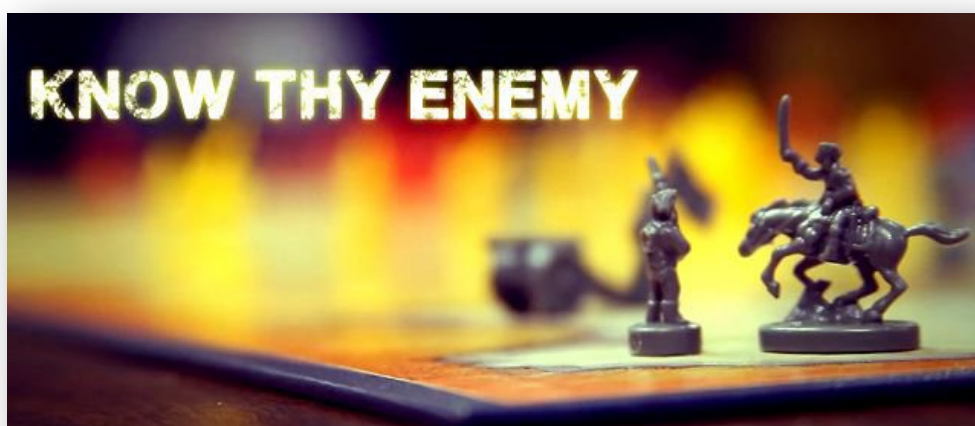
Identify whether you completed everything that was required, determine which tasks require more time and determine when you're most productive.

Find and implement strategies that address your problems and that will help you become more time efficient.

STEP 2: DOCUMENT HOW YOU PLAN TO USE YOUR TIME



- Each Sunday, put together a rough schedule for the upcoming week. Make a list of the major tasks you want/need to complete and assign them to the most ideal days.
- Make a list first thing each morning and designate time frames for each of the tasks you need to accomplish on that day, arranging lunch and fresh air breaks for the times when your focus is low (and hunger is high!).
- Record **ALL** major deadlines as assessments are issued. Document dates on a calendar that's displayed in a regularly frequented area such as the bathroom or on the fridge door.
- If you're a notorious procrastinator, record due dates earlier than the true dates so that you're forced to work ahead of schedule. This will ensure that there's sufficient time to complete or polish up on assignments/assessments **STRESS FREE**.
- **ALWAYS** allocate more time than you think will be required to complete a task.
- Divide large tasks into smaller milestones.
- **Keep detailed lists** of everything that you need to address. Cross these items off your list as they're completed.

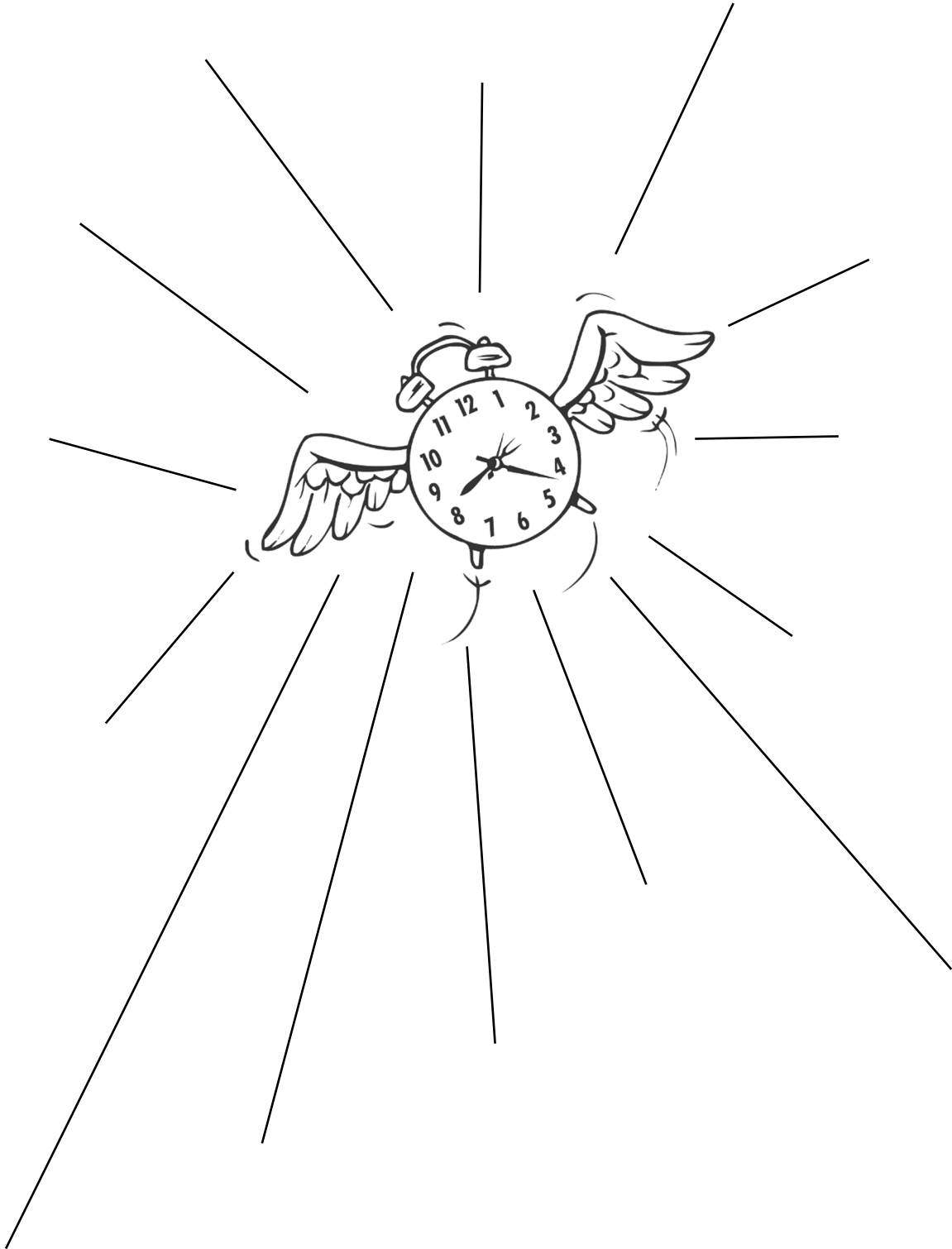


WHAT'S A VCE STUDENT'S BIGGEST ENEMY?

Refer to the back of this booklet to discover the answer.

EXERCISE 2: STUDY RELATED TIME-SAVING STRATEGIES

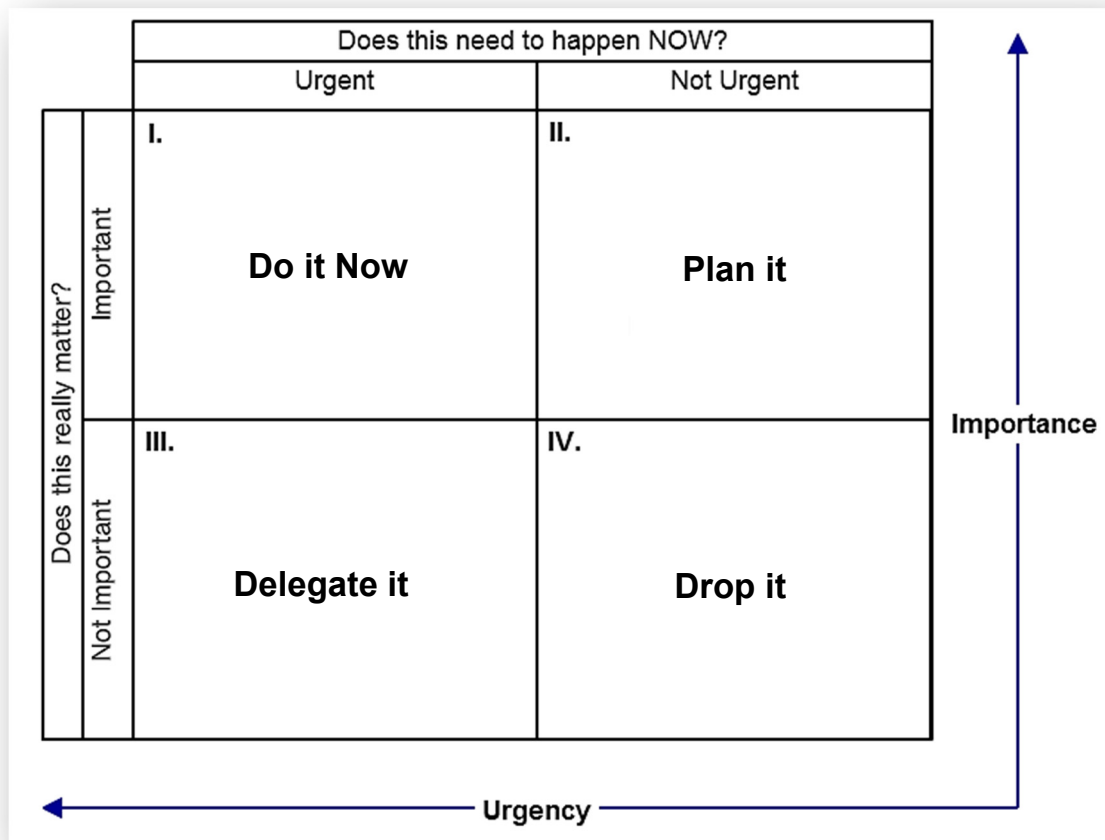
What shortcuts/time saving strategies can I implement to help free up my time?



STEP 3: PRIORITISE TASKS

(A) THE EISENHOWER PRIORITY MATRIX

“What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower



The priority matrix is a simple but very effective time management tool that's used to help us prioritise tasks. It uses two criteria – urgency and importance to create four levels of priority.

When we know which activities are important and which are urgent, we can overcome the natural tendency to focus on unimportant urgent activities, so that we can clear enough time to do what's essential for our success. This is the way we move from "firefighting" to a position where we can complete tasks stress-free and maximise VCE marks.

The **'urgent tasks'** are those that need our immediate attention whereas **'non-urgent tasks'** are ones that can be done at a later date.

'Important tasks' are usually mission critical and have to be done to ensure the continued operation of a system or the achievement of a goal. Tasks deemed as **'not important'** have no positive influence on the operation of a system or the success of a goal.

QUADRANT 1: IMPORTANT AND URGENT TASKS

There are two types of 'urgent and important' tasks:

- Tasks/activities that you couldn't have foreseen.

Where unforeseen issues and crises are concerned, the best approach is to leave some time in your schedule for these events. If a major crisis arises, then you'll need to also reschedule other tasks.

- Tasks/activities that you've left until the last minute.

Last-minute tasks/activities can be eliminated by planning ahead and avoiding procrastination.

QUADRANT 2: IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT TASKS

- These are the tasks/activities that will help you complete important tasks and achieve your goals. Most of your time should be spent addressing tasks in this quadrant.
- Make sure that you assign plenty of time to do the tasks/activities in this quadrant properly, so that they don't become urgent.
- Leave enough time in your schedule to deal with unforeseen problems and crises. This will maximise your chances of keeping on track, prevent tasks from moving into the important and urgent quadrant, and help you avoid having to study under highly stressful and unproductive conditions.

QUADRANT 3: URGENT BUT NOT IMPORTANT TASKS

- Urgent but not important tasks are things that prevent you from achieving your goals.

QUADRANT 4: NOT IMPORTANT AND NOT URGENT TASKS

- These activities are basically distractions that prevent you from being productive. Avoid them where possible.
- Some of these tasks/activities will be things that other people want you to do, even though they don't contribute to the accomplishment of your goals. Say "no" politely, if you can, and explain why you can't complete the requested task or participate in the activity.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	I Activities: Assignments Projects with Deadlines Crises Pressing Problems	II Activities: Major Goals Planning/generating new ideas Recognizing new opportunities Relationship building Prevention of major problems
Not Important	III Activities: Interruptions Checking email Incoming phone calls/texts Some meetings Pressing matters/check news	IV Activities: Trivia, busy work Web browsing/Facebook Watching TV Pleasant Activities Wasting Time

SETTING UP YOUR PRIORITY MATRIX

The first step is to define what time frames 'urgent' and 'not urgent' represent and what tasks are to be classified as 'important'. Where your studies are concerned, we suggest the following:

- Let 'urgent' = Due this week
- Let 'not urgent' = Due next week or thereafter
- Let 'important' tasks represent those tasks that count directly to your marks as well as those tasks, that if ignored, will result in a much greater workload when finally addressed.

Consider the importance or weighting of each task and the urgency (when it is due), and allocate tasks to their most appropriate quadrant.

For example:

Task	Urgency	Importance	Quadrant
Last minute preparation for a SAC today	Urgent	Important	1
Homework due tomorrow	Urgent	Important	1
Homework due in 2 days	Urgent	Important	1
Read ahead in my weakest subject	Not Urgent	Important	2
Prepare for a SAC in 2 days	Urgent	Important	1
Write up summary notes in Chemistry	Not Urgent	Not Important	4
Exam preparation (exam is 4 weeks away)	Not Urgent	Important	2
Write an English essay (not being assessed)	Not Urgent	Important	2

Reorder tasks within each quadrant in terms of relative urgency and the impact the task will have on your marks.

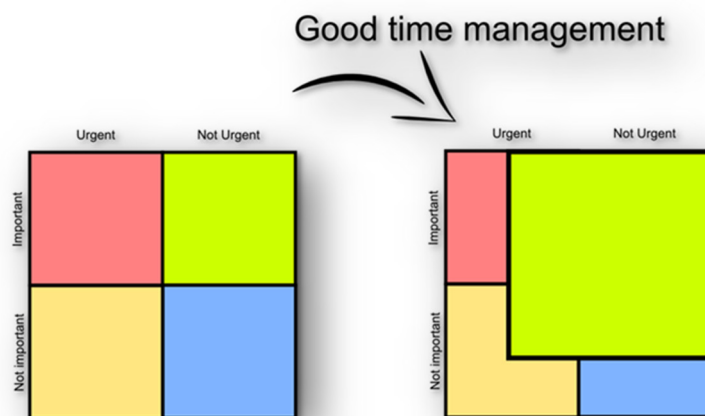
For example, the order of priorities in Quadrant 1 would become:

- 1st:** Last minute preparation for a SAC today
- 2nd:** Prepare for a SAC in 2 days
- 3rd:** Homework due tomorrow
- 4th:** Homework due in 2 days

Work through the tasks in Quadrants 1 and 2, and ignore, deprioritise, delete or delegate the 'not important' tasks in Quadrants 3 and 4.

Note:

- Once you have a matrix setup you can quickly assign each new task to where it belongs in the matrix rather than diverting your attention to 'urgent' tasks that aren't important to the achievement of your goals.
- If time is an issue, complete the tasks that have the greatest payoff (i.e. worth the greatest number of marks for the time and effort invested).
- Plan to spend most of your time in Quadrant 2.



- To make it easier to reprioritise tasks in each quadrant in terms of relative urgency/importance, you may choose to score each task using the product of importance (most important = 5, least important = 1) and urgency (most urgent = 5, least urgent = 1).

For example, if Task 1 is scored as 5 for importance and 3 for urgency, the priority index becomes $5 \times 3 = 15$.

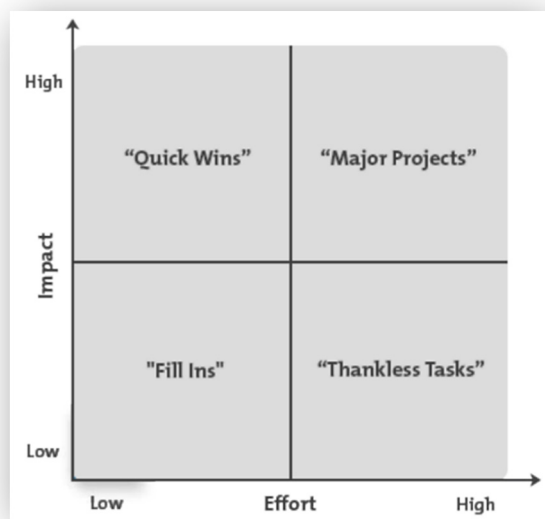
If Task 2 carries an urgency and importance of 4 points each, its priority index ($4 \times 4 = 16$) indicates that we should focus first on this task, followed by Task 1.

When using a priority matrix, you'll not only avoid shifting your focus from what needs to be done, you'll also never underestimate or overestimate the urgency of a task again!

(B) THE ACTION PRIORITY MATRIX

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

When there isn't enough time available to complete all of the tasks on our list, it's important to prioritise the high-value activities that keep us moving forwards and drop those tasks that don't contribute provide a good return for the time and effort invested.



The Action Priority matrix is used to score tasks/activities based firstly on their impact and secondly on the effort needed to complete them.

Scores are then used to assign tasks to one of four quadrants:

- **Quick Wins (High Impact, Low Effort)**

Quick wins are those tasks that give you a good return for relatively little effort. You should focus on these tasks as much as you can.

- **Major Projects (High Impact, High Effort)**

Major projects give good returns, but they are time-consuming.

The time required to complete these tasks is usually not as profitable as the gains that can be made spending the same amount of time on the 'quick wins'.

- **Fill Ins (Low Impact, Low Effort)**

These tasks are usually the ones we like to start with so we can get them out of the way, and feel as if we are making good progress in completing our tasks. These tasks, however, should only be done if you have spare time. If not, drop them or delegate them.

- **Thankless Tasks (Low Impact, High Effort)**

Avoid these tasks/activities at all costs. Not only do they give little return, they also chew up valuable time that could otherwise be spent on 'quick wins'.

STEP 4: CHIP AWAY AT THE LARGER TASKS



- Commence formal preparations for the exams well in advance so that you can complete the bulk of your learning under low stress conditions. High stress decreases the amount of information that can be input into the brain, which means that it will take you longer to learn a given amount of information.
- Regularly revise materials throughout the year rather than re-learning in the weeks leading up to the examinations. It's less time consuming to spend short periods reviewing materials while they're fresh in mind, rather than re-learning them "from scratch" before the exams.

- **Save considerable time by:**

Filling in your notes with the examples and facts that you didn't have time to take down in class during breaks or once you get home.



Writing up study notes and summaries within 24 hours of covering topics at school or **AFTER** you've revised materials before a test or exam. Don't leave this task to the weeks leading up to the exams as it will take significantly longer than if you were to complete this task when your recall ability was higher, and under less stressful conditions (the better you know your work, the less time it will take to write up notes and summaries).

- Don't leave the task of collecting past examination papers until the weeks leading up to the exams. Collect as many examination papers and resources while demands on your time are low and when there are no queues at the photocopiers at school.
- **DO NOT** leave the task of working through past exam papers to the last minute. Students often gain access to large volumes of material in the few weeks before their exams and rarely find the time to take full advantage of these very important resources.
- You should start working through exam-style questions from the beginning of the year, and as each topic is covered at school. If you're unable to find a resource that groups past exam questions by topic, print out 5 – 8 past VCE exam papers, and work through the relevant questions as you complete each topic at school.
- Work through as many examination papers as possible. The more exam papers you work through, the better your examination mark.

STEP 5: USE THE AVAILABLE TIME WISELY

(A) STUDY SMARTER

- Always plan on running out of time and implement as many time-saving strategies as possible from the beginning of the year. Examples include purchasing notes rather than writing them yourself, attending exam revision lectures rather than going through the process on your own.
- Circle difficult, challenging or tricky questions as you come across them and highlight sections of work that you found difficult. This will save you valuable time when trying to prioritise which materials need to be addressed in the lead up to the exams.
- Use waiting times, travelling times, free periods and breaks to learn or revise materials.
- Don't spend huge amounts of time trying to master a concept or answer a question. Mark these sections and ask your teacher or a friend for assistance when you get to school. You'll decrease stress levels, cut down on study time and develop a more confident attitude towards your studies.
- Many students engage in little or no study across January, February, June and July of each year. These periods, are, however, the ideal time to get ahead and make a significant difference to stress levels and study loads later in the year. We therefore recommend that students dedicate as much of their school holidays for study related purposes.



Suggestions include: Revise examinable materials.
Work through topics ahead of school.
Write your summary notes for your next test or exam.
Read (or re-read) your English texts.

(B) USE CLASS TIME WISELY



Students spend the greater majority of their learning time at school and should be maximising these opportunities so as to cut down on after school study commitments. Use the time spent at school wisely. The more you learn and/or complete at school, the less work that you will need to complete at home!

Here are some strategies you can use to maximise the learning you do at school:

- If you have trouble concentrating in class, sit at the front so that you are removed from as many distractions as possible.
- Listen to your teachers very carefully. Stay focused and pay attention at all times. Do **NOT** day dream. Remind yourself that if you don't pay attention now, you'll need to spend at least 5 times the amount of time to cover the same amount of work on your own.
- Listen when other students ask questions – someone may just bring up a concept or fact that you're having difficulty with.
- Don't tune out even when you think that you know the materials being addressed. You may just learn something new, pick up some new examination strategies, and at worst, you will have reviewed and further consolidated the information being covered into your long term memory. And this means that you will have less study and revision to complete in the lead up to tests and examinations.

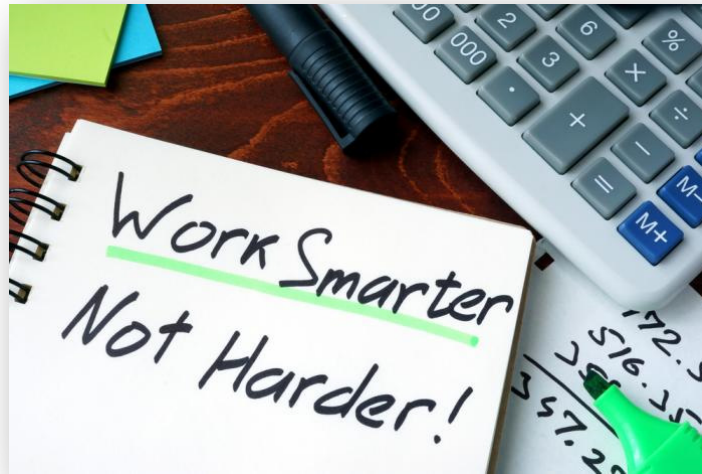


- Minimise the amount of notes you write while the teacher is delivering their class. Students who divide their attention between listening, watching, comprehending and writing notes will only remember about 5% of what was presented 72 hours later – as opposed to 50% if they didn't write at the same time. You're also likely to miss vital concepts, resulting in additional study requirements outside school hours.



- Try to keep ahead of the classroom with respect to the material being covered at school. Know what topic is to be covered during the next class and read through the relevant chapter in your text book. You may even like to attempt some of the exercises in advance (you'll have to complete the exercises eventually – so it won't hurt if you try a few problems before they're assigned for homework). If you take the time to peruse your textbook, you'll become aware of what notes may need to be written down as a teacher delivers their class. You'll probably find that the majority of what he/she relays in class is already in your text book! This strategy will enable you to concentrate and pay more attention in class, improving knowledge and understanding of course materials, decreasing out of school study commitments and dramatically improving VCE marks!

(C) WORK WITH (& NOT AGAINST) YOUR BIOLOGICAL CLOCK



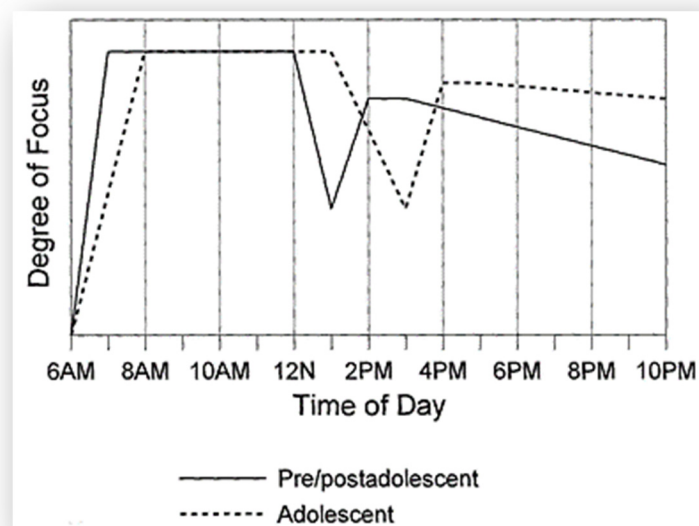
Not all hours are created equal. Therefore, the key to increasing productivity is to spend the right time, on the right things, the right way, and with the right energy.

We all have power hours or peak performance periods where we're in "the zone", ploughing through tasks with maximum efficiency and ease. Some of these periods are quite obvious, but many are camouflaged by daily activities that could be executed during less efficient parts of the day.

Identifying and using our power hours in the best way is one of the most powerful, and least used time management techniques that can greatly cut down on study time without negatively impacting results.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL/COGNITIVE CYCLE

The psychological-cognitive cycle plays a significant role in memory and learning and is heavily influenced by the sleep-wake cycle. The psychological-cognitive cycle regulates our ability to focus on incoming information, which means that our concentration levels fluctuate throughout the day.



If we were to wake up at 6am:

- Teenage concentration levels are at their lowest in the morning with peak alertness occurring between 8am to 1pm. Students undertaking very early morning studies report being less alert, wearier, and having to expend greater effort while studying.
- Concentration levels begin to decrease from about 1pm, reaching half of the maximum value by 3pm. During this period, learning can still occur, but it does require more effort.
- Most teenagers experience a drop in energy and feel drowsy somewhere between 2pm and 4pm. This is a great time to take a 15 to 30-minute nap – not only will you feel more alert and focused on waking, you'll be replenishing your levels of brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) that play a critical role in memory and learning.
- Following the mid-day slump, concentration levels quickly rebound to about 80-90% of the maximum value and remain at very high levels until around 10pm.
- The drive for sleep becomes very strong between 11pm and midnight. This means that the majority of teenagers don't fall asleep until at least 11.30pm.

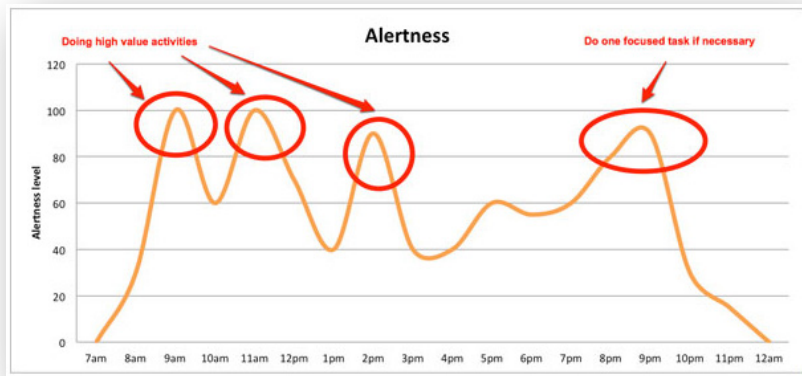
LEVERAGING YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL/COGNITIVE CYCLE

- Don't fight your natural biological clock. For example:

Don't force yourself to work through an energy slump, particularly if you're in the middle of a high-concentration task. You'll waste more time plodding through that task than if you were to stop for a while and pick up a low concentration activity.
- Working with your circadian rhythm will not only increase your daily efficiency and productivity, it will also help maintain a healthy body and mind. Your confidence levels will also improve, and you'll be less likely to procrastinate future studies!
- As there are individual variations in daily rhythms, it's a good idea to chart your energy, concentration and motivation levels across the day. Once you determine your internal biological clock's daily schedule, you can then plan your study sessions around those times of day when you're most alert and motivated.
- Testosterone production and hence alertness are at their highest levels between 11am and 1pm. This is the best time to tackle tasks that require high focus and attention, such as Mathematics.
- Where possible, take a long break when concentration levels are at their lowest levels eg. Between 2pm and 3.30pm.
- Heavy meals require large amounts of energy to digest and process. Therefore, having a light, healthy lunch often helps to reduce the severity of the mid-day slump.
- If you must study during the mid-day slump, implement strategies that will increase focus and concentration. Examples include reading out loud, exposure to cold, drinking 1 – 2 glasses of water and brief spurts of exercise.
- Do some light stretching for 5 – 10 minutes after lunch to improve your circulation.

USE YOUR POWER HOURS WISELY

- After identifying your power hours, protect them so that you can spend them where you need it most. Don't use these periods to attend appointments, play sport, socialise, clean or sleep in. These hours should be used for tasks that require high levels of concentration or motivation.
- Identify which of your tasks will require high levels of focus and concentration, and which ones do not.
- Don't work on concentration intensive tasks when your alertness and energy levels are low. Not only will you make avoidable mistakes, tasks will require more time and effort to complete, increasing the likelihood of you becoming overwhelmed or demotivated. Use these times to eat, relax, clean, sort, research or answer emails.
- Difficult or high value tasks should be addressed when concentration levels are high.



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(D) BOOST YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

- Losing just 1.5 hours of sleep reduces alertness by 32%, and avoiding junk food can raise your productivity 20%. Exercise helps you to better handle stress, makes you more alert, and gives you more mental energy.
- A good mood makes you 12% more productive, so joke with a study mate, watch a funny cat video, or chat with a friend.
- Divide tasks into three categories – ‘Must, Should and Want’. Focus your efforts on the “Musts”.



- Don't multitask. Not only is it less efficient (productivity decreases by 40%), it drops your IQ by 10 points. That means more mistakes, which you'll only have to go back and correct... wasting even more precious time.

- Practice meditation. It teaches your brain to tune out distractions and focus longer. Even 5 minutes a day can have a positive impact on productivity.
- Leave the last 5 to 10 minutes of each study session to review what you've learned, to note any questions you may have, and to document which sections you're having difficulty with.
- Research has shown that we're way more productive the less time we assign ourselves to complete our tasks (within reason). This is why Sweden has introduced the 6 hour working day – they realised that employees are likely to work harder, be happier, and use their time more wisely when there's less time available to get things done at work. Therefore, allocate less time than required to complete tasks.
- Allocate a time limit in which to complete each individual task. Time boxing forces you to complete tasks sooner and to work smarter (work has a tendency to expand and fill the time that's available for its completion!)

Challenge yourself by giving yourself 25% less time than you conservatively estimate it will take you to complete a task. This forces you to get creative and find more efficient ways to work.



- Don't listen to music while studying. When you listen to music, you're making your brain work twice as hard. Half your brain is trying to listen to the music and the other *half* is trying to study. The result? A loss in concentration and productivity, which means that it will take you longer to complete each task.
- If you must listen to music, choose music that doesn't have lyrics in the languages you speak. Choose either instrumentals for ambience or white noise to block out sound instead, and you won't be as tempted to stop and sing along with the tune.

- Frequent pop-ups are distracting and almost guaranteed to pull your attention away from the task at hand. Therefore, if you're unable to shut down your phone or computer, shut noncritical notifications off so you can focus with greater ease. Alternatively, set your mobile phone to flight mode.
- Use an effective and time saving learning technique.



- Set up study groups where you're given the opportunity to teach others what you've learned. If this isn't possible, try the family dog or cat (but chain the dog up so it doesn't run away)!
- To get the most from learning sessions (and cut down on study time), spread learning across a longer time frame rather than cramming before your exams (spaced learning). You will learn more in ten 2-hour sessions than in two 10-hour sessions!
- When preparing for exams, save huge amounts of time by attending quality revision programs, such as those delivered by TSFX.



Learning via seeing and hearing (as in the case of **lectures** and **classroom** instruction) is also a very powerful way to commit course materials to memory. You will **cover at least 5 times** more theory and absorb 5 times more information in a lecture or classroom than if you were to work through the materials on your own!

You'll also get a fully comprehensive set of **A+ notes** at no charge – saving you the time and effort of preparing your own!

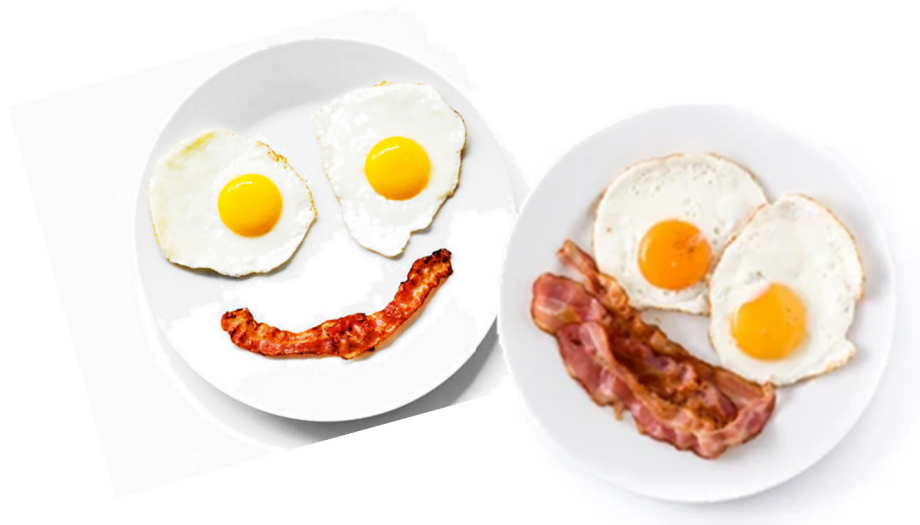
- Once you get home from school, take a 30-minute break and have something to eat and drink. Then take a shower and change into something you'd wear on a non-school day. You'll feel as if you've started a new day, making it easier to commit to continued study. If you're very tired, take a 70 to 100-minute nap, followed by a shower and change of clothes.
- To study efficiently, it's very important to set goals. Not just vague goals or ones that are way too high to achieve, but clear and realistic goals.
- Unless you're a night owl, the changes in hormone levels that occur as part of the circadian rhythm make learning much less effective after midnight.
- Decrease the temperature in your study area. If necessary, layer up with clothes and open a window so you get a continual supply of fresh air. Air from cooling or heating vents is recycled throughout the house and often has a lower concentration of oxygen, which reduces productivity.

- Rather than let them collect and snowball, if a task takes less than two minutes to complete, you should do it ASAP.
- Eliminate your least favorite tasks first up, and you'll find the rest of your day to be more pleasant and productive.
- Working in small blocks of time can be a great way of increasing your productivity levels, as you can assign smaller bite-sized tasks to each block, rather than large overwhelming tasks.
- Studies show that exposure to sun light improves sleep, thereby improving your well-being and in turn, your productivity levels. So, if you can, try and work near a window. You'll get the benefit of improved productivity and better sleep as a result.
- Always batch similar tasks together when planning your day, it'll definitely make your work process flow more smoothly.
- It's been shown that exercising in the morning can greatly improve your productivity and decrease stress levels.

(E) OPTIMISE YOUR CONCENTRATION LEVELS

- Distractions impair the learning process and reduce how much information can be input into memory per unit time. Therefore, remove distracting stimuli and focus on the task at hand.
- Don't use any form of social media during study sessions. If social media is too strong a distraction, download one of the many social media blocking apps that are available for students.
- Even mild dehydration (<2%) which is characterised by a mildly dry mouth and dry lips can decrease concentration and test performance by 10 to 20%. Therefore, drink one glass of water within 5 minutes. Your alertness and energy levels will greatly improve if you're not sufficiently hydrated. At the very least, the levels of stress hormone (cortisol) will drop significantly within 10 minutes.
- Do a rhythmic activity for 1 – 5 minutes. For example, tennis, jogging, tapping, drumming etc. This will increase dopamine levels in the brain, which improves focus, motivation and task completion (very well researched and documented).
- Go outside and take a brisk walk or engage in breathing activities. Oxygen is critical for brain function, and helps you stay sharp and alert.
- Conduct your studies by reading materials out loud. Perform calculations as if you were tutoring another student – explaining what you're doing and why.
- If you need to study in a noisy environment, purchase a cheap pair of disposable foam ear plugs (<\$1) and a pair of jackhammer ear muffs (<\$25), and enjoy the instant silence!
- If your desk is by the window, and you get distracted by what's happening outside, move your desk to another part of your room.

- Studies have shown that peppermint stimulates brain activity and enables you to concentrate better. Therefore, drink plenty of peppermint tea when studying, as well as in the exam room!
- Change the colour of the text in typed notes every 3 – 4 lines. Not only will this make it easier for you to keep your place, you'll absorb more information and get through each passage faster.
- Surround yourself with the colour yellow. Yellow improves focus by decreasing the production of melatonin – the hormone that makes you sleepy each evening. So invite some friends over during the school holidays and paint your study area a bright shade of yellow!
- Start using site blockers so that you can work without the constant threat of distracting websites.
- Clutter is extremely stress-inducing. A messy desk can make you feel overwhelmed and anxious, and make it much easier for you to procrastinate.
- Eat a high tyrosine breakfast. Tyrosine is a component of protein that's used to build the brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) that are involved in concentration, motivation and learning i.e. dopamine and norepinephrine.



STEP 6: MANAGE PROCRASTINATION

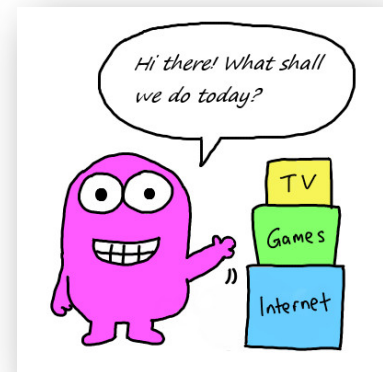
Everyone suffers from procrastination at one time or another. For some, procrastination only affects some areas of their lives – for others, the effects are quite significant.

Irrespective of the severity of this condition, the results are the same:

- Missed opportunities
- Wasted time
- Decreased performance
- Lower self esteem
- Increased stress and anxiety in the lead up to a deadline

People usually procrastinate when they perceive tasks as being:

- Difficult
- Unpleasant
- Uncomfortable/overwhelming
- Boring
- Time-consuming
- Pointless



Some students procrastinate to avoid confronting their fear of:

- Failure
- Not meeting others' expectations
- Not meeting their own expectations
- Lacking the skills or intelligence to complete a task
- Not doing their best work
- Being poorly judged by others
- Making the wrong decision

They often make up clever excuses to justify why they should put off their studies, resulting in feelings of guilt and regret when they don't get the ATAR they wanted or need.

How many of the following statements have you used to get out of studying?

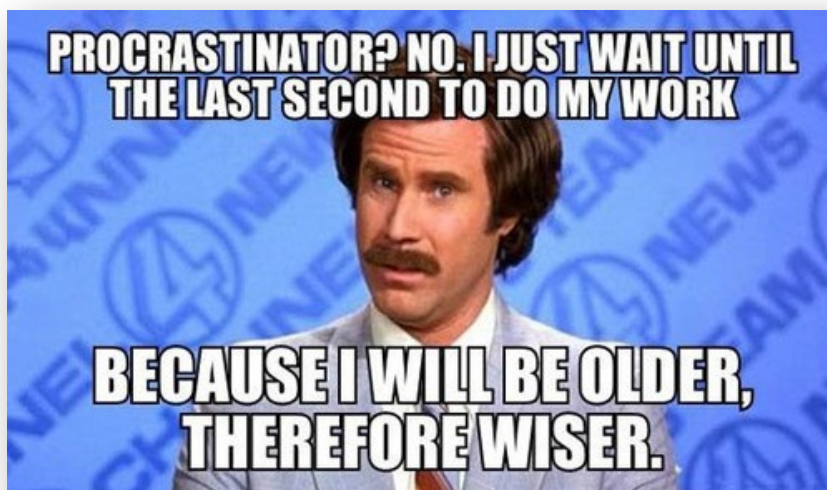
- *I'm not in the mood to study. I'll get more done if I wait until I am in the mood.*
- *I'll start a regular study schedule tomorrow.*
- *There's plenty of time to get this done – I'll do it later.*
- *I work better under pressure, so I'll finish this off later.*
- *I've got too many other things to do first.*

By taking control of procrastination, not only will your marks improve:

- Your stress levels will decrease.
- You won't get overwhelmed with the amount of work that needs to be completed.
- You won't run out of time to complete all tasks to a high standard.
- You'll **complete tasks faster**. The longer you put off your studies, the more information you forget, and therefore, the greater the time and effort required to complete a task.
- You'll create **more free time** to do the things you enjoy.
- You'll feel better about the quality of your work as well as your overall abilities.
- You'll feel **more confident** about forthcoming tests and exams.



OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION



Step 1: Divert your attention away from negative thoughts and feelings and ask yourself the following questions:

“Why am I procrastinating?”

“What are the benefits of putting this task off until later?”

“What are the consequences of putting this task off until later?”

If I put this task off to another day, would it take more time to complete it?

How much more time would I need to complete this task if I left it to another day?

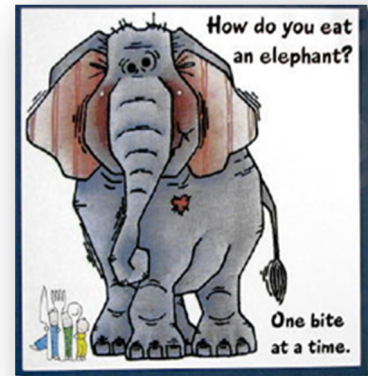
Is it worth procrastinating?

Reminder: The longer we leave a study task, the less information we remember, which means that it will take you longer to complete.

So unless you love to study, and are looking for ways to increase the time you spend studying – DON'T PROCRASTINATE!

Step 1 is usually enough to stop most students procrastinating their studies, however, if you do need heavier strategies, try the suggestions in Step 2, 3 and 4.

Step 2: One of the most important neurotransmitters involved in motivation and task completion is called **dopamine**. Dopamine also plays a **key role** in concentration, learning speed, memory formation and regulating reward and pleasure.



When we complete a task, no matter how small, dopamine is released, improving motivation and brain function! Therefore, divide large tasks into smaller, more achievable milestones and start with the smallest or most pleasant task and get some momentum happening. As soon as you've made some progress, the task won't seem as bad as you made it out to be, and it won't take much effort to continue your study session. The beginning is always the hardest!

Step 3: Don't wait for inspiration to hit or for the perfect time, just start working on anything study related.

Think about what you want to achieve before you sit down to study and write these study goals down. This will help prepare your unconscious mind for the tasks ahead, reducing the chances of procrastination.

Find purpose for the tasks you need to complete. It's always easier to commit to tasks when they mean something to you.



Be honest with yourself and work out what's realistic given your abilities and the time and resources available to you, and plan accordingly.

This may require that you lower your standards or expectations, but as they say, "done is better than perfect".

Trick your brain. Rather than telling yourself that you need to work for three hours (which might put you off from starting) tell yourself that you'll only study for 10 minutes. Pick something relatively easy and you'll quickly discover that studying isn't that bad once you get stuck into a task. More often than not, you'll end up doing more than 10 minutes after that initial hurdle of getting started is overcome.

Compile all tasks that need to be completed into a list. Then ask yourself: "*What is the best use of my time right now?*"

Keep specific to-do lists or calendars with your tasks and goals clearly documented. This will help you track your success and recognise your achievements.

Tell yourself how **great you'll feel** once you have completed all of your tasks.

Step 4: Apply the relevant strategies from the suggestions below.

Identify what will motivate you to start and complete this task? Is it something intrinsic or extrinsic? Identify a motivator for each of your goals and keep that in mind as you approach each task!

Telling yourself that you have to study for your exams can be overwhelming, especially when you're tired or beginning to feel anxious. Instead of saying you're going to study, set a task that has a clear and imminent end point. For example, you could read a chapter from a text book, complete half an exam paper, or work through 20 exam questions.

Set **realistic and manageable goals** so that you know what you want to achieve and you can see clear evidence of your progress towards your goals. It may also help to visualise what you want to achieve and put up posters around your house that remind you of your goals.

Remove as many barriers to starting your studies by leaving your desk clean, tidy and uncluttered each evening. Then spend 10 to 15 minutes on the hardest task that needs to be completed on the next day. It's amazing how the thought that you've already started on a tough task can reduce anxiety, procrastination and the feeling of being overwhelmed.



Acknowledge unhelpful thoughts and feelings and focus on positive self-talk and action. Regularly tell yourself:

"I'm doing great!"

"This isn't easy but I'm getting there"

"I'm on the right track to achieving my goals".

Eat some chocolate. You'll get a rush of dopamine, a hormone that boosts motivation. Chocolate also releases chemicals that promote calmness and stimulate your brain – perfect for buckling down and getting things done.

Find a place to work that is quiet and free of distractions. Your surroundings can affect productivity as well as the quality of your work.

Don't over commit yourself to any one activity including study. Set aside time to do the things that you enjoy.

Try using **rewards** to motivate you to study. This could be a break or relaxing activity for every hour of study or for every task completed. Use things that are typically classified as distractions as rewards (such as TV or Facebook), rather than punishing yourself when you use technology to procrastinate.



Set early deadlines for tasks. Rather than leaving things to the last minute, ‘fake’ deadlines will compel you to complete tasks earlier than required, leaving you with sufficient time to go over your work before you hand it in.

Listen to a favourite piece of music that’s on the fast side, and at a higher volume. Then switch to music that hovers around 60 beats per minute. Vivaldi and other Baroque-period pieces are the first to pop into mind, but there are many modern works that also have a beat that mimics

the resting heart rate. Whatever you choose to listen to, just make sure that it isn’t too loud.

If you’re struggling to get into your studies, go for a quick jog or power walk around the block. Catch your breath and then start studying – even if you have to tell yourself that it will be for only 5 minutes. Exercise increases dopamine levels, which increases motivation. So that 5-minute study session may just turn into a 3-hour marathon!

It’s much easier to procrastinate when you have games and the internet ready to access at every weak moment. Even worse is the knowledge that your friends are most likely chatting on social media. The solution? Make a study pact with your friends. Download a distraction blocker app and block all social media sites for an agreed period of time. Then you’ll know that you’re not missing out on anything on Facebook, making it much easier to get into your studies!



Distract yourself when temptation starts surfacing. Distraction, of course, is what you’re trying to stop doing, so we’re talking about avoiding one kind of distraction (web surfing, social media) by using a more benign form such as tidying up your desk, stretching or working on something different.

Your subconscious mind uses body cues such as breathing speed, sweating and heart rate as indicators of how you should be feeling. When you’re feeling lazy or overwhelmed, or you’re struggling to get started on some task, use this association to your advantage by moving and breathing like you’re excited. ‘Psychology Today’ suggests sports-style psych-ups, like moving around, talking to yourself with high-energy words, and breathing like you’re about to step into the ring.

Write down every task that needs to be completed, in order of importance. Assign a time limit to each task, and then see whether you can complete each one in the given time. If you need more time for a task, trim the time allocation off the next task. The challenge of beating the clock will reduce the desire to procrastinate, as well as the number of tasks on your list!

Set a timer for 25 minutes and work solidly until it beeps. It's surprising how easy it is to force yourself into working in a short dash, with a definite end in sight. Take a 5-minute break, followed by another 25-minute study session and so on. If 25-minute sessions are too long, study for 15 minutes, then indulge in a 2-minute break and repeat. Whatever you do, don't go beyond the 25 or 15-minute study sessions – even if you're seconds away from completing a task. The fact that something hasn't been completed will make it easier for you to get back into your studies once your break is over. Note: This technique is also great when you're feeling overwhelmed and can't get started on a task.



Turn tasks into **challenges** or games. For example: "I bet I can't get this done in 30 minutes."

If you have a very bad case of procrastination, do short bursts of focused work. Spend 1 to 2 minutes on a task and see how much you can complete. Go back to procrastinating and repeat the burst of work as often as you can. You may even decide not to set a timer to sound at the 2-minute mark and just power through a question or section of work. To keep you challenged and interested, guess how long each burst of work lasted, and compare your efforts with your friends.

Visualise failure and how you'd feel knowing things could have been different if you didn't procrastinate. Now pick up something easy and get on with the task at hand.



START
where you are.
USE
what you have.
DO
what you can.

Arthur Ashe

Visualise success. See yourself starting, working through and finishing the task.

Track how you're spending your time by keeping a time diary. You'll quickly see how much time you're wasting when procrastinating, and how much time could be gained for leisure activities if you completed tasks without delays.

Create a status board that's highly visible. Document what's been completed or what percentage of each subject has been covered.

Find an 'accountability partner' – someone who knows you well that you'll report your progress to and that can hold you to your commitments.

Post **reminders and prompts** around your house. These will serve as a great source of motivation when you're distracted or avoiding your studies. Examples include:

"Procrastination wastes time. Do it now and get it over and done with."

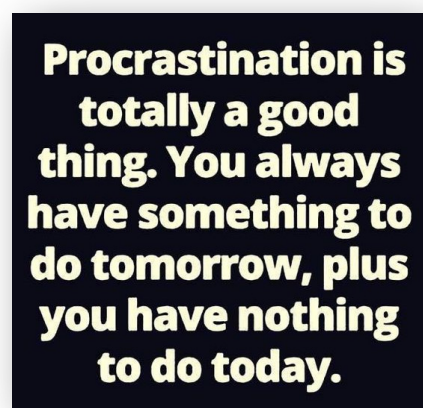
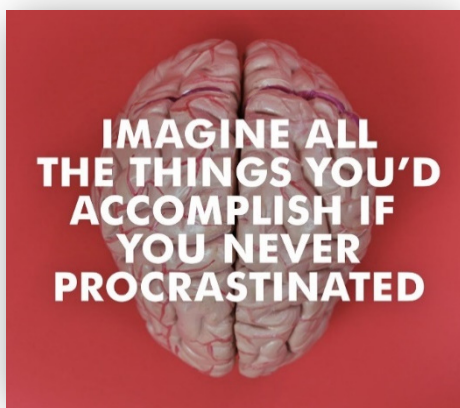
"Procrastination adds time to tasks".

"Don't like studying? Don't procrastinate and save huge amounts of time!"

"Procrastination makes easy things hard, hard things harder."

"How will I feel when I get my results and I haven't achieved the ATAR I need?"

Don't risk it. Get studying."



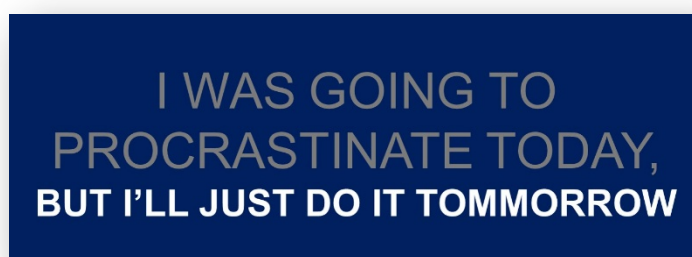
After a productive study session, **record a message** to yourself. Explain how you didn't want to study and looked for any opportunity to procrastinate. No matter how difficult it was, you then decided to spend a short time studying, only to find that it wasn't as bad as you worked yourself up to believe. Describe how great you felt after completing your studies and why you shouldn't procrastinate next time. Play this message when you're struggling to get started – there's nothing more powerful than a personalised message that directly targets your logic and thought processes.

Study every day – **NO EXCEPTIONS**. This will ensure that you develop a regular study habit and render you less susceptible to procrastination! Established routines will:

- Minimise effectiveness of procrastination attempts.
- Ensure that work is completed on time and that it doesn't accumulate.
- Create time to do other things.
- Reduce stress and workloads before tests and examinations.



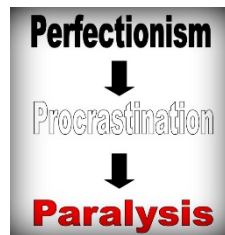
If all the given suggestions fail – just accept the fact that you have to study and get on with it.



AVOID PERFECTIONISM



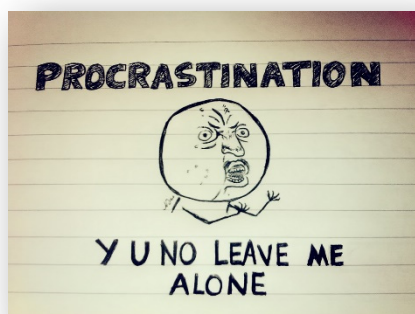
perfectionism often leads to many students avoiding their studies.



If you are a perfectionist, it may be beneficial to learn about the “The Pareto Principle”. This principle states that for many events, roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes.

Many natural phenomena have been shown to exhibit the 80 – 20 rule, including spending, distribution of wealth, customer complaints, land ownership, company profits, staff productivity and even essay marks!

So rather than spending significant amounts of time trying to perfect essays and assignments, aim for a slightly lower standard, saving considerable time as well as reducing the chances of future procrastination.



MISCELLANEOUS TIME SAVING SUGGESTIONS



When you start an assessment task or assignment, prepare a checklist of concepts/items to be covered or included. As the task is completed, cross each item off your list so that you can feel confident that you have addressed all the required components.

- Use homework/task folders where possible eg. Coloured cardboard document wallets. File homework in accordance with its urgency. For example:

Red Wallet: Urgent Tasks

File the tasks that need to be completed that day in the Urgent Wallet.

Orange Wallet: Medium Term Tasks

File the tasks that need to be completed that week in this wallet.

Green Wallet: Long Term Tasks

File the tasks that can be completed over an extended period in this wallet.

- Manage leisure time and friends and family.

Ask friends not to call or drop in between certain hours, as disruptions will lead to a loss in concentration and motivation. A 30 minute unscheduled break may entice you to break your study plan for that day. How many of us have justified disruptions by saying *"I'll relax for the rest of the night and work harder tomorrow"???*

- When you finish studying – **CLEAN UP** immediately. You do not want to waste time at the beginning of each study session cleaning up and sorting material. This will only create a state of panic and confusion during high stress periods, and at best, create a "valid" reason to justify procrastination.

File everything away immediately so that you do not waste valuable time searching for items.

If it takes 30 minutes to find your work:

- You have lost 30 minutes of study time.*
- You have lost 30 minutes of leisure time.*
- You will start to panic.*
- You will lose motivation and increase your chance of procrastinating*



Dedicate a shelf or box to each subject and file items away immediately after they are no longer required.

Allocate a box that can be used to store miscellaneous materials for future filing or sorting. This means that if you cannot find an item in the appropriate place, it should be easy to locate in the **UNFILED** box.



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SECTION 2: TIME WASTERS TO AVOID

<p>1. Not planning your meals. It takes time choosing what to eat & ensuring you have the right ingredients in the house.</p>	<p>2. Watching TV out of habit. Do you watch TV because you can't think of anything else to do, are bored or lose track of time?</p>	
<p>3. Social media. Mindless scrolling can soon add up during the day.</p>	<p>4. Not having a visual To Do List. Don't rely on your memory!</p>	<p>5. Not planning in advance. Avoid problems and don't forget appointments.</p>
<p>6. Procrastinating. Don't put things off for another day. Get them done today and feel much better for ticking them off your list at last!</p>	<p>7. Not being organised. Stop running around like a headless chicken. Plan, prepare and give yourself some wiggle room for emergencies.</p>	
<p>8. Overloading. Your calendar and your To Do list. You won't get it all done anyway.</p>	<p>9. Being tempted by distractions. Try to complete one task at a time and not get side-tracked.</p>	<p>10. Not blocking out chunks of time & underestimating how long something will take.</p>
<p>11. Checking emails when you can't action them meaning you have to read them twice instead of just once.</p>	<p>12. Relationships that don't add value. Only invest your time in friendships that are reciprocal and supportive to you both.</p>	
<p>13. Too much multi-tasking so you don't do any of it properly.</p>	<p>14. Not being intentional & asking yourself why you're doing something.</p>	<p>15. Too much clutter needing too much of your time to look after it.</p>
<p>16. Not batching errands and work so you have to make multiple trips or switch between different tasks, lose your place and your focus.</p>	<p>17. Not keeping an ongoing shopping list so you forget what you need, waste time trying to remember or have to go back to the shops again!</p>	
<p>18. Not doing an online weekly shop to save time on multiple trips to the shops.</p>	<p>19. Losing things by not having organised systems in place to help you find things quickly.</p>	<p>20. Prioritising the wrong things because you have no clear purpose or goals.</p>

Telephone interruptions
 Cluttered work space
 Misfiled/misplaced information
 Extended breaks
 Poor planning
 Procrastination
 Waiting/delays
 Junk mail
 Drop-in-visitors
 Not setting/not sticking to priorities

SECTION 3: MORE BENEFICIAL TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

1. Write a To Do List

This can be on paper, on your phone, even a post-it note on the fridge, but definitely write down the things you have to do rather than keep them in your head. A mental list of things to do can easily be forgotten and jumbled. Keep a visual list somewhere you're likely to see it and you'll find it easier to:

Know what needs to be done and keep focused.

See what's most important or urgent.

Cross things off as you go so you can track your progress and stay motivated.

Carry over the things you haven't done to do tomorrow.

2. Use a Calendar

It doesn't matter whether you have a paper calendar that sits in the kitchen or on your desk or you prefer an electronic version but it's helpful to have one somewhere. A calendar will help you plan and remember where you have to be and when you have to be there!

However, a calendar is only useful if you actually use it so I'd suggest making sure that you get into the habit of including everything you have to do in it.

Pop everything down on the calendar so you can see at a glance all that you've got to do. If you find your calendar bulging at the seams and you're too busy for anything, then stop and think about whether you really need to do it all and read on to the point below!

My husband and I also share Google Calendars so we can see what's coming up for both of us. It makes booking appointments, attending school events with the kids or planning our life around work and school so much easier!



3. Be Intentional

One of the most effective ways of managing your time is by learning to say no to things that you don't want to do or don't add value to your life in some way. When you say yes to everything, it's easy to find yourself too busy to catch a breath. You don't get any free time to just do what you want, even if that's to do nothing at all (which is ok too!), and you also leave yourself no wiggle room in case of any problems.

When you say yes to one thing, you're also saying no to something else. Make sure that you're saying yes to things that really deserve your time and learn to say no to things that aren't in alignment with your priorities.



4. Plan

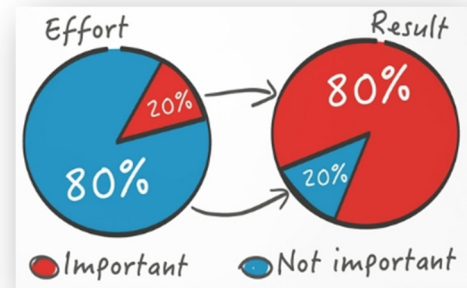
Planning is your friend when it comes to time management. Spend a little bit of time at the start of each week to plan what's coming up for you during that week. Plan your To Do list at the start of each day. Use Sundays to plan, organise and get ahead for the week. Plan your goals for the year, your priorities for the month, study plans for the week etc.

There are lots of ways to plan your life to make it easier, simpler and more efficient. I'm not talking about rigid planning that doesn't allow for anything fun or spontaneous, but general planning to help you keep on top of things with minimal stress.



5. Follow the 80 20 Rule

The 80-20 rule is also known as the Pareto Principle (after the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto who first used it back in 1895). The 80 20 rule states that “80% of the output or results will come from 20% of the input or action”. Putting it another way, the rule suggests that two out of ten items, on any general To Do list, will turn out to be worth more than the other eight items put together.



In terms of time management, this rule is one of the best ways to focus your mind and energy on what you have to do, instead of allowing yourself to be swayed by the things that just shine or shout the loudest! When looking at your To Do List, make sure that you prioritise the tasks that will bring about the best results. Then focus your time on achieving these tasks before moving onto anything else.

6. Eat the Biggest Frog First



Mark Twain once said *“If it’s your job to eat a frog, it’s best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it’s your job to eat two frogs, it’s best to eat the biggest one first.”*

In terms of time management, it’s best to eat the biggest frog first.

The biggest frog is the one job that you don’t want to do. It’s the one you’ll procrastinate over and find a million other things to do instead. But the big frog will still be there at the end of the day, sitting on your To Do list, ready and waiting for you the next day and the next...

Unless you summon up the energy, motivation and willpower to eat the biggest frog first. Once you do, your To Do list will seem so much easier and more manageable. You’ll feel a sense of achievement and feel motivated to carry on. Go on, eat that frog!

7. Deal With Your One Most Important Task First

If I asked you to tell me all the things on your To Do list, I bet there's probably ONE MOST IMPORTANT TASK that stands out above all the others. It may take the longest, be the most urgent, the thing that you keep putting off but keeps reappearing on your list day after day. Whatever it is, one way to make sure it's done is to DO IT FIRST.

Make it your job to do this one task before you do anything else on the list. Get up early, allocate a specific portion of your day or a time slot when you're not going to do anything else but this one most important task. When you've done it, tick it off your list.

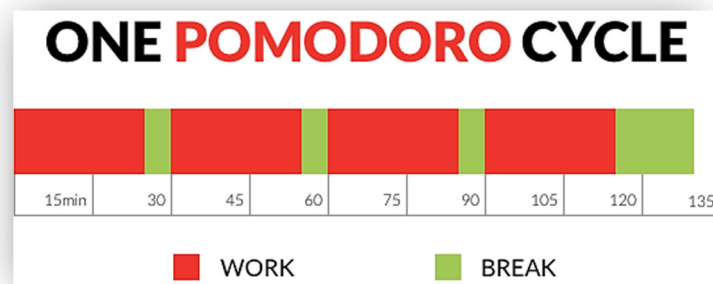
Remember how you feel when you've ticked it off and can feel it dropping from your list, the weight from your shoulders and the thought out of your mind. You'll feel a sense of accomplishment and it will spur you on for the rest of your day! If you do nothing else on your list today, at least you'll know that your one most important task has been done.

8. Eliminate Time Wasters

Things that waste our time take us away from the things that really deserve our attention, but they don't do anything to help us get done what we need so we can do things we want. We do so many things that waste our time but often we're not even aware we're doing them!



9. Use the Pomodoro Technique



The Pomodoro Technique is a time management method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the 1980s. It uses a timer to break down work into intervals, usually 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. Each interval is known as a pomodoro, from the Italian word for 'tomato', after the tomato-shaped kitchen timer that Cirillo used as a university student!

This time management tip works because you're breaking down large tasks into smaller ones that are spaced out with short breaks. It trains the brain to really focus for short periods of time and encourages us to improve our focus and concentration during these times. Spend any longer on a task and your mind tends to wander and we start to get easily distracted. As you're working in short bursts, you're also being consistently productive.

At the end of each pomodoro, you assess what you've achieved and this can boost your motivation. You also appreciate that big tasks can be more easily tackled when they're broken down into smaller, more manageable chunks. Try it for yourself and see how it feels!

Here's how:

Choose a task you need to do.

Set the Pomodoro (the timer) to 25 minutes.

Work on the task until the Pomodoro rings, then put a check on your sheet of paper.

Take a short break (5 minutes is a good length of time).

After every 4 Pomodoro's, take a longer break.

That "longer break" is usually around 15-30 minutes, whatever it takes to make you feel recharged and ready to start another 25-minute work session. Repeat that process as many times as you need and see what you can achieve!

10. Batching

Batching is a great way of being more productive. I use it a lot for managing my website but it applies equally if you're running your home and in the workplace. Batching means grouping together similar tasks and doing them all at once.

Studies have shown that when we switch tasks it can take a while before our brains adapt and get focused on the new task at hand. Our brains are still catching up from the previous tasks and gathering the necessary information to help us with our new task. Hence, not only do we lose focus and concentration but we also lose productivity.

So, exactly why does batching help with time management and productivity?

Well, imagine doing the ironing. You have to get the ironing board out, top up the water levels in the iron, switch the iron on and wait until it's hot. You need to get hangers to hang your ironed clothes on and plenty of space to do the ironing in the first place.

It's more productive to iron lots of items having gone through the effort of all the steps above, rather than just ironing one shirt and then putting the board and iron away, only to repeat it all when you need another shirt ironed.



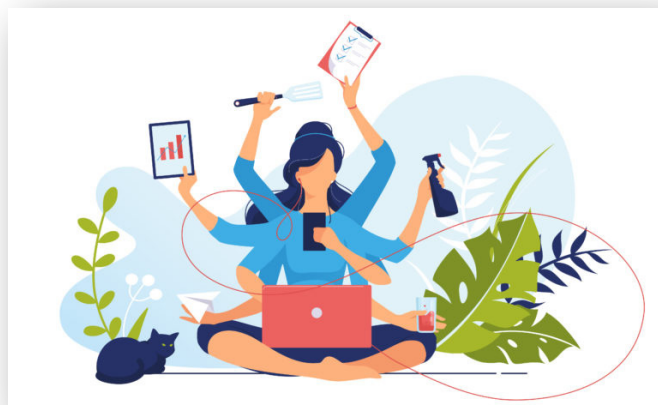
Batching means that any preparation work and set-up is put to maximum use rather than just a one-off. So, whether you're writing emails, doing housework, making phone calls, doing homework or preparing for exams, batching work is the way to go to make the most productive use of your time.

11. Avoid Multi-Tasking

We're often led to believe that multi-tasking is a great skill to master. And it is when you're having to take on board lots of information, in a short space of time. Yet, it's difficult to really focus on any of these tasks in great detail so multi-tasking is only really of benefit to store information to process at a later date or for quick jobs that don't require much detailed thought.

A study from the University of California Irvine found that it takes an average of **23 minutes and 15 seconds** to get back to the task after getting distracted.

So multi-tasking can actually **WASTE** your time because it takes a while for your brain to get back to the task at hand. Focus on one task at a time is a great time management tip to help ensure you're much more likely to get it done, quicker and better.



12. Get Rid of Distractions

In the same way that multi-tasking isn't great for our productivity and efficiency because it makes us lose focus, distractions from the noisy and shiny world around us don't help either for the same reason.

Here are some ideas to reduce distractions that just tempt us into stopping what we're doing and inadvertently finding something more fun or appealing to do!

Turn off all notifications on your phone, computer, and tablet.

Leave your phone in a different room to where you're studying so you can't just quickly check it. Not quite out-of-sight, out-of-mind but nearly!

Work, read or study with noise-cancelling headphones.

The internet is a distracting place. Turn-off your Wi-Fi when your tasks don't require internet connectivity.

Don't browse social media when studying at all. If you can't resist, designate "distraction time" and browse it for a couple of minutes or keep it for your lunch break.

Practice daily meditation because it trains your mind to let go of thoughts which interrupt you so you can centre on just one thing.



13. Delegate

Don't feel that you have to do everything yourself. As parents and siblings to help out by downloading and printing past VCE exam papers and assessor reports, typing notes, proof reading essays, running errands and even searching the internet for resources that will help you with your SACs or exams.

14. Leave Enough Wiggle Room



There's nothing worse than double-booking yourself or arranging appointments, parties and events back-to-back so that you've got no flexibility or, as I call it, 'wiggle room'. Things go wrong, take longer than needed, pop up when you least expect them.

Factor in some down time, or allow more time in between activities and appointments, so you can use it to catch up if and when you need to without stressing yourself out.

15. Set Reminders and Alerts

Use your phone to remind you when to take the dog for a walk, when to get ready for a tute, when your break is up and just before a task needs to be completed.

You're much less likely to forget or run out of time for these things and you can give yourself an extra 5 minutes to get ready rather than running around like a headless chicken trying to get out of the door! You could even set a reminder on your phone for things like meditation, time to read your book.

Don't go overboard, but if there's something that you need or want to do, treat it like it's important and make a time slot for it.

Setting reminders and alerts like these as a time management tip means you can rely on your phone to tell you what you need to do and when, rather than relying on your brain!

16. Write Things Down

If you need to remember something, whether that's something to buy at Officeworks or an invite to a party, write it down. Don't rely on your memory. Too many thoughts will just clutter up your brain and there's a high chance that you'll forget whatever it is when you really need it!

17. Keep a Clock Handy

This may sound like an obvious time management tip but it's an important one for knowing what the time is! You'll be more aware of where you need to be, how long you've spent on things, whether you're running late or early, how much time you've got to do something (even if that's just chilling on the sofa). You won't be able to give yourself or others any excuses such as "I lost track of time" or "I didn't realise what the time was."



18. Practice Punctuality

Some of us prefer to be punctual, even early. Others are always late. Be punctual wherever possible and you won't end up playing catch-up with yourself. Try to be a little early if you can and this is even better! It can help reduce stressful problems such as running late because you got stuck in loads of traffic, your mum couldn't find a parking space or you had to go back home because you forget your bag!

19. Declutter

Not strictly speaking a 'time management tip' but a very effective way of being more productive and efficient. Declutter your home office and desk, your filing system, your email inbox, desktop, photos, stationery, clothes – everything! Keep what you need, save and file the important things, get rid of the stuff that just clutters your space (and your mind).

You'll be able to find things quicker, won't lose as much and your bedroom/study will be much more visually appealing and way less visually distracting.



20. Decide on your Priorities

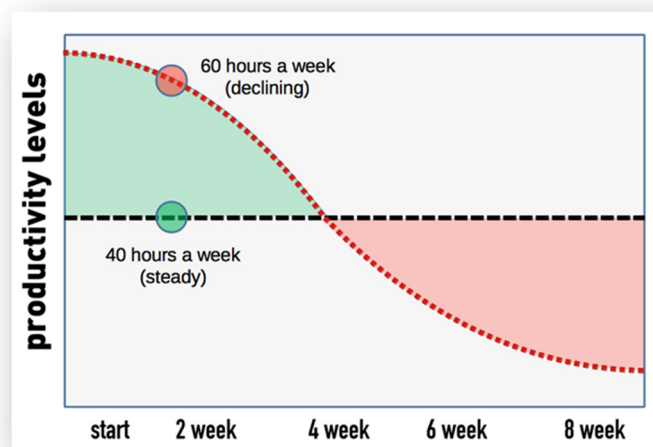
Be clear on your priorities in life, focus on these and stop getting distracted by the things that just shout the loudest from your To Do list or phone. Keep these priorities in mind when you're planning your day, mapping out your To Do list for the day or working out how best to spend the time that you do have. Don't get swayed into doing what other people think is most important and don't get caught up in the little details that you won't really remember next week, let alone next year.

Set yourself some goals, practice daily gratitude or journal to be clear on what's most important to you in life and find a way to make sure that you're doing a little bit every day towards these priorities.

Adapted from www.balancethroughsimplicity.com/20-best-time-management-tips-to-increase-your-productivity/

JUST A FEW MORE TIPS 'FOR THE ROAD'!

- Consolidate similar tasks.
- Tackle tough jobs first.
- Learn to use idle time.
- Learn to say 'no'.
- Engage in creative waste basketry. Live by the maxim: "When in doubt, throw it out. "
- Put together a daily "To Do" list. Use one piece of paper and list all the tasks you need and wish to do each day.
- Start at the top of your list. Work on your most important tasks early and make in-roads on them whenever you have 15 minutes of uninterrupted time.
- Take time to plan. Although every hour spent in effective planning saves three to four hours in labour, few people are willing to take that time. Just as it takes money to make money, it takes time to make time.
- Maximise productivity by spreading out your studies across a longer period of time rather than studying long hours in the last minute trying to complete your tasks.



$$\begin{array}{r} \text{STUDENT} \\ + \text{DYING} \\ \hline = \underline{\underline{\text{STUDYING}}} \end{array}$$

SECTION 4: STUDY TIMETABLES & STUDY SPACES



HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD I SPEND ON HOMEWORK/PERSONAL STUDY EACH NIGHT?

VCE students should be dedicating at least four weeknights and one day over the weekend for study purposes.

Weekday study periods should be in the order of 3-4 hours (2.5 hours for Year 11 students) and approximately 8 hours over the weekend (6 hours for Year 11 students). i.e.

- Year 12 students should spend between 20 and 24 hours on personal study each week.
- Year 11 students should spend at least 16 hours on personal study each week.

What's classified as personal study?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ✓ School assigned homework | ✓ Working through exam questions |
| ✓ Learning materials off by heart | ✓ Revising course materials |
| ✓ Essays/assignments | ✓ Weekly tuition classes |
| ✓ Getting ahead | ✓ Lectures |
| ✓ Preparing for tests and exams | ✓ Private tuition |

Ideal study nights:

- Monday – Thursday with Friday evening off.
- A four-hour study session (3 hours for Year 11 students) on Saturday morning, followed by a one to two hour break and then another four hour study session (3 hours for Year 11 students).

Note: Timetables will depend upon individual commitments and concentration levels.

WHAT SHOULD I DO DURING MY STUDY SESSIONS?

The ideal order of priorities:

1. Prepare for imminent SACs and exams.
2. Complete any homework that was issued that day. If you're stretched on time, complete the homework relating to the subjects that have classes on the following day.
3. If no homework has been issued in a subject, spend 10 minutes per hour spent at school on that subject revising the materials that were presented that day.
4. Work through past examination questions.
5. Read topic materials ahead of school.
6. Revise topics that were covered earlier in the year.
7. Write summaries or flash cards on recently covered materials whilst this information is still fresh in mind.

In the weeks leading up to your exams, spend at least 10 minutes each night reading your English texts OUT LOUD.

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HOW DO I STRUCTURE A STUDY TIMETABLE?

When planning a timetable, take the following points into consideration:

- Your personal commitments including sporting activities and part-time work.
- Our body moves through a daily cycle of high and low energy. At certain times of the day and night, we can feel energetic or lethargic and everything in between.

Don't attempt any study during your low energy periods. Use this time to eat, relax or to do some exercise. High energy periods should be reserved for the more difficult tasks.

Identify the times you study best and incorporate these times into your study timetable. Don't worry about other student's study regimes.

- Study at the same time each day so that you create firm and regular study regimes.
- Include time for relaxation, revision, preparation of study notes, working through past exam questions and the completion of homework.
- Optimum efficiency is obtained when learning time is divided into 40-50 minute blocks, followed by a 10 minute break.
- If you become restless – take a break. Don't waste valuable study time day-dreaming. There are better things out there to do!
- Stop studying when you feel tired or begin losing concentration.
- Allocate a time limit in which to complete each individual task. Work tends to expand and fill the time that is available for its completion!
- Always allocate more time to complete a task than what is required. This serves several purposes:

If you finish your work ahead of time you will find that you will feel more in control. Your confidence will increase and you will become more motivated in your studies.

You will find more time for rest or relaxation. On the other hand, you can use the free time to compile study notes and prepare for the forthcoming examinations!

If your tasks take longer than what you expected, you will have additional time up your sleeve, and you will not fall behind schedule.

- Don't study late at night as concentration levels usually decrease throughout the day.

**List and complete tasks according to priority.
Make sure that you divide tasks into small digestible portions.**

- Set study goals before you begin studying each day.
- Start with the easiest task or one that requires the least amount of concentration.
- Start large tasks ahead of time. Don't leave these tasks to the last minute.
- Underset your task lists to ensure completion. This will also help with motivation, and will provide you with a great sense of achievement when all your assigned tasks are completed.
- Bring interest into the materials being studied as well as a sense of purpose to each task.
- Regularly ask questions. This will keep you focused and hopefully increase your interest in each task.
- Give yourself small rewards as each task is completed.
- Pass out your timetable to family and friends so that they know when not to interrupt you.

Additional Hints:

- If necessary, start with short study periods and slowly build up to longer sessions.
- Take advantage of free time during the school day. Use this time to revise new materials and to read materials in advance of school.
- Trade time to compensate for unexpected events. For example, if an unexpected visitor drops in and takes up 2 hours of your time, add two hours to your study schedule to compensate for the loss.
- Construct daily and weekly lists of tasks to be completed.
- For easy access and reference, carry daily timetables on small cards.
- Regularly review your performance.
- Record your study behaviour so you can easily identify distractions and the conditions that work best.

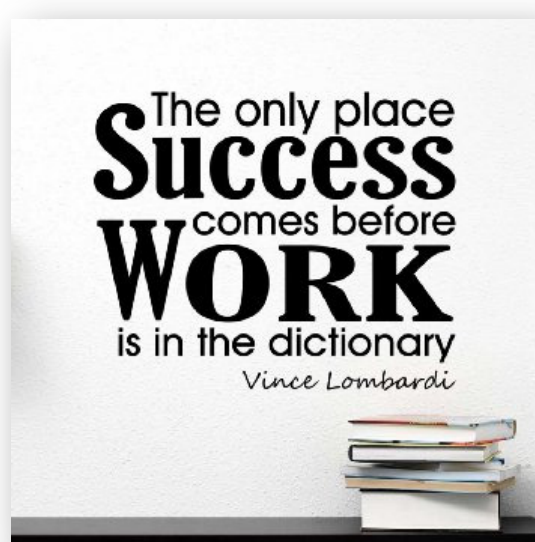
Try not to break your study timetables. The longer that you stick to a timetable, the easier it becomes to commit to study related activities.

SAMPLE TIMETABLE – WEEKNIGHTS

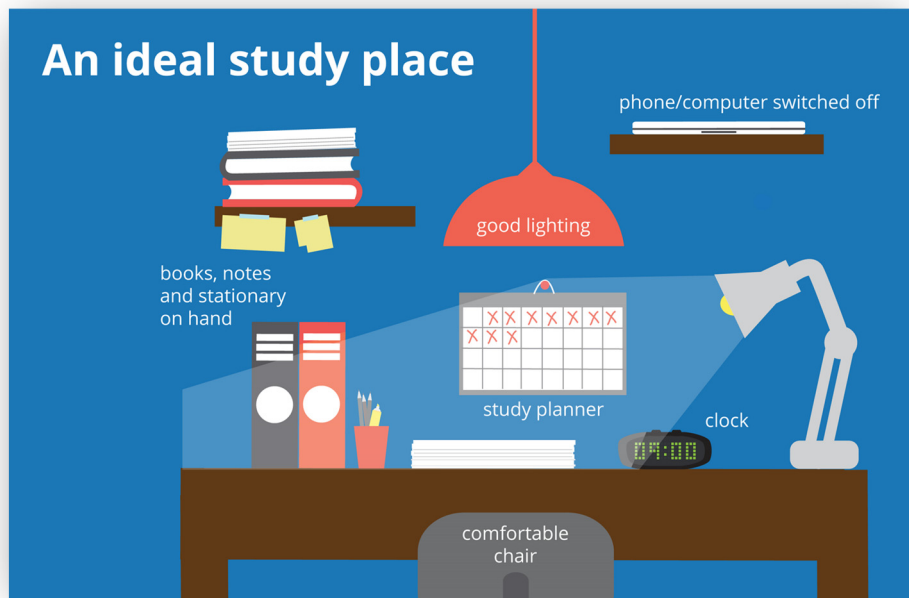
**A 4 hour weeknight study schedule
(where there are NO personal commitments)**

Morning	Read materials ahead of class OR Revise materials (30 minutes).
3.30pm	Finish school. Whilst travelling back home – revise materials for the subjects in which you don't have any homework (30 minutes) OR Read the sections of work that you had difficulty understanding OR Read ahead of class.
4.30pm	Arrive home, shower and eat. Don't leave much of a time gap between leaving school and getting home, otherwise, you'll probably lose motivation and/or procrastinate.
5pm	Start your homework. Remember to commence the finite and quickest tasks first.
6.30pm	Take a break.
7pm	Start homework session 2.
8.30pm	Finish study for the day.

Remainder of Evening = Free Time



STUDY SPACES



- Allocate one room to study related activities. Don't use this room to relax, engage in conversations or sleep. This will help you associate this location with studying, and assist with concentration.

If you must study in your bedroom, arrange your desk so that the bed and any items associated with relaxation are not in your direct view.

- Ensure that your study environment has the following:
 - Good lighting.
 - Good ventilation.
 - A comfortable chair.
 - An area to spread your work out.
 - No distractions such as TV's, radios, telephones.
 - Sufficient stationery and study tools.
 - Enough snacks to ensure that you get through the allocated study time.
- Organise your desk before commencing study and remove all distractions.
- Allocate a set amount of time to your task, and stick to the time allotment before taking a break.

SECTION 5: ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES IN THIS BOOKLET

EXERCISE 1: TIME MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

0 – 1 Yes Responses

Congratulations! Your score indicates that you are very good at managing your time. Others can learn from your effective time management techniques.

2 – 4 Yes Responses

Reasonable, but no cause to be complacent. While you mostly know how to prioritise your workload, you still struggle occasionally. Start working on those YES responses.

5 – 7 Yes Responses

Addressing the YES responses will see heavy workloads become very manageable.

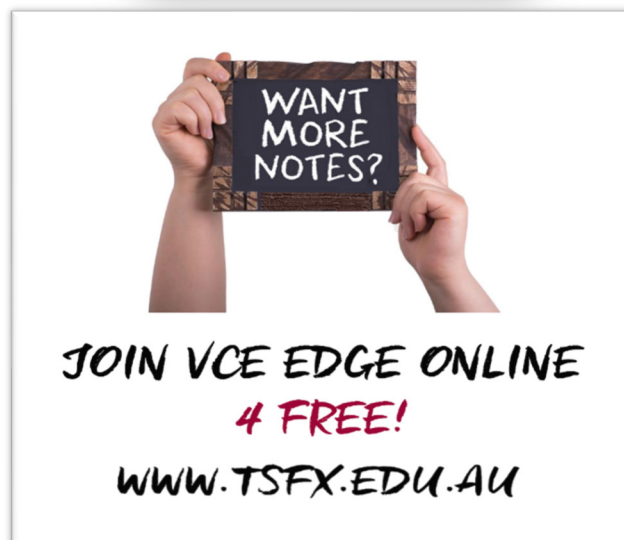
8 – 13 Yes Responses

It really is time you managed your time more effectively! Go through this booklet at regular intervals and make those necessary changes.

Over 13 Yes Responses

You urgently need to make changes. A time management workshop or training would be most appropriate.

WHAT'S A VCE STUDENT'S GREATEST ENEMY?



EXERCISE 2: STUDY-RELATED TIME-SAVING STRATEGIES

Some Suggestions Include:

- Don't write notes – use your text books or TSFX notes instead.
- If you must write notes, do so after revising the materials or on the same day that you covered the materials in class. This will save huge amounts of time.
- Attend head start and exam revision lectures – it's always faster to have an experienced VCE teacher take you through the head start/revision process as compared to doing it on your own.
- Don't write your own notes – purchase a copy instead.
- Work through past VCE exam questions as you complete each topic at school.
- Spend 15 minutes each day committing information to memory or revising previously learned materials. There are about 260 days between the first day of school and the written VCE English examination, which means that you can complete 65 hours of exam preparation before officially starting to prepare for the exams!
- Revise materials on a regular basis so there is no need to relearn topics before the exams.
- If you can't find the time to write English essays each week, read quality A/A+ English essay response essays out loud (visit VCE Edge Online for sample A/A+ essays).

The Ultimate ATAR Calculator



At TSFX, we've got VCE's most advanced **ATAR calculator!**

Enter your estimated raw study score for each subject and our **ATAR calculator** will determine your scaled study scores based on last year's VTAC data, and generate your estimated ATAR. You'll also see what Victorian courses you can get into.

Use the **Study Score Predictor (Reverse ATAR Calculator)** to explore the study scores you'll need and find out how hard you'll need to study to achieve your ATAR goal.

The **Study Score Predictor** uses your performance in last year's VCE exam to predict what study score you're likely to obtain.

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**WRITTEN BY VCE EXAM ASSESSORS (VCAA) – NOT
INEXPERIENCED UNI STUDENTS!**

What do experienced VCE Exam Assessors find most important in the Study Design?

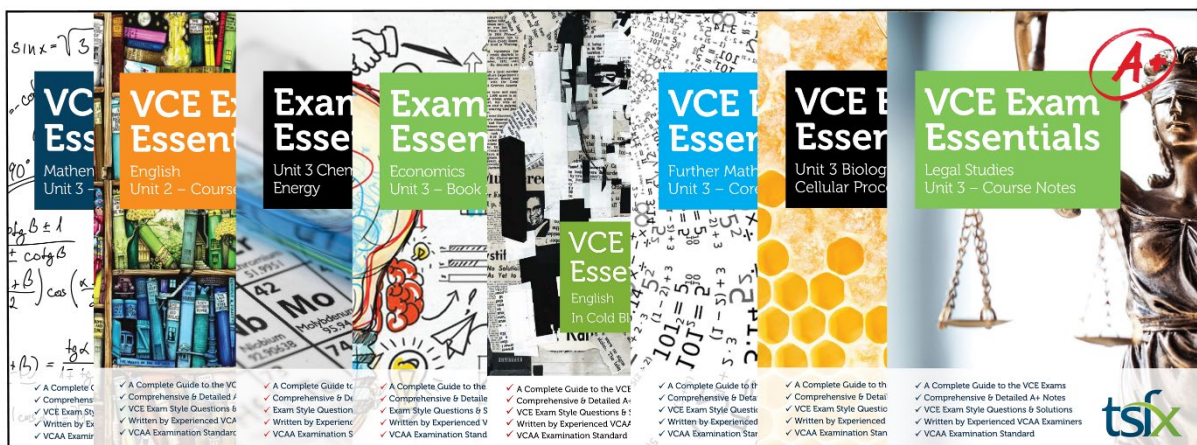
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TSFX Programs: Designed to Help You Achieve Your ATAR Goal

Who is TSFX?

TSFX is a leading Australian provider of **high-quality** educational courses, resources and services for VCE students. We offer examination revision programs, intense weekly tuition classes, study skills and exam strategy lectures as well as specialised courses that prepare students in advance of each school term. Each program is developed and delivered by experienced, qualified teachers who are **official VCE exam markers (VCAA)** – the very same people who will be marking your final VCE exams! Courses are available to attend in person (face-to-face) or to view online (live streams & video on demand).

Our Role

The role of TSFX is to **build on** the learning that takes place in schools and to give students the opportunity to strengthen their understanding of examinable materials – increasing confidence, reducing procrastination, stress levels & study time, and **greatly improving** their VCE marks.



Head Start Programs: Get Ahead. Reduce Stress & Study. Maximise VCE Marks.

Summer School = Unit 1 & Unit 3 (Held in January)

Winter School = Unit 2 & Unit 4 (Held in July)

Our **'Head Start'** programs are specifically designed to give you the tools and information to **maximise your SAC marks**, and secure the **highest possible subject ranks** in your Unit 3 & 4 studies.

You will work through course materials ahead of school in a thorough, time-efficient and relatively painless way. You will also get **advance exposure** to a wide range of SAC and exam-style questions, learn key **problem-solving/application skills**, discover the **most effective** way to prepare for your SACs & how to make your poster/essay/project style SACs **stand out** and above the works submitted by your subject peers. You'll leave our **'Head Start'** lectures **well prepared** for your first round of SACs; giving you a **huge edge** in the VCE.

Advanced Study Skills & Exam Strategy Lectures

Maximising Your VCE Marks = Year 11 & 12 Students (Held in January)

Mastering the Exams = Year 11 & 12 Students (Held in July & September)

Our **study skills & exam strategy** lectures are designed to motivate, empower & organise students and to ensure they have the correct skills & information to secure the highest possible SAC and examination marks.

You will also learn how average students get **90+ ATARs** & how you can use the same strategies to reduce stress, decrease the time you spend studying & **reach your full potential** in the VCE.

Backed by the latest findings in neuroscience and cognitive psychology, these **exclusive programs** will show you step-by-step, topic by topic, and tool by tool, what you really need to know in order to **ace your VCE**.

These highly beneficial lectures **guarantee to improve** academic performance & should not be missed!



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Reach Your Full Potential in the VCE

VCE Master Classes: Achieve Your ATAR Goal!

Unit 1 & Unit 3 Master Classes = Classes Run Between February & April
Unit 2 & Unit 4 Master Classes = Classes Run Between July & September

Our **VCE Master Classes** are **powerfully effective** weekly tuition classes designed to extend each students' potential & ensure they achieve **exceptional academic success** – be that a two-grade improvement or the elite **A+** scores. This program also enables students to complete their exam preparations well ahead of their VCE peers, reducing stress levels and study loads in the challenging weeks before the final exams.

Students attending our **VCE Master Classes** consistently achieve impressive results each year. The **median ATAR** obtained by the students attending our **VCE Master Classes** in 2021 was **94.70**, with **78.6%** of students receiving an **ATAR of 90 or above**, even though many had been previously getting average or below average marks!



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VCE Exam Revision Lectures

Dates: Held in September & October

Students can save **significant amounts** of stress and time before their exams by having an experienced VCE teacher guide them through the revision process.

Our '**VCE Exam Revision Lectures**' have been designed with this purpose in mind, and to give students the skills and information they'll need to perform to the **highest possible standard** in their final exams.

When you attend our '**VCE Exam Revision Lectures**' you will review and then **extend** on the materials covered at school to VCE exam standard, find out how & where students lose valuable marks & discover the **trick & traps** that could appear in your exams. You will also learn about the **exam marking schemes** used by VCE exam assessors & how to structure exam responses that will be awarded **full marks** & practice a variety of problem solving & analytical skills to **further boost** your exam marks.

Every student also receives a thorough set of **A+ notes** that will save you hundreds of hours in study time!

Save Huge Amounts of Time

Not only will every hour you invest in our programs **improve your SAC marks**, you'll also reduce the time and effort you'll need to **prepare for your exams!**

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Students who attend our programs receive **extended, unlimited & unrestricted** access to recordings of their enrolled lectures until **after** their end-of-year exams*. **NO OTHER VCE** program provider gives students access to their recordings to **fast track** preparations for, and to **maximise** both their SAC & examination marks.

* Recordings of Head Start lectures are available until 30 June (Unit 1 & 3) & the end of Term 3 (Unit 2 & 4).

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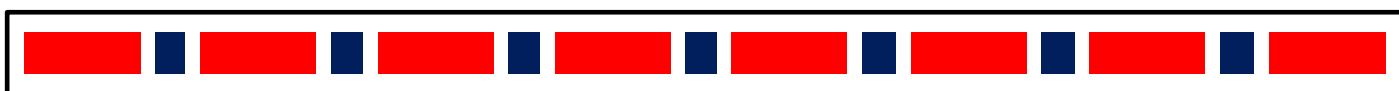
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Learn from the Absolute Best

To ensure you receive every possible **advantage in the VCE**, our lectures & VCE Master Classes are prepared and delivered by hand-picked, qualified, experienced VCE teachers from top performing schools (not university students). Our teachers include authors of VCE texts and study guides, writers and markers (**VCE exam assessors**) of your VCE exams, as well as **leading experts** in their subject fields.

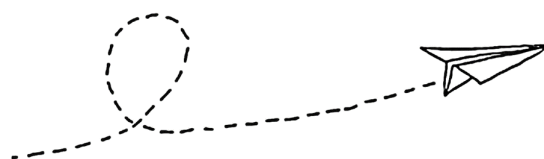
TSFX Program Calendar

Month	Program	Program Type	Year Level(s)	Unit(s)
January	Summer School	Head Start Program	11 & 12	1 & 3
	Maximising Your VCE Marks	Advanced Study Skills Program	11 & 12	All Units
February	VCE Master Classes	Intensive Weekly Tuition Classes	11 & 12	1 & 3
March	VCE Master Classes	Intensive Weekly Tuition Classes	11 & 12	1 & 3
April	VCE Master Classes	Intensive Weekly Tuition Classes	11 & 12	1 & 3
May	VCE Exam Booster Classes	Mastery of Exam Skills & Strategies	11 & 12	1 & 3
June	VCE Exam Booster Classes	Mastery of Exam Skills & Strategies	11 & 12	1 & 3
	Maximising Examination Marks	Advanced Exam Skills & Strategies	11 & 12	All Units
July	Winter School	Head Start Program	11 & 12	2 & 4
	VCE Master Classes	Intensive Weekly Tuition Classes	11 & 12	2 & 4
August	VCE Master Classes	Intensive Weekly Tuition Classes	11 & 12	2 & 4
September	VCE Master Classes	Intensive Weekly Tuition Classes	11 & 12	2 & 4
	VCE Exam Revision Lectures	Preparation for the Exams	11 & 12	2, 3 & 4
October	VCE Exam Revision Lectures	Exam Revision Program	11 & 12	2, 3 & 4
	VCE Exam Booster Classes	Mastery of Exam Skills & Strategies	11 & 12	2 & 4
November	No Programs	<i>Dream. Believe. Commit. Succeed.</i>		
December	No Programs			



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