

9 November 2021

Dear Year 11 students and parents/carers

I am writing to you today with some advice and support around time management during the exam period, and for Year 11 generally. I really struggled when preparing for exams, so I would like to offer some tips that have been tried and tested and found to be really useful.

Good 'time managers' achieve more and experience less stress because they have a better balance between life and work. When you are under exam stress, you will need some good strategies to manage your time. Therefore, I will also share some tips to use when you're not in school. If you get into the right time management habits now, you will achieve more and be more relaxed than those who don't.

Firstly, please answer the following questions honestly:

Do you ever seem to run out of time to do all the things that you want to do?

Do you see other people achieving more with their lives than you do?

Do you think you might need to be better at managing your time now and in the future?

If you said yes to any of these questions you need some tips on managing your time.

TIP 1: 'Eat that Frog'



Brian Tracey wrote a great time management book entitled Eat That Frog. The basic premise of his book is that there are horrible, boring things that we have to do in life, which he refers to as 'frogs'. This might include household chores, such as tidying up, or even doing your homework. Frogs are unpleasant to eat, so if, by law, you had to eat one every day, Brian Tracy poses the question: When would be the best time to eat it? The answer is obvious; eat that frog first thing in the morning. Get it eaten and out of the way so you can enjoy the rest of your day. Don't be the kind of person who puts things off until later or tomorrow meaning that you will have seven frogs to eat by the end of the week! People who put things off are called procrastinators.

So what is the lesson here? Don't let things pile up, such as schoolwork, homework, or even the cleaning up. Don't be a procrastinator; ensure that you tackle your frogs as you go along, and you won't feel overwhelmed or fall behind.

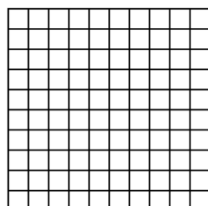
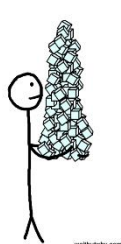
The author says this in the book: *"Your ability to select your most important task at each moment, and then to get started on that task and to get it done both quickly and well, will probably have more of an impact on your success than any other quality or skill you can develop."*

It is tempting to do things that are fun and easy all of the time, such as being on your phone or playing computer games but doing too much of this will get you into bad habits. You must learn to manage some of the less fun, more boring stuff too as this is what builds your knowledge and your character.

TIP 2: Plan Your Time in Advance

Each week we all have the same amount of time – 168 hours. In our ‘awake’ time we need to schedule things otherwise we might forget to do them. This isn’t just about doing the urgent things that need doing straight away, it is also about doing the things that are not urgent but are important. This includes exercise, studying, socialising and helping your family or others in your community.

So what’s the best way to plan your time in advance? Answer: Make a schedule.



Here’s a great way of scheduling your time. Most people sleep about eight hours a night, which leaves 16 ‘awake’ hours each day, or about 1,000 minutes. According to Tim Urban the creator of a website called waitbutwhy.com, we can break these 1,000 minutes down into one hundred 10-minute blocks, such as in the diagram on the left.

This is a really simple way to think about time and helps us to get more done while reducing anxiety at the same time. For example, if you get into the habit of allocating two blocks for reading before you go to sleep each night (which represents 20 minutes), this will mean that you will read 15 more books a year than you would have done otherwise! You can choose to allocate as many blocks as you want a day to anything you want to achieve. This includes exercise, studying, and those frogs we talked about earlier.

Try this exercise to see if you are managing your time well – please see me if you require print outs to help with this.

Be honest and write down how you spent each of your blocks yesterday. Once you have finished, consider whether your day had the right balance. Did you spend enough/any time on reading? Studying? Exercise? Did you spend too much time on your phone? Playing computer games? Watching Youtube clips? If you don’t think you’ve got the right balance, plan tomorrow’s time in a better way. Choose and stick to the time when you’ll exercise or study. Allocate a few blocks to these things and you’ll find that you’ll enjoy your leisure activities even more because you’ll be keeping on top of the things that you know deep down that you must do to ensure you do well at school and beyond.

TIP 3: Talk about Time

Ask parents and other adults you know how they manage their time. Ask those who you especially think seem to have what is known as a ‘good life-balance’. In other words, they manage the time spent on their work, families, socialising and hobbies really well. If you know someone like this, ask them; how do you manage your time? They might use a diary, or a calendar, or use other strategies that they may have on their smartphone, for example. Ask them to show you their strategies and give you some tips, or even better use a block or two of time to set up an appointment with them.



In Summary

- Learn to eat your frogs.
- Plan your time in time in advance and create a schedule.
- Talk to others about time and what tips they have learned.

A final thought about time from Denis Waitley, a well-known motivational speaker and writer:

“Time is the most precious element of human existence. The successful person knows how to put energy into time and how to draw success from time.”

Finally, I would like to wish you all the best for the rest of this year.

Yours faithfully

Mr S Martin
Head of Year 11

* This resource was created by Andy Griffith, Director of Malit in the Community, who we have been working with at Appleton Academy.