



## Lesson: Time Management

This lesson looks at the benefits of good time management and the consequences of bad time management. It also suggests ways in which students could manage their own time in a better way.

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

**Time:** about 90 mins

**How to use this lesson:**

This lesson is designed to be done in class. If desired, Worksheet A could be given out in advance of the lesson. Students could then do exercises 1 and 2 for homework. Make sure you allow plenty of time in the lesson for discussion.

## Worksheet A

- 1 This first exercise introduces some vocabulary that students can use in this lesson. Tell students to work alone, at least initially, and to try to fill in the gaps. They should fill in the words that they feel more sure about. After a minute or so, allow students to compare notes in pairs and try to complete the text together. They will need a further 2-3 minutes for this.

Elicit answers from the class, giving a brief definition or translation of new words as you go. Don't discuss the ideas presented here in great detail at this point because students will have the chance to do that in exercise 2.

Finally, ask students to give you examples of their own using the target words. Encourage them to note the way the words are used in sentences (for example, submit + *object*, rely on, get a reputation *for*, job prospects; suffer *from*).

**Answers**

1	submit	3	consequences	5	efficient	7	suffer
2	relies	4	reputation	6	prospects	8	stress

- 2 Give students 2-3 minutes to write their answers in note form. Elicit answers from as many students as possible and open this up into a class discussion. The aim at this point is to discuss some of the good and bad consequences of time management (or the lack of time management). Suggestions will be dealt with later in the lesson so don't spend too much time analysing those here.
- 3 Begin by going through the lists and making sure students understand all of them. Then put students in pairs and ask them to decide who will take each column. Allow 2-3 minutes for students to think of any further points of their own and note them down.

Give students a further 2-3 minutes to compare their answers in pairs. Follow up by asking questions such as:

- ▶ *Did anyone add points of their own? (What did you add? What did you number it?)*
- ▶ *What did you put for number 1? / What are your top three points? Why?*
- ▶ *What's at the bottom of your list? Why?*
- ▶ *Why do you think ... is more/less important than...?*
- ▶ *In what way (is bad time management a sign of weakness? / does good time management make you feel better about yourself?)*
- ▶ *Do you think that good time management is important? Why? / Why not?*

Encourage students to comment on what other people say. Note that you do not need to get every student to tell you the exact order they have put the items in. Focus instead on the most and least important things according to each student.





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### Worksheet B

Use the exercises on this worksheet as an opportunity for students to practise the vocabulary that has arisen in the lesson so far.

- Put students in groups of 3-4. Briefly run through all the points, making sure students understand them. Tell students to discuss suggestions for each of the points. Allow up to five minutes initially for groups to discuss the points (you can add more time if necessary). Remind students to keep their suggestions on the subject of *time management* and tell them that you are going to ask them to report their suggestions to the rest of the class.

When groups finish their discussion, ask them to report what they have discussed. Encourage comments from other members of the class.

#### Suggested answers/prompts

Groups may well come up with different answers to those given here, in which case, use these to prompt further discussion.

- Simply going to bed an hour earlier might help, as could a more flexible approach to working hours from the employer.
  - Talking to family members and planning your time to use the house when it's quiet can make sure you don't get interruptions.
  - Arranging things to do in the evenings or joining a club or society can help you get a proper break and use your free time wisely.
  - Stress is often a result of working under pressure. A lot of pressure can be removed if you start on projects earlier, do a little every day, and generally manage your time well. Planning is important.
  - Making time for your loved ones is important in a relationship. It takes effort but many people believe that it is essential.
  - Again, planning to work when it's quiet will cut down on interruptions. Sometimes discipline is the answer, perhaps deciding that you will work on something for one hour and not allow anything to distract you. Music can block out some noise but it can be a distraction in itself.
- Make sure students understand what they need to do. Lists like these can be reduced to just bullet points, while other articles give an explanation of the meaning of each bullet point. Tell students that they have the bullet points but they need to give more information for each tip. This can be in the form of examples, as given in the first tip, or explanations, as in the second tip.

Go through the first two tips saying something like:

- ▶ *The first tip says we should avoid distractions and interruptions, and one way to do this would be to hang a 'Do not disturb' sign on your door.*
- ▶ *The second tip says making our time count is important. This is because some people waste a lot of time when they should be working.*

Follow this by asking for further suggestions for the first two tips (see *suggested answers/prompts* below).

Allow 5-10 minutes for students to add notes. They should work alone for this. If students cannot find anything to say about a tip, you could prompt them with the *Suggested answers/prompts*.

When they have finished, put them in pairs and ask them to compare notes and choose two tips each. Tell them to choose the tips that they can say the most about. They can 'borrow' notes from their partner for this.

Finally, choose one pair and ask them to take turns presenting their tips to the class. You could give them an example of what you want them to say based on the first tip. Say something like:

*If you were doing the tip about avoiding distractions and interruptions, you could say:*

*Our first tip is about avoiding distractions and interruptions. One way to do this would be to hang a 'Do not disturb' sign on your door. You could also switch off your mobile phone. Listening to music might also help to block out noise.*

Repeat for each pair, inviting comments from the rest of the class. Note that in a very large class, this might become repetitive, so you could ask each student to present just one tip.





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### Grammar note

You may wish to draw attention to the following.

When tips are written down, they usually take the imperative form (*Avoid distractions / Make your time count*). There are several ways to talk about tips without the need to change the verb, e.g. *We need to avoid distractions / It's important to avoid distractions / We should avoid distractions*.

However, when students come to talk about the tips, they may need to make changes, especially with negative imperatives (beginning with 'Don't'). Remind them that in spoken English, they usually need to change the negative form, e.g. *It's important not to ... / We shouldn't ... / It's a bad idea to ..., etc.*

Students also very often need the gerund form when the verb becomes the subject of a sentence, e.g. *Avoiding distractions is important because ... / I don't think avoiding distractions is ....*

Make sure students are aware of these different constructions before they talk. If they make mistakes such as *We need to remember to don't ...* or *I think avoid distractions is important*, remind them that they need a different negative or the gerund form.

### Suggested answers/prompts

- ▶ Avoid distractions and interruptions  
*Turn off your mobile phone. Listen to music to block out noise.*
  - ▶ Make your time count  
*Stop working and do something else if you're not being effective.*
  - ▶ Plan your time  
*Get organised. Set time limits. Do a little every day. Keep a note of how long things take you.*
  - ▶ Don't get overtired  
*You don't work well if you're tired. Get plenty of sleep. Don't drink too much coffee.*
  - ▶ Decide what's most important  
*Some things can wait. Make a list of things to do. Do the urgent things first.*
  - ▶ Find time for yourself  
*See friends. Reward yourself after a productive hour. Join a club.*
  - ▶ Don't forget your family and friends  
*These people are important to you. Make time for them.*
  - ▶ Take regular breaks  
*Nobody can expect to be effective for hours at a time. Go for short walks. Have a shower. Look out of the window.*
- 6 Allow up to five minutes for students to write their top five, working alone. They only need to write the 'bullet' points. When they have finished, put them in pairs to compare their lists. Remind them to use some of the phrases given. Finish by asking several pairs to tell you some of the similarities and differences.
- 7 For the last task, give students a minute or two to look through the tips again and to decide which one is the most useful. Start by asking students to tell you what they have chosen and why. You could write the more popular tips on the board. Finally, ask them whether they plan to manage their time any differently as a result of the information in this lesson.





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### Worksheet A

1 Complete the text using the words in the box.

consequences

prospects

reputation

submit

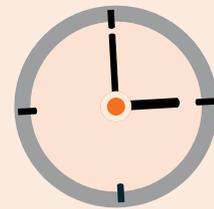
efficient

relies

stress

suffer

## How well do you manage your time?



There is so much to be said in favour of good time management that it's surprising how many people are bad at it. From the school student who always struggles to \_\_\_\_\_ work on time ... to the powerful businessperson who \_\_\_\_\_ on a personal assistant to organise their day, we could all benefit from a more organised approach.

The simple fact is that poor time management can have some terrible \_\_\_\_\_. These include damaged relationships, getting a \_\_\_\_\_ for always being late, and seeing your free time get eaten up.

On the other hand, people who manage their time well are more \_\_\_\_\_, improve their job \_\_\_\_\_, and are known to \_\_\_\_\_ less from sleep problems, anger and \_\_\_\_\_.

2 Answer the questions about the text above.

1 Do you always submit work on time? Why? / Why not?

2 Do you rely on anyone else to organise your time for you? Who?

3 Do you think you would 'benefit from a more organised approach' to time management? Why? / Why not?

4 Have you suffered from any of the bad consequences mentioned here? Which?



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3 Work in pairs. Choose one column each and try to add your own ideas. Then rank the items, putting number 1 as the most important. Discuss your answers.

### Consequences of *bad* time management

- You get a bad reputation
- You have more stress
- Your work is often late
- Your work is not so good
- It's a sign of weakness
- You might make less money
- Your relationships can suffer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Consequences of *good* time management

- It improves your job prospects
- You have more free time
- You finish work on time
- You do better work
- It's more efficient
- It makes you feel better about yourself
- You have more time for other people
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Student's copy

## Worksheet B

4 Work in small groups. Discuss how better time management could help in each of the cases below. Report back to the class.

1. Lack of sleep makes people less efficient and costs companies billions per year.

2. Around 60% of people who work or study at home say they are distracted by other family members.

3. Just under a quarter of all workers say they are unhappy with their work-life balance.

4. As many as 80% of students and workers say they suffer from stress.

5. Nearly half of all top managers say they are too tired to talk to their husbands, wives or partners after a hard day.

6. We need about half an hour to get back to a task after an interruption. Sometimes we never get back to it.



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Student's copy

- 5 Try to add at least one more explanation or example to each tip below, as in the first two tips. Then, with a partner, choose two tips each and present them to the class, using your examples.

### Time management tips

- ▶ Avoid distractions and interruptions  
*Hang a 'Do not disturb' sign on your door.*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Make your time count  
*Some people waste a lot of time when they should be working.*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Plan your time  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Don't get overtired  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Decide what's most important  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Find time for yourself  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Don't forget your family and friends  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Take regular breaks  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 6 Create your own list of five tips for better time management. You can use the ideas from this lesson or your own ideas. Then discuss your list with a partner. Use some of the phrases below.

*I think ... is the most important tip because ...*

*I don't consider ... to be so important because ...*

*I see you have ... as your number one. Why do you ... ?*

*Do you really think that ... is more important than ... ?*

*You haven't mentioned ... – is that because you don't think it's important?*

*I think ... is something most people do anyway.*

*When someone is ... then they need to ...*

*If you don't ..., then you can't ...*

- 7 If you could choose just one change to make to the way you manage your time, what would it be?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

