

What can I do to make the best use of my time  
and develop good study habits?



# Chapter 18

## Time Management and Study Skills

### Key Terms

*time management*  
*time log*  
*IRS time*  
*priorities*  
*procrastination*  
*concentrate*

### Chapter Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

- **examine** how you spend your time by keeping a daily time log.
- **list** five suggestions for making the best use of your time.
- **take** notes that will help you review what you study.
- **identify** helpful tips related to preparing for, taking, and learning from tests.
- **compare** good and poor study habits.

### Key Concepts

- Creating a time log will help you complete important tasks efficiently.
- Taking good notes improves learning.
- Proper test preparation leads to better test scores.
- Good study habits will help you learn more quickly.

# Why Is Time Management Important?

Time management is a skill that is needed throughout life. Adults need to manage the time they spend at work and at home. As a student, you need to manage the time you spend at school as well as studying after school. You need to manage the time you spend with your family and the time you have for other activities, too. This chapter will help you plan and manage your time. It will also help you identify good study habits to help you make the best use of your study time.

## Time Management

Time can be a valuable ally or your worst enemy. Time only moves forward, never backward. You can never recapture misused time or undo what has already happened. Learn to use time as a valuable resource. The way you manage this resource can make the difference between success and failure.

Planning how to use your time is **time management**. It is a key element in your study habits. No one can plan or manage your time but you. Too many people fail to control their use of time. Some people even allow others to use up their time. The key to success, however, is to make wise use of time.

If you are in the habit of wasting time, you can work to break the habit. Managing your time is not a difficult or unpleasant task. Much of your time is planned for you, such as your school and work hours. Your teachers and school officials set the hours you are in school. Your employer determines the time you are assigned to work. It is your job to manage the rest of your time. You might plan for the following activities:

- uninterrupted periods for study
- personal duties and tasks
- relaxation and fun

Most people don't know how they spend their time. They are often surprised to find out how much time they waste. If you are in the habit of wasting time, you should work to break the habit. Do you know how you spend your time? A good way to find out is to keep a daily time log for two weeks. A

**time management**  
Planning and carefully using time.

**time log**

A written record of a person's use of time.

**time log** is a written record of a person's use of time. A sample time log is shown in 18-1. At the end of two weeks, you may be surprised to see how you spent your time.

**18-1**

A time log shows the number of hours used for different activities. It can help you see how much time you are wasting.

Sample Time Log								
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Total
Sleeping	9	8	8	7.5	8.5	7	8	56
Eating	1.5	.75	1	.75	.75	1.25	1.25	7.25
Grooming	1	.5	.75	.75	.75	1	1.25	6
Going to school	0	7	7	7	7	7	0	35
Studying/doing homework	2	1.25	2	1	2.5	0	1	9.75
Working at a job	6	3.5	0	3.5	0	0	6	19
Doing household tasks	.75	.5	0	.25	.25	.25	.75	2.75
Participating in extracurricular activities	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	4
Watching TV/listening to music	.5	1.25	.5	1	0	2	1.25	6.5
Phoning/messaging friends	1.25	.5	1.5	.5	.25	.75	.5	5.25
Visiting friends	0	0	.75	0	1.5	3	3	8.25
Reading and relaxing	0	0	0	.25	0	.25	.5	1
Doing other activities	2	.75	.5	1.5	.5	1.5	.5	7.25

## The Computer and Time Management

Using a computer can help you save time. Creating a time log using a spreadsheet program is quick and easy. If the spreadsheet is set up to perform calculations, it can automatically total the time spent daily, weekly, or monthly on each activity. Using the data from the spreadsheet, you can create graphs that visually demonstrate how your time is spent. Once the time log is created, it is easy to continue tracking your time on a regular basis.

The computer can also be a source of distraction. Instant messaging, checking and sending e-mail, surfing the Internet, visiting social networking sites, and playing computer games can waste valuable time. When creating a time log, schedule separate times for school, work, and leisure computer activities. Make a commitment to stick to your schedule. When you use the computer for studying, sign out of e-mail and instant messaging services to reduce interruptions.

## IRS Time

You know that you cannot create more time. The earth's timetable is fixed at 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 60 minutes an hour, and 60 seconds a minute. How can you get more time for everything you want to do? The answer is to be a better manager of time. One suggestion is to place yourself on IRS time. **IRS time** is defined as Individual Responsibility for Saving time. You take whatever steps are needed to make the best use of your time. The following suggestions may help you:

- Make a to-do list each day. Don't rely on your memory to recall what is important. Get into the habit of writing it down.
- Organize your time according to your priorities. **Priorities** are everything you consider highly important. Tasks that are most important have the highest priority. You should do those first. Using your to-do list, rank each of your tasks. Write A beside each task that you must do. Write B next to the tasks you should do. Use C to mark the tasks you want to do if you have time. Then follow your list. After you finish the A-list, do your Bs and, if time permits, work on your Cs.
- Avoid **procrastination**. In other words, do not delay or put off decisions or activities. Try to work on them right away. Do a little each day on long-term assignments, too. Suppose you are assigned a paper to be completed by the end of the term. Do not wait until the day before it is due to start.



## Making a Difference

It's never too early to start learning time management and study skills. Use a computer to create a booklet that gives helpful advice to students in lower grades. Topics may include managing time, effective studying, and test taking. Ask your teacher to review the booklet before you print a final copy. Contact one of your former teachers who might be interested in providing this information to his or her class.

**IRS time (individual responsibility for saving time)**  
Taking whatever steps are needed to make the best use of time.

**priorities**  
Everything you consider highly important.

**procrastination**  
Delaying decisions or activities.

- Reduce interruptions of your planned study time. If friends call during your study time, exchange a few words, but excuse yourself quickly. Let them know you have something to do. If they are true friends, they will understand. Remember, you cannot recapture lost time. Therefore, get in the habit of telling them you'll call back later. Return immediately to what you were doing before the interruption. Better yet, study in a place where common interruptions cannot occur. Do not let time thieves steal your time, 18-2.
- Focus on one task at a time. It is difficult to focus on your studies while watching television or talking to friends. You can study best when you devote your full attention to it.



## Your Reading

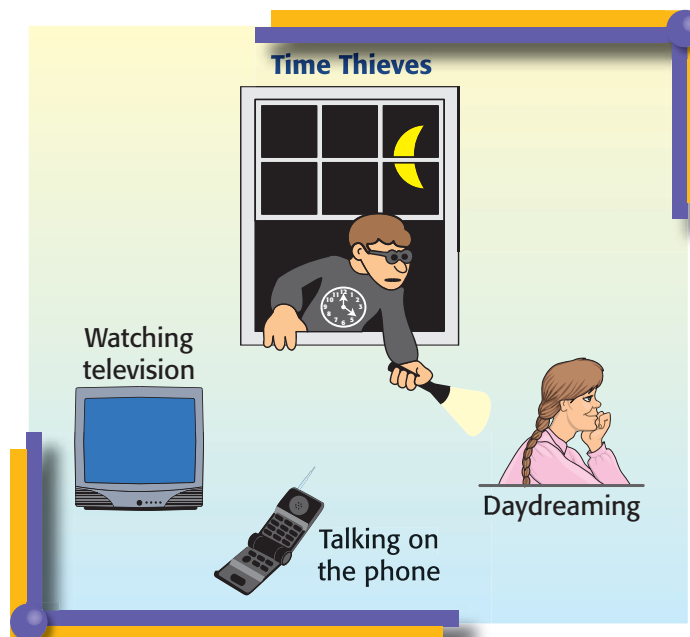
What activities should you include in a time log?

## Study Skills

Many students can improve their study skills. The most common cause of poor study habits is poor use of time. Study periods or study halls are often used as social periods. That is an unwise use of time unless you are working on a team project. The schoolwork that could be accomplished in a study period must then be done after school. One secret to becoming a better student and getting better grades is to use time wisely.

### 18-2

Watching TV, daydreaming, and talking on the phone can be “time thieves” that steal your time from more important activities.



Begin your study period with a positive attitude. A good attitude will help you get right into your study assignment. Make up your mind to tackle the hardest part first. Set a time limit for study, perhaps two hours. Let others know this is your time for study, not interruptions. Avoid trying to study in a noisy crowd. Instead, find a comfortable, quiet place at home, at school, or in the library. In this way, you can get the most accomplished in the least amount of time.

Make sure your desk or tabletop is clear of distractions. Don't leave anything on it that will keep you from your assignment. Put away magazines and books not needed for your assignment. Make sure you have everything you will need to complete the assignment. Gather the necessary books, papers, pens, pencils, and other supplies before you start. See 18-3. Don't waste valuable study time looking for these items while trying to get your assignment done.

The hardest part of any job, even studying, is getting started. Once you sit down, make up your mind to begin. Then concentrate right away on your assignment. To **concentrate** means to focus your attention and effort. Stay

**concentrate**

To focus attention and effort on something.

**18-3**

Good study habits include working in a quiet area with all your supplies at hand.





## Making a Difference

Some students cannot afford basic school supplies. It can be difficult to develop good study habits without access to books, paper, pens, pencils, and highlighters. Organize a classroom project to donate school supplies. Visit [adoptaclassroom.com](http://adoptaclassroom.com) to find a school in need.

involved in what you are doing. Don't waste valuable study time daydreaming or thinking about something else.

Plan to study when you are rested. Being rested is important because a tired person will find it difficult to concentrate. If you can't concentrate, you won't be able to remember what you have read.

Another important study tip is to take a few moments after you study to think about what you have learned. Sometimes you can mentally review the material by just sitting back and recalling the main points. Reflecting on your studies will improve your level of learning.

## Taking Notes

Taking notes is an important study skill to develop. Good notes come in handy when it's time to review what you have studied. They help you recall the important points of information.

Taking notes does not mean writing down every word that is said. In fact, people who are too busy writing generally do not hear everything being said. Try to listen carefully to your teacher or study partner and write down only the key points. Teachers often identify key points with phrases that focus attention, like "the cause was," "the result was," or "to sum up."

When taking notes during a slide show presentation, pay attention to how the text is organized on the slide. Slide show presentations often prioritize content by using main points and indented subpoints. Following the slide format can help you create an outline as you take notes.

## Helpful Tips

The following tips may help you learn to take good notes:

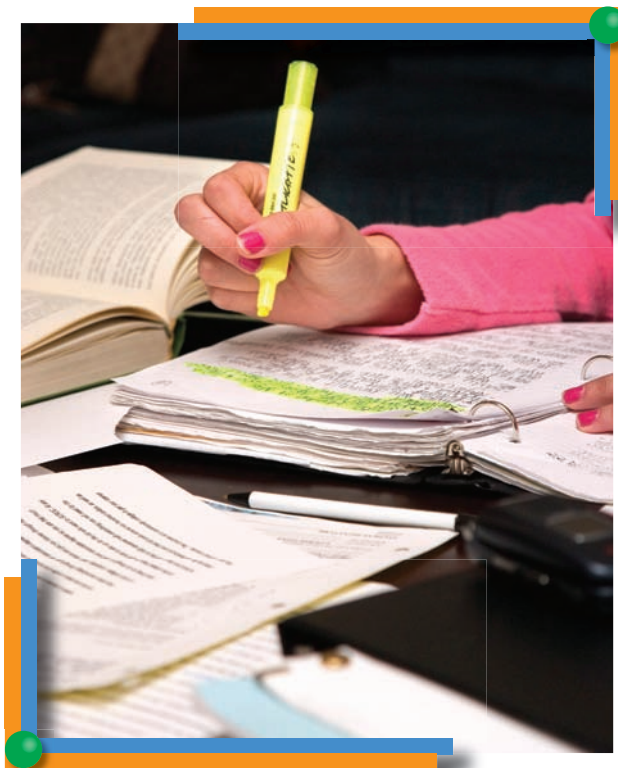
- Use one side of a sheet of paper.
- Number each page, especially for a loose-leaf notebook. It is easy for pages to shift out of order.
- Leave a margin at the top of the page. You can use this space to write key information, such as the date an assignment is due. Also use this space to identify the class, topic, date, and teacher.
- Write only the important points.

- Use an outline format.
- Whenever possible, use symbols and abbreviations. Write = for *equals*, ≠ for *does not equal*, and + for *plus*. You may use other symbols, too, as long as you remember what they mean.
- Write notes to yourself in the margins. They may be questions, suggestions, or reminders.
- Highlight key words when you review your notes, 18-4.
- Keystroke handwritten notes on the computer to review what you learned.

Good study skills will help you on the job, too. Your employer may ask you to attend a meeting and report to coworkers what was discussed. Being able to take good notes will help you prepare your report.

## Using a Computer to Study

Some schools make teacher materials available to students online. Such access is helpful to students who miss a class or just want to review the material that was covered on a certain



### 18-4

Reviewing your notes regularly and highlighting key words will help you remember important concepts.



day. A school's online site can provide access to teacher notes, slide shows, handouts, and other class materials.

The computer can be a very effective study tool when a textbook has a companion Web site. Such sites provide quizzes and learning activities for students to complete at their own pace. These exercises help students review chapter concepts and reinforce their learning.

In some cases, students are able to access their entire textbook online or from a CD. These students do not need their books to study, but can read the text on their computer screens. Some programs even provide sound, which lets students hear the lessons as well as correct pronunciations.

Searching the Internet is an easy way to find additional information about topics you are studying. When conducting Internet research, it is important to use reliable Web sites that have a reputation for providing accurate facts. Your teacher can help you learn to recognize such sites. The information you find online can be used to complete homework assignments, do special projects, and gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, 18-5.

**18-5**

Using the Internet, you can quickly find additional information about the topic you are studying.



## Taking Tests

Tests are given to find out how much you have learned. They provide feedback for both you and your teachers. Tests are not meant to scare you or to make you look bad. Their purpose is to measure how much you know and don't know. Your job is to do your best to show all that you know. To do that, you can't rely on magic or luck. You need to prepare yourself.

### Before the Test

Cramming the night before is not the best way to prepare for a test. You need to keep up with what is being taught in your classes. Studying and doing your homework regularly will help you understand information better and remember it longer. However, you may want to give extra effort to your studies the last few nights before a test. The following tips will help you as you give special attention to test material:

- Review the material in the textbook on a regular basis—daily, if possible.
- Pay particular attention to your notes.
- Try to determine what questions will be asked.
- Recall what kinds of questions were asked on the last test in the class.
- Consider studying with a classmate, taking turns to ask each other questions.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Eat a good breakfast to start the day.

See 18-6 for a summary of good study habits that are wise to develop. The chart also lists some poor study habits to avoid.

### Taking the Test

The way you take a test can affect how well you do on it. The following suggestions may help improve your test performance:

- Be relaxed and have a positive mental attitude.
- Look over the entire test before starting it.
- Read and follow directions carefully.
- Read each test question accurately.

**18-6**

Using good study habits will help you benefit most from your study time.



## Community Connections

Your guidance counselor can be a helpful resource for improving your study skills. Make an appointment to see your guidance counselor. Before the meeting, write a list of questions and concerns that you have about your test-taking skills. At the meeting, discuss the list and ask your counselor to share test-taking hints and stress-relieving techniques.

Good Study Habits	Poor Study Habits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackle the hardest parts first when you sit down to study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study the easiest parts first.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study in a comfortable place where you will not be disturbed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study in a noisy crowd or another area where you will be easily distracted.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear the desk or tabletop of magazines, books, and other objects you are not going to use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study in a cluttered area.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather the books, papers, pens, pencils, and other supplies you need before you start to study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste time looking for books, papers, pens, pencils, and other supplies you need.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When you sit down to study, begin concentrating right away.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow your mind to wander when you sit down to study.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study when you are well rested.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study when you are tired.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a few moments after you study to think about what you have learned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As soon as you finish studying, go on to another activity.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write down only the key points when taking notes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try to write down every word that is said when taking notes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get a good night's sleep before taking a test.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay up late studying the night before a test.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin projects and start studying for tests well in advance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try to cram all your studies into the last minute.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give your studies your full attention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try to do something else while you study, such as watch television.</li> </ul>

- Think before you write your answer.
- If you get stuck on a question, skip it and return later after answering the other questions.
- Before handing in your test, review it and make corrections where necessary.

## When You Get Your Test Back

Learning does not stop once you turn in your test. When you get the test back, you can use it to prepare for future tests. The following suggestions might help you get more from your tests:

- Congratulate yourself for everything you answered correctly.
- Honestly evaluate your test. Were you really prepared?
- Read the teacher's comments and corrections.
- Ask for help on topics that gave you difficulty.

Start preparing immediately for the next test. Learning from your mistakes and reviewing regularly as you study will help you perform well on future tests, 18-7.



### Your Reading

What can you do to improve your concentration when studying?



#### 18-7

Reviewing mistakes can help you identify how to better prepare for your next test.

A circular graphic with a purple background and a white glow effect. The word "Chapter" is written in a light orange, cursive font at the top. Below it, the number "18" is written in a large, bold, orange font.

## Summary

Time management is a key life skill. Although you can't change the amount of time in a day or week, you can change the way you use it. You can learn to make the best use of your time.

Using a computer can help you save time and can assist you when studying. Scheduling specific times for school, work, or leisure activities on the computer will help you use it to your advantage.

Good study habits help you make the most of your study time. They can also help you learn more and get better grades.

Taking notes is a study skill that improves with practice. The key is to listen carefully while writing only the important points.

By taking tests, you find out how much you have learned. You can improve your performance on tests by following certain steps. The steps can help you prepare for tests, take tests with confidence, and learn from the results of the tests.

## Reviewing Key Concepts

1. What is the purpose of a time log?
2. Describe how to avoid wasting time when using the computer.
3. How can you get more time to do everything you want to do?
4. List five suggestions for making the best use of your time.
5. Identify two phrases that teachers often use to highlight key points that should be written down in notes.
6. List three ways to use the information you find online when studying.
7. List five steps to take to prepare for a test.
8. List five tips that can help you perform well during a test.
9. When you get a test back, list three steps to follow for improving your test-taking skills.
10. Rate each of the following study habits *good* or *poor*.
  - A. Clear your desk or tabletop of distractions before beginning.
  - B. Study when you are well rested and alert.
  - C. Start with the easiest part of the task.
  - D. When taking notes, write everything the teacher says.
  - E. Take a few moments after you study to think about what you have learned.



### Building Academic Skills

1. **Math.** Create a time log. Exchange your time log with a classmate. Analyze your classmate's time log to determine what percentage of each day is devoted to various activities.
2. **Writing.** Write a paper about successful habits for studying, note taking, or test taking. Submit it to the school paper.

### Building Technology Skills

1. Use a spreadsheet program to create another type of time log—one that reflects unscheduled times in each day. Make a chart with *Hours of the Day* heading the first column, followed by seven columns—one for each day of the week. Make rows for each hour of the day.
2. E-mail five people and survey them for the following information: how they manage their time, save time, and work efficiently. Compile your list and report your findings to the class.
3. Conduct an online search for ways to take good notes. Write three or four of the best suggestions recommended on the sites you search and note the address of each Web site used. Share your recommendations in class.

### Building Career Knowledge and Skills

1. Ask several people to tell you their best time management tips. Share your tips with the class.
2. Test your concentration. Go to the library and find two newspaper articles that are about equal in length. Study one article in a quiet place for a certain length of time, perhaps 15 minutes. Then write as much about it as you can remember. Later, go to a noisy place or sit in front of a television. Study the second article for the same amount of time. Then write as much about it as you can remember. Compare the results. Which setting allowed you to concentrate better? In class, discuss how study efforts are affected by a person's surroundings.
3. Practice taking notes during classes. Later, compare your notes with those of a classmate to make sure you included all the key points.
4. Keep a daily time log for at least one week. Graph how the time was spent. Identify time wasters and develop a plan to avoid them.
5. Research how to do more tasks more efficiently. Pick one suggestion to try for one week. Record what was done and the time involved. Write a statement summarizing the experience.

### Building Workplace Skills

Do a three-step study to compare how you think you spend your time with how you want to spend it and how you actually spend it. Using a computer, create a time sheet that lists all your activities and allows room for recording times. First, estimate how much time you think you spend with each activity. Then, imagine yourself leading an ideal life and estimate how much time you would like to spend on each activity. Finally, keep a daily log for two weeks to find out how you actually spend your time. Write a brief report about what you learned from this exercise. Include ideas on how you could improve your time management.