



Project and Time Management Top Tips

The Task(s)

Make sure you understand what is expected of you for each task. This includes any deadlines, specific requirements and especially in the case of large research projects like the EPQ, what an A* grade looks like. If you're confused by the task or need more clarification don't hesitate to ask the teacher in charge of the project and/or your supervisor.

Brainstorming or Defining the Task

If you can choose your own research question:

- Make sure you have a genuine interest in the topic
- What is already known about the topic?
- Is there enough literature available on this topic?
- Can you identify your aims and objectives clearly and concisely?

If the question has been given and/or you have to answer a specific question(s):

1. **Analyse it** – make sure you understand the language and terms being used, including the context. If you are unsure – ask!
2. **Think about it** – what do you already know? How would you go about researching it? What is the argument/requirement? What are the different ways you could answer the question(s)?
3. **Stick it up** – using a sticky note, keep the question(s) within your line of sight wherever you study. That way you'll be more likely to stay on track and not deviate from the original research question(s).

To help with any task, try a few note-taking methods such as brainstorming, mind mapping and making lists. Together they can make it easier to understand the context of your topic, what you already know, what you need to know and where to go next.

Activities you can try:

- Question Instruction Word Glossary: (created by: Faculty of Arts, University of Leeds)
<http://arts.leeds.ac.uk/uploads/studyskills2/Glossary/engage.swf>
- Interpreting the Task: (Skills@Library)
<http://library.leeds.ac.uk/tutorials/activities/reading/interpreting-task/>
- Note-Taking: (Skills@Library)
<http://library.leeds.ac.uk/skills-note-taking>

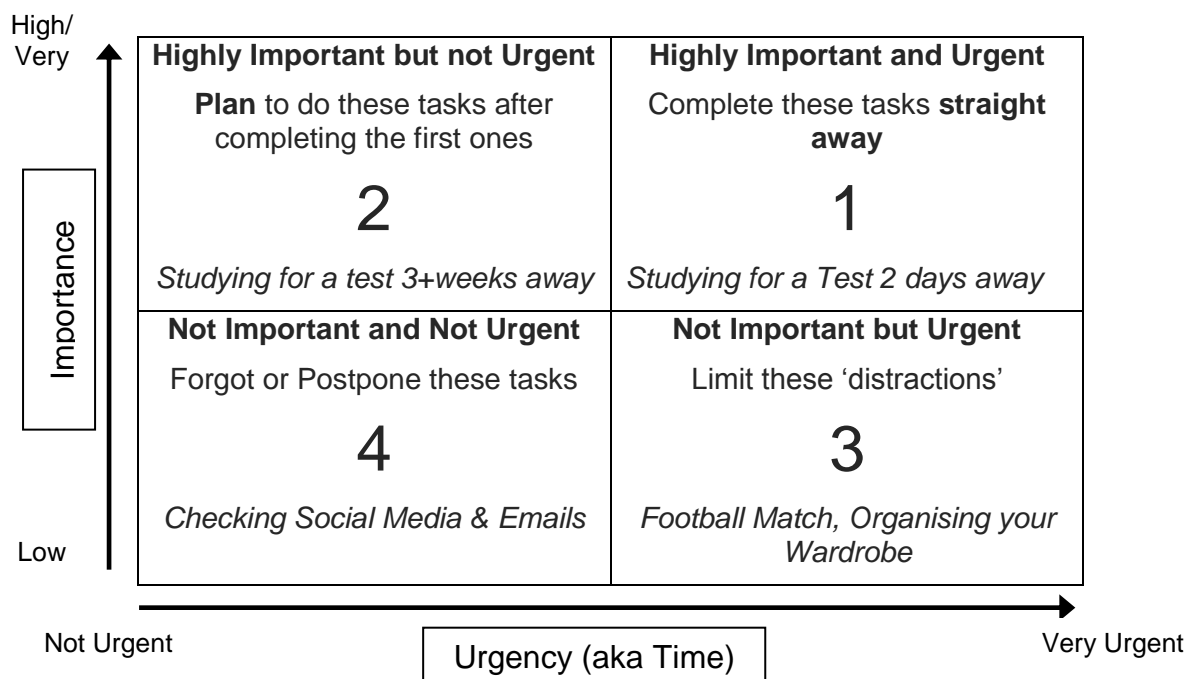


Time Management

Time is a significant factor in project management, and if you plan your time wisely you should be able to complete the task by the deadline(s) and still have time for your other school subjects as well as a social life.

Items to help you along the way:

- **Schedules** – make sure you meet your deadlines and show you what needs to happen when.
<http://www.kent.ac.uk/ai/ask/index.php>
(University of Kent ASK series, based on the original [Assignment Calculator](#)^[2] from the [University of Minnesota Libraries](#)^[3] with development work from [Staffordshire University](#)^[4] and the [University of Kent](#)^[5]. Information in the report writing ASK was developed in conjunction with the [University of Reading](#)^[6].)
- **Calendars & Diaries** – are invaluable ways to make sure you can have a balance between work/school and your personal life. Try our quick, 30 minute tutorial on building your own diary:
<http://www.ldu.leeds.ac.uk/skills/diary/>
- **To do list** – so you know what it is you have to do, from your academic life to your personal life. If you are unsure of what elements can be involved try our Mind Sweep:
http://library.leeds.ac.uk/download/63/mindsweep_checklist
- **Prioritization Matrix** – is an advanced to-do list that helps you to understand which tasks you should complete first and which ones are less important. Below is a basic idea of the matrix and how to use it. You can find out more through our Time Management video and/or by the following link to MindTools.com:
http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_91.htm





Staying Motivated

Sometimes it's hard to stay motivated and enthusiastic during a project. This is normally caused by or leads to procrastination and distractions. To avoid these here's a few links from the Skills@Library website with information and activities to help:

- “Procrastination: what and why does it happen?”, “Overcoming Procrastination” and “Dealing with Distractions” (authors: Learnhigher.ac.uk)
<http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/learning-at-university/time-management/>
- Try breaking down projects or studying time into smaller, more manageable chunks. *Example I:* studying in smaller time blocks. It's simple: get rid of all distractions and centre your full attention on studying for 20 minutes (some people find its easier to start with 5-10minutes and work up to 20 minutes). Then give yourself a break for 5 minutes, by going for a walk or talking with friends, before starting the cycle over again. *Example II:* breaking down an essay into smaller tasks. (see table below)

Monitoring your Progress

This is an important step that can sometimes be overlooked. When you are defining your tasks and scheduling your time make sure to build in specific milestones or goals to check whether or not you are on target and most importantly that you are still on track to answering the question.

For example, if you were assigned an essay due in 4 weeks time then you could create the following, simple (milestone) checklist:

TIME	4 Weeks Away	3 Weeks Away	2 Weeks Away	7 Days Away	4 Days Away	1 Day Before the Deadline
TASK	Research the Topic	Have all Research & Notes Completed	Write & Edit First Draft	Write & Edit Second Draft	Have Final Draft Ready	Print and have Essay ready to Hand in
DONE?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LATE by 2 days, need to reprioritise schedule	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Worked longer for 3 days to catch up)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>