

Using a To-Do List to Prioritize Tasks (Teens)

Objective

To identify your priorities and create a to-do list that works for you.

You Should Know

For many teens, time management is challenging. Your time is splintered by many demands—academic, social, sports or other extracurricular activities, volunteer hours, and family responsibilities. So, when it comes to prioritizing tasks, how do you learn to set priorities and manage your time effectively?

Prioritizing your to-do list will help you stay on top of your responsibilities and use your time effectively. Just organizing your priorities using a to-do list may not necessarily help you manage your time. You also need to think about how long tasks take and how to plan your schedule using strategies like blocking out chunks of time to devote to certain tasks, setting daily goals, identifying the steps required to complete each task, and anticipating potential obstacles that might thwart your efforts! This worksheet will help you prioritize what's most important to do now, as well as what's less important and can be done later. Then, you can separate what you "need" to do from what you "want" to do. You'll also better manage multiple deadlines by setting aside the right amount time to complete each task.

What to Do

There are several factors that can help you determine when a task is a priority. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What needs to be done?
- When is it due (deadline)?
- How important is it? Does it impact your grades, health, or responsibilities?
- How much time will it take, assuming there will be no distractions or interruptions?
- How many steps are involved to complete the task? For example, is it a science project that will require research, writing, or creating a presentation?
- How much help will you need to complete the task?

Use the following chart to help you prioritize your to-do list. You might want to use another piece of paper or an organizer/planner.

Priority Ranking	Task	Due Date	Time It Will Take	Things I Need to Complete Task	People Who Can Help Me with Task	Date Completed

Reflections on This Exercise

Was the chart useful in organizing your priorities and completing your tasks? Why or why not?

Were there some tasks that were easier to complete than others? Why?

If this exercise was difficult for you, is there someone who could help you prioritize your tasks?

Did you identify other tools or resources to help you prioritize tasks?

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?
