



## **How to Use a Planner** **Tips and Suggestions from a STAR Student Success Coach**

We've met with several students who are having difficulties with time-management. Many of you (students) are taking several classes, which have several overlapping assignments and due dates. In addition to classes, many of you are trying to balance working a full-time or part-time job, as well as responsibilities within your home.

A planner can be a useful tool when trying to manage all of your responsibilities. However, using a planner **effectively** is critical. Here are our tips and suggestions for how to use a planner.

### **Choose the right planner for you.**

- **Digital planners versus paper planners.** There are several options for planners on your phone, tablet, or computer. You can also buy a handheld planner. Which one will best allow you to manage your schedule and keep up with your responsibilities?
- **Monthly planners** are a good choice if you don't have many tasks to plan for. Monthly planners provide an overview of the entire month and help you plan for events that are more distant into the future, such as travel plans or holidays.
- **Weekly planners** are a popular choice. They allow you to schedule for daily tasks and events, while also giving you an overview of the entire week. You can manage your daily routine while also planning for upcoming deadlines, such as an assignment due at the end of the week.
- **Daily planners** allow you to plan day-by-day. The downside is that daily planners don't allow for you to look ahead. It may be easy to forget about upcoming tasks and deadlines. If you choose a daily planner, pair it with a weekly or monthly planner.

### **Use the same planner for everything.** It's easier to keep up with things if they're all in one place.

- Add your work schedule. Account for time traveling to and from work.
- Add your school-related tasks.
- Add personal events and schedule your free time.

### **Always carry your planner with you.**

- This will allow you to add things to your planner as they come up.

### **At the start of the semester, write down each one of your classes for each week. Use your syllabus to view the assignments for each class. Then, write down each assignment and due date in your planner.**

- For bigger projects that will require more time to complete, break the project down into smaller steps. For example, if you have a big essay due in three weeks:
  - Schedule days to complete the research for the paper – write the deadline for when the research should be completed.
  - Schedule days to complete an outline and first draft – write the deadline for when to have the first draft completed.
  - Schedule days to complete the final draft – write the deadline for when to have the final draft completed. Your personal deadline for the final draft should be a few days before the essay is due to be submitted to your instructor. This will allow you plenty of time to review the essay and make any necessary revisions before turning it in.

Huff, L. (2011, July 07). Plannerisms. Retrieved December 06, 2017, from <http://www.plannerisms.com/2011/07/choosing-your-planner-part-1-daily.html>

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**Have a weekly/daily planning day.**

- Choose one day of the week, such as Sunday evening, to write down plans for the upcoming week. Utilize this time to view upcoming assignments and deadlines.

**Complete daily check-ins.**

- Throughout the day, mark everything that has been completed. Make adjustments or add notes.
- At the end of the day, go over your schedule for the next day.

**Be creative with your planner.**

- Decorate your planner to make your planning sessions fun!
- Add pictures or drawings to your planner.
- Some people color code events in their planner. For example, all of your assignments can be written in **blue**. Personal events can be written in **red**. Your work schedule can be written in **green**.
- Lastly, make your planner unique to you. Your method for using your planner doesn't have to resemble someone else's. Do what works for you.

**Please see an example of a weekly planner below.**

**Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> – Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00 AM							
7:30 AM							
8:00 AM							
8:30 AM	Work 8:30a-2p						Work 8:30a-2p
9:00 AM							
9:30 AM							
10:00 AM		10a-11a BIO 110		10a-11a BIO 110		10a-11a BIO 110	
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM			11a-12p PSY150		11a-12p PSY150		
11:30 AM					PSY exam today!		
12:00 PM							
12:30 PM							
1:00 PM							
1:30 PM			Study for PSY exam!				
2:00 PM		2p-3p ENG111		2p-3p ENG111		2p-3p ENG111	
2:30 PM						Essay due!	
3:00 PM							
3:30 PM	Finish BIO hw!						
4:00 PM			Work 4p-9p			Work 4p-9p	
4:30 PM	Study for PSY exam!	Study for PSY exam!					
5:00 PM				Study for PSY exam!			
5:30 PM							
6:00 PM		Write final draft for essay!			Review ENG essay!		
6:30 PM	Dinner w/ mom						
7:00 PM							Ashley's birthday party!
7:30 PM							
8:00 PM							
8:30 PM							
9:00 PM							
9:30 PM							
10:00 PM							

**Notes:** Green = work schedule    Blue = class schedule and assignments    Red=personal events

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