



Task Title: Managing Procrastination

OALCF Cover Sheet – Practitioner Copy

Learner Name: _____

Date Started: _____

Date Completed: _____

Successful Completion: Yes ☐ No ☐

Goal Path: Employment ☐ Apprenticeship ☐

Secondary School ☐ Post Secondary ☐ Independence ☐

Task Description: The learner will read an article about procrastination and consider how they could integrate strategies into their own learning.

Main Competency/Task Group/Level Indicator:

- Find and Use Information/Read continuous text/A1.2
- Communicate Ideas and Information/Write continuous text/B2.1
- Manage Learning/E.1

Materials Required:

- Pen/pencil and paper and/or digital device
- Computer

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Learner Information

Many students struggle with procrastination. Understanding what procrastination is, and how it can be managed, can help students achieve success in high school and post-secondary classes.

Read "Procrastination Isn't Laziness: Why You Delay and What to Do About It"

Procrastination Isn't Laziness: Why You Delay and What to Do About It

Understanding Procrastination: Causes and Solutions

You had the entire day to easily block out time and get your tasks done. But now, 6 hours have passed, it's 1 hour before class, and that presentation you've been avoiding? Still untouched. You have been scrolling through your phone instead, your to-do list keeps growing, and now—your stomach starts to grumble for food?!

You wish you could get those 6 hours back. Regardless of how much time you are given, you always seem to wait until the last minute. Why?

Procrastination—the act of delaying or postponing tasks despite foreseeable negative consequences—is a common yet complex behaviour. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a matter of laziness or poor time management alone.

In fact, research shows that procrastination is often rooted in deeper psychological and emotional factors. Let's take a closer look and see what these factors might be.

Potential Causes of Procrastination

- **Fear of Failure**

A significant contributor to procrastination is the fear of failure. Individuals may delay tasks out of anxiety about underperforming, being judged, or not meeting personal or external expectations. This avoidance becomes a coping mechanism to protect self-esteem.

- **Perfectionism**

Perfectionism can manifest in the need to complete tasks flawlessly, often leading to an inability to begin. Perfectionists tend to delay tasks until they feel conditions are ideal or they are adequately prepared. Research has found that fear of failure and overgeneralization of negative outcomes often mediate the link between perfectionism and procrastination.

- **Feeling Overwhelmed**

When tasks seem too large, individuals may experience emotional overload, leading to avoidance. It was identified that "self-overwhelming" was one of the most prevalent factors contributing to procrastination among post-secondary students.

- **Low Self-Esteem and Impostor Syndrome**

Individuals with lower self-esteem may procrastinate to avoid the discomfort of confronting their perceived inadequacies. Research suggests the interconnection between self-esteem, fear of failure, and procrastination in competitive academic settings, finding that lower confidence often correlates with higher procrastination tendencies

Good time management isn't just about squeezing 100 tasks into your day; it's about working smarter. Research shows that students with strong time management skills feel less stressed, achieve better grades, and even boost their creativity. Poor time management, on the other hand, often leads to procrastination, last-minute cramming, burnout, and a never-ending cycle of stress.

Practical Strategies for Improving Time Management and Overcoming Procrastination

If time keeps slipping away, here are some quick strategies to help you stay on top of things:

- **The Pomodoro Technique** – Work for 25 minutes, then take a 5-minute break. Studies show that planned breaks like this boost your mood, improve focus, and help prevent burnout. In contrast, choosing your own break times often leads to more distractions and fatigue.
- **Time Blocking** – Instead of just making a to-do list, schedule when you'll complete each task. Be realistic and leave buffer time for unexpected delays. For example: *10:30 AM-12 PM: Math homework, 12-1 PM: Lunch break, 1:30-2:30 PM: Gym.*
- **Identify and Minimize Time Wasters** – Scrolling on TikTok, checking Instagram, or watching "just one more episode" can steal hours. Set app limits or turn off notifications when studying.
- **Create a Dedicated Study Space** – Where you study matters. Having a quiet, comfortable, and organized spot improves focus and productivity. Choose a clutter-free area that helps you stay on track and signals to your brain it's time to work.

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- **Learn to Say No** – It's tempting to say yes to every social event, but overcommitting can leave you overwhelmed. Prioritize your tasks, and don't be afraid to say no when needed.
- **Reward Yourself** – Whether it's a treat, an episode of your favourite show, or a fun activity, positive reinforcement helps build better habits.

Finding What Works for You

Time management isn't one-size-fits-all. The key is to experiment with different techniques and figure out what fits your learning style and lifestyle. Whether it's using a planner, digital tools, or setting daily goals, consistency is what matters. Managing your time effectively creates space for success, self-care, and balance. While these strategies can be game-changers, putting them into practice isn't always easy.

[Adapted from <https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/procrastination-isnt-laziness-why-you-delay-and-what-to-do-about-it/>]

Work Sheet

Task 1: How is procrastination defined?

Answer:

Task 2: List four (4) potential causes of procrastination.

Answer:

Task 3: From the article, select one practical strategy for managing procrastination. In two (2) or three (3) sentences, list the steps you could take to incorporate this strategy into your learning.

Answer:

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Task 4: Choose a second practical strategy for managing procrastination. In two (2) or three (3) sentences, list the steps you could take to incorporate this strategy into your learning.

Answer:

Answers

Task 1: How is procrastination defined?

Answer: Procrastination is the act of delaying or postponing tasks despite foreseeable negative consequences.

Task 2: List four (4) potential causes of procrastination.

Answer:

- Fear or failure
- Perfectionism
- Feeling Overwhelmed
- Low Self-Esteem and Imposter Syndrome

Task 3: From the article, select one practical strategy for managing procrastination. In two (2) or three (3) sentences, list the steps you could take to incorporate this strategy into your learning.

Answers will vary. An example is as follows:

Identify and Minimize time wasters: I will keep my phone in a different room or turn off sound notifications when I am studying. I will only open web pages that are related to studying so that I can avoid checking things like social media. I will make sure I have everything I need at my desk so that I am not wasting time by leaving the room to get a pen, glass of water, etc.

Task 4: Choose a second practical strategy for managing procrastination. In two (2) or three (3) sentences, list the steps you could take to incorporate this strategy into your learning.

Answers will vary. An example is as follows:

Reward myself: I will plan to take a break and reward myself after every hour of studying. Each hour, I will have a candy or small treat. After three hours of work, I will take a 30-minute break to watch a short tv show and check social media. I will also plan to go out to a movie with my friends on Friday night if I have had a productive week of studying.

Performance Descriptors

Levels	Performance Descriptors	Needs Work	Completes task with support from practitioner	Completes task independently
A1.2	scans text to locate information			
	locates multiple pieces of information in simple texts			
	makes low-level inferences			
	makes connections between sentences and between paragraphs in a single text			
	reads more complex texts to locate a single piece of information			
	follows the main events of descriptive, narrative and informational texts			
	obtains information from detailed reading			
	begins to identify sources and evaluate information			
B2.1	writes simple texts to request, remind or inform			
	conveys simple ideas and factual information			
	uses sentence structure, upper and lower case and basic punctuation			
	uses highly familiar vocabulary			

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Levels	Performance Descriptors	Needs Work	Completes task with support from practitioner	Completes task independently
E.1	begins to identify barriers to achieving goals			
	begins to identify ways to remember information and reinforce learning			
	begins to monitor own learning			

This task: Was successfully completed ☐ Needs to be tried again ☐

Learner Comments:

Instructor (print):

Learner (print):