S4 Steps to Success
Blog: *Time Management Tips*

LIFT OFF
SCHOOLS FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Hi, I'm Graham, one of the Development Workers here at LIFT OFF.
Welcome to blog number 3 of our S4 Steps to Success.

We all have the same 24 hours in each day, but if you're like me, I'm sure you can think of someone who always seems to be organised and on top of everything, while you scramble to get things done. Since I don't have a time turner, I need to make do with the subject of this week's blog: Time Management.

As you might have guessed, time management is all about effectively managing your time so you can be more productive. While this is an easy concept to understand, putting it in to practice is often harder than it sounds. Today, we'll have a look at some tips that might help you start to master this skill.

So, why is developing good time management skills worthwhile? Firstly, your time is important and you should enjoy it. I have been in the position where I have had to miss doing something with friends or use my weekend just to finish work. This never feels good, but might have been avoidable. Secondly, this is a skill that you will benefit from for life. Whether it is planning your time to revise for exams, submitting assignments on time in HE, or completing tasks when you have a job, you will always benefit by making effective use of your time. Finally, effective time management can aid your mental wellbeing. Those who leave work to the last minute are much more likely to feel stressed or anxious as the deadline gets closer, which is something we all want to avoid (Jack has shared some great tips to help with identifying and managing stress in our first blog).

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Now that I have hopefully convinced you that improving your time management is going to be useful, let's have a look at some things you can do to achieve this. Whatever approach you take, it is important to find what works best for you. As a self-confessed procrastinator, here are some tips that have helped me improve my time management.

- A good first step is to assess how you currently spend your time, particularly when you should be getting work done. This is a great way to see if you are being efficient while you should be working or if this is something you can improve (e.g. are you spending more time finishing your homework/revision or are you mainly on your phone).

- I always find myself with too many different things I need to do. Using a to-do list is a great way to keep track and prioritise my work – more important things go to the top of the list (now I just need to remember to actually look at my list). This is also linked to having a clear deadline of when a task needs to be completed. I like to put this in my calendar along with a reminder to keep me on track.

- Most people delay starting tasks because they are not sure where to begin. Breaking down a larger task in to smaller parts makes it much easier to get started and to see that you are making progress. A big part of this is being realistic with how long you will need to complete it (hint: it's probably going to take longer than you think). LIFT OFF's **Study Planner** is a great template to help break down your workload and plan your time.

- Finally, it is important to take breaks. I usually find that the longer I work without a break, the less productive I become as I'm more likely to get bored or distracted. Instead, add in a short break as a reward for working for a certain amount of time. The **Pomodoro Technique** is one approach to doing this.

I hope you have found some of these tips useful. Let us know if you have any of your own time managements tips you would like to share.