One advantage of creating a project plan is that you can use the deadlines in your plan to hold yourself accountable. Also, crossing off tasks as you complete them gives you a feeling of accomplishment, which can be crucial for maintaining momentum throughout the project.

Manage Time in Your Online Classes

If your schedule includes online classes, keep in mind that they often present unique time-management challenges. Your traditional courses are scheduled on particular days and times, and you can block off this class time in your schedule. With many online classes, though, the time you spend participating in class is less structured. Most online courses don't require you to attend at any specific time, so deciding when you'll create and respond to online posts and complete other course requirements is up to you. In addition, while some students expect online classes to be easier or less intensive than face-to-face courses, most online classes take as much time as in-person classes (and sometimes even *more* time). So, be sure to schedule enough time to complete your assignments. Try these tips for staying on top of your online coursework.

- **Get comfortable with this class format.** If you're new to online classes, block out time in your schedule to learn how to navigate the online class system. Your instructor and institution can help.

- **Devote time *each week* to work on your assignments.** Be sure that your weekly schedule includes time for studying, reading, and posting work online for your class. Creating a consistent schedule is particularly critical to mastering course material for online classes.

- **Log in to your online class each day.** Even if it's just for five minutes, log in to check for updates from your instructor or posts from other students. That way, you can make sure you're keeping up with assignments and monitoring class discussions.

- **Know your deadlines.** If your instructor gives specific due dates for class assignments, enter them into your schedule for each week of the term.

- **Schedule time for live meetings hosted by your instructor.** Sometimes hosted via tools like Skype or a text chat, live meetings give you opportunities to interact with classmates and instructors in real time.

- **Take personal responsibility.** Online classes require a great deal of discipline, particularly with respect to managing your time. You'll likely have to make sacrifices in order to get your work done well and on time. Make a commitment at the start of the class to hold yourself accountable, keep to your schedule, and make your education a priority.

- **Build in a buffer.** Build some extra time into your schedule to read, study, and complete assignments when you're first adjusting to online learning. If you don't end up needing it, you can squeeze in a break or a quick nap instead.

WRITING PROMPT: Invite students to schedule their online classes as they would their face-to-face classes. For example, a traditional class may meet every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the same classroom. Have students pick a time and "classroom" (such as the library or a coffee shop) to "attend" their online class. Then ask students to explain their selections in writing.

Consistency Is Key. Online classes are often less structured than face-to-face courses, which means it's up to you to create your own schedule. Your best bet? Keep it consistent: Devote regular time each week to working on your assignments and log in to your courses every day.
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