



Stop Procrastinating **NOW!**

By Laura Speek

You had two months to write that paper. But there you are, staring at a blank page. You haven't even started and it's due tomorrow!

You keep asking yourself, "Why didn't I start sooner? Why do I always leave things until the last minute?"

If this sounds like you, you're not alone. Getting your work done on time can be difficult for everyone, even adults. Here are some tips to help you.

Tip #1: *Chop It and Chunk It*

People are more likely to put things off that seem to be impossibly large. Researching and writing a big, long paper can feel like way too much to handle all at once. And in truth... it is!

So, when you get the assignment, your first task is to break it down into a few general chunks. Here is what writing a paper might look like:

- Step 1.** Gather research material
- Step 2.** Review material
- Step 3.** Write an outline
- Step 4.** Write the rough draft
- Step 5.** Write the final draft
- Step 6.** Create the bibliography
- Step 7.** Proofread and assemble the final copy

Tip #2: *Refine & Timeline*

Now, break each chunk into smaller steps and estimate how long it will take to finish each one.

Think in terms of sessions that are 45 minutes long and estimate the number of sessions for each step.

You can handle just about anything for 45 minutes, right? Your plan might look like this:

Step 1. Research and gather material (One trip to the library and two online searches for 3 sessions)

Step 2. Review the material (2 sessions with books and 2 sessions with online stuff)

Step 3. Write an outline (1 session for the big picture and 1 session to fill in details)

Step 4. Write the rough draft (4 sessions writing 1.5 pages each)

Step 5. Write the final draft (2 sessions rewriting 3 pages each)

Step 6. Create the bibliography (1 session)

Step 7. Proofread at least twice and assemble the final copy (2 sessions)

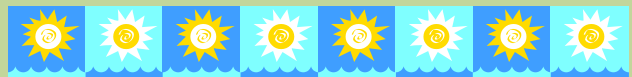
Total sessions required: 18



Congratulations – You have already started your project!

Tip #3: *Be a Calendar Girl*

Now, set your schedule. Figure out how many weeks you have and how many sessions you need to complete each week to get the job done.





Mark a calendar with your goals for each day or each week.

Decorate your calendar so you enjoy looking at it. Keep your calendar *where you can see it every day*.

Tip #4: *Let's Make a Deal*

There you are. You know you need to get started, but you just **can't** seem make it happen. That means... it's time for some wheeling and dealing.

What **reward** can you give yourself for completing just 1 session? Here are some ideas:

- **Equal time playing a favorite game?**
- **A nice, relaxing bubble bath?**
- **A movie with your BFF?**
- **A cup of hot cocoa or a trip to the mall?**

Ask your parents for ideas. They'll be so happy you are getting your work done they may come up with something totally **COOL**.



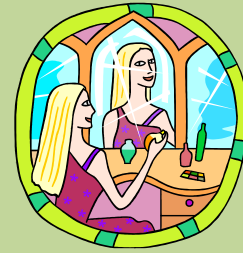
Tip #5: *Take a Victory Lap*

Give yourself **A LOT OF CREDIT** for each session you complete.

Put gold stars on your calendar.



Look in the mirror and tell the girl you see how fabulous and **GREAT** she is.



Think about how it feels to make slow but steady progress. Do you feel **lighter**? More **grown up**? More **in charge**? **Do you like those feelings?**



Tip #6: *Keep It Going*

Try and build momentum so you can stay on schedule and meet your goals.



Imagine yourself with your project all finished well before the deadline.

Can you remember how bad it felt when you left everything to the last minute?



Which way feels better?

Breaking down big jobs into smaller chunks makes them seem more manageable.

The reward system is a great way to help you get started when your motivation is low.

But after awhile you may not need so many outside rewards, because meeting your goals and staying on schedule become rewards in themselves.

You'll feel rewarded because you won't have the dark cloud of the whole, big project hanging over your head.



You'll feel rewarded because you took a series of small steps to make steady progress towards doing the right thing.

You'll feel rewarded because you are taking charge of your life and your schoolwork!

It may not be as dramatic or as fun a reward as say... tickets to Justin Bieber or Taylor Swift.

But it will be a reward that has very special value.

And when it happens, you'll reach a whole new level in being happy to be YOU!

