

Study Time Management

Suppose you spend 3 hours every weeknight studying. Then add another 8 hours for the weekend and you've got at least a 100 hours of study a month, each month, in the run up to the **Leaving Cert**. This is a fairly significant amount of time, and if managed properly, it allows for a great deal of useful study that should lead to success at results time.

It is a challenge to make the most of the time you have and ensure that you don't spend valuable time aimlessly. It's a good idea to take a step back every now and then and come up with a plan to fit the work that still needs to be done into the time left available.

No plan is going to be 100% foolproof, and outside circumstances are bound to intervene every now and then, so it's best to keep things fairly flexible.

If you map out, even roughly, what you hope to achieve week-by-week in each subject you are taking, then you will have targets to aim for and you will be able to see more clearly the progress you are making. Take satisfaction from marking items off a list as done, often using a big thick marker. Having such a list also works as proof to show parents and others that you are taking things seriously and moving forward.

Making a worthwhile **time management plan** isn't just a case of dividing the work to be done by the hours available. You should take it more

seriously, and analyse your own strengths and weaknesses. Give yourself more time on subjects that might need it. Alternate your strong and weak subjects so that you can keep your confidence high. Divide the time between going over what you covered recently in class, and long-term revision of notes you have already made.

An important part of any time management plan should involve setting yourself goals you can work towards. Every time you take out the books you should have a good idea of what you hope to get out of this study session. Make sure that these are realistic and achievable goals and you will be able to clearly see the progress you are making each week. This method really focuses your work and lets you see that you are indeed moving towards your final goal of finishing with the Leaving Cert forever.

You should include regular breaks in your time management plans. A break gives you something to look forward to while you're practicing your Fench or Irish verbs, and what is more, your brain also works better when it is allowed to rest every so often. One system involves revising intensively for 40 minutes, then taking a ten-minute break. When you come back from the break look over the already revised material again before moving on to the next subject or topic. When taking a break go for a walk in the garden or down the street, or talk to someone else who is in the house. Try not to plonk yourself down in front of the telly, as you'll probably find it hard to get back up again.

Procrastination is a big word with dangerous effects. Putting things off until tomorrow is often attractive, but this can be disastrous. It is especially

tempting when you are faced with so much work that you just don't know where to start. When you have a plan, with realistic goals, you will be less tempted to stick things on the long finger since you will be able to see the benefits of even a short time spent studying immediately.

It is worth bearing in mind that, as with most jobs, successful studying becomes a matter of habit. If you can come up with a routine that matches the time you have available with the work that has to be done, then hopefully a plan will fall into place fairly naturally. There is no need to panic yet, you have plenty of time, but it's up to you to manage it cleverly