# Prioritizing Your Life

College life is full of competing demands: classes, assignments, jobs, social life, and more. Learning how to prioritize what matters most can help you stay focused, reduce stress, and avoid burnout. One popular and practical tool to help with this is Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix, also known as the Four Quadrants.

Quadrant I: Urgent and Important – Tasks that need immediate attention, like deadlines or emergencies.

Quadrant II: Not Urgent but Important – Planning, studying ahead, self-care—this is where long-term success happens.

Quadrant III: Urgent but Not Important – Distractions or interruptions that feel pressing but aren't priorities.

Quadrant IV: Not Urgent and Not Important – Time-wasters like excessive scrolling or mindless tasks.

Many students spend too much time in Quadrants I and III and not enough in Quadrant II. This worksheet will help you identify where your time is going now—and how to shift toward the habits that support your goals and well-being.

| COVEY'S FOUR QUADRANTS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Urgent** | **Not Urgent** |
| **Important** | Quadrant 1 - Do It<br>• Things due today or tomorrow<br>• Handling a personal emergency<br>• Last chance studying for an exam | Quadrant 2 - Schedule It<br>• Planning out your week and study schedule<br>• Working on a big project or studying for a test early<br>• Taking care of your health and well-being |
| **Not Important** | Quadrant 3 - Avoid It<br>• Interruptions or Distractions<br>• Feeling pressured by someone else's priorities<br>• Social invitations that aren't meaningful | Quadrant 4 - Delete It<br>• Time wasters - doom scrolling, YouTube black holes, unnecessary social drama<br>• Procrastinating with busywork or technology<br>• Endless organization or "pre-work" |

Covey, S. R. (1989). The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change. Free Press.
Covey, S. R. (1994). First things first. Simon & Schuster.



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# Covey's Four Quadrants Practice

1. Make a Task List

Write down everything you need to do this week—assignments, study time, work shifts, errands, events, and personal tasks.

| | |
|---|---|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

2. Ask Two Questions for Each Task

- Is this important? (Does it help me reach my goals or reflect my values?)
- Is this urgent? (Does it need to be done soon or by a deadline?)

3. Place Tasks in the Correct Quadrant

Sort each task into the most appropriate quadrant based on importance and urgency:

| COVEY'S FOUR QUADRANTS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Urgent** | **Not Urgent** |
| **Important** | | *Quadrant of Quality |
| **Not Important** | | |

4. Ask Yourself:

Which quadrant has the most tasks? Are you living mostly in reaction (Quadrants 1 & 3)?

How can you spend more time in Quadrant 2, planning for success?