

Priorities Checklist

Choosing priorities is one of the most important steps in managing your time. Sometimes we have to choose priorities over the long term, and sometimes we have to do it day to day. No matter how perfectly you have your time budget balanced, there will always be unexpected changes and new responsibilities to fit in. To help you choose priorities when you need to, keep these ideas in mind:

_____ **Remember the big things.** There are big things in life, and there are little things, and you've got to do your best to tell them apart. Some things that may seem really important today, like getting to the hobby shop to buy a pack of collectible cards, might seem a lot less important in a few weeks or months. On the other hand, doing well on school assignments and completing your family responsibilities are *always* important. These are the "big things" that you should always consider *first* when making a time budget. Always reserve plenty of time for these priorities, and use "leftover" time for things that are less important.

_____ **Think about what's urgent.** You've set aside time after school to do some research on your history paper, but you also have a big concert coming up and need to practice your cello. Which takes priority that day? Well, which deadline is coming up first? If the concert is next week, but the report's not due until the week after, there's your answer. Knowing which task is more urgent is an easy way to choose priorities.

_____ **Think about the consequences of NOT spending time on it.** Can't decide whether something is worth your time? Ask yourself this: What would happen if you DIDN'T do it?

_____ **What do these things mean to my life?** What means a lot to you now, and will continue to do so in the future? This is where you have to look into your heart and decide which is more important to you. Which one would you miss the least, and which would really hurt to give up?

_____ **Is this a now-or-never situation?** You have to choose between joining the newspaper and trying out for the school musical. The show this season is "The Sound Of Music" and you've always dreamed of playing Maria, but the newspaper will always be around next year. This is your one chance to be part of your favorite musical, but not your only chance to be on the newspaper. Well, there's your answer!

_____ **Am I doing this for me, or for someone else?**

You've always been into karate and your parents have been supportive, but now it seems like they're more excited about it than you. You'd like to try something new, but you don't want to let them down. This is where your own wishes should take priority (after an honest chat with your folks).