

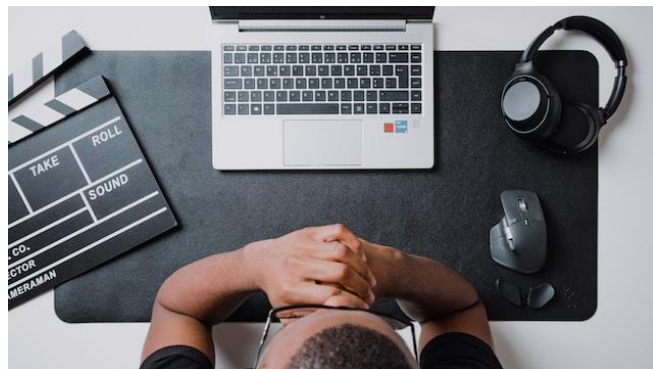
Procrastination

*A perfect method for adding drama to life is to wait until the deadline looms large. –
Alyce Cornyn-Selby*



Warm up

- What do you think of the quote above?
Can you relate?
- What is procrastination ?
- Do you think teenagers procrastinate more than adults?
- Do you procrastinate? If so, what kind of things do you tend to put off doing?
- What are some things that people commonly tend to leave until the last minute?



1. Below are some common procrastination activities. Take a quick look and answer the following questions.

Binge watching a tv show
Going to the gym
Endless scrolling through social media
Taking a nap

Cleaning
Reorganising your closet
Looking up strategies on how *not* to procrastinate
Looking up things to buy

1. Do you find yourself doing any of the activities above to avoid doing something you don't want to do?
2. Are there any other procrastination activities you can think of which aren't mentioned above?
3. Do you feel bad procrastinating when you know you have other things to do?
4. What are some tips you would give to someone who needs to procrastinate less?
5. Why do you think people procrastinate?



2. Read the article on procrastination and discuss the following questions.

Procrastination¹

Procrastination is the act of putting off making decisions or taking action for no particular reason. For example, when someone postpones preparing for a presentation they are dreading until the deadline, even though they know that it would be better for them to start earlier.



Procrastination is a common problem, in fact, studies have suggested that procrastination affects 15%-20% of adults and that around 25% of these adults think that procrastination is a big part of their lives. When we consider young adults, approximately 75% of students at university have said they think of themselves as procrastinators, and around 50% say that they procrastinate so frequently that it affects their lives in an adverse way.

There are several reasons why people choose to procrastinate over doing things that need to get done. One of them is the *fear of failure*. You've probably heard the term 'perfectionists'. 'Perfectionists' tend to focus on doing whatever they do without any mistakes or imperfections i.e. they like things done *perfectly*. Although this might sound positive at first, 'perfectionists' often develop standards for themselves that are impossible to attain. Therefore, they may start to put off starting something knowing that they have set the standards too high and they won't be able to reach their goal. On the other hand, there's something referred to as 'double insurance' in which procrastination is used to protect self-esteem. In this case, someone won't prepare for something as insurance. If they do badly on the thing they didn't prepare for, they will tell themselves it's because they didn't prepare. On the other hand, if they do well on it, they will consider themselves above average for managing to do well with so little preparation.

Fear of success is the concern that once we achieve something new that we won't be able to sustain it. The *fear of losing control* also inhibits people's growth because some people are deeply concerned by the idea that if they can't control what's happening in the future something terrible could happen. Other factors of procrastination include *the fear of the unknown and change*, *the excitement of last-minute work*, *poor time management*, *difficulty making decisions*, etc.

Knowing and understanding why you procrastinate can help you overcome some of the detrimental behaviour. We should use the most appropriate techniques to develop new habits. These could be, setting specific and realistic goals, making a to-do list, setting priorities, etc.

¹ <https://solvingprocrastination.com/>



3. Refer to the underlined words in the text and explain them below.

1. Synonym for 'put off' *to postpone*
2. What does 'to dread' mean? *to wait for something in fear*
3. Synonym for 'to consider' *to think about*
4. Synonym for 'frequently' *often*
5. Synonym for 'adverse' *negative*
6. What is the difference between 'i.e' and 'etc.' *'i.e' is used when you want to define something more clearly or eliminate doubt about what you're talking about. 'etc' generally comes at the end of a sentence (though not always) and means 'and the rest' or 'and others'.*
7. Synonym for 'to attain' *to achieve/to accomplish*
8. Synonym for 'referred to as' *to call*
9. Explain the word 'average' *the midpoint - the sum of all the numbers divided by the total number of values*
10. Synonym for 'to inhibit' *to prevent*



4. Answer the following comprehension questions.

1. According to the article, is procrastination a problem amongst young adults?
Yes, approximately 75% of college students consider themselves to be procrastinators, and around 50% say that they procrastinate in a consistent and problematic manner.
2. What percentage of young adults consider procrastination to have a negative impact on their lives? *50%*
3. Why do 'perfectionists' sometimes procrastinate? *They develop a standard for themselves which is impossible to reach which leads them to not start anything in fear of failure.*
4. Explain 'double insurance'.
'double insurance' is when procrastination is used to protect the self-esteem. In this case, someone won't prepare for something and if they do badly on it they will tell themselves it's because they didn't prepare. On the other hand, if

they do well on it they will consider themselves above average for managing to do well with so little preparation.

5. Explain *fear of losing control*. *This is when people worry that they won't be able to handle the upcoming outcomes and that bad things will happen.*
6. What are some common reasons why people procrastinate? *The fear of the unknown and change, the excitement of last minute work, poor time management, difficulty making decisions etc.*
7. Can you relate to of the points mentioned in the article?



5. You are going to watch a video which contains the following vocabulary. Match the vocabulary on the left with their definitions on the right.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----|---|
| a) thesis | 1 | 1. A long research paper handed in at the end of a degree. |
| b) to pull an all-nighter | 10 | 2. when one often does smth or has a particular kind of thought |
| c) perplexed | 5 | 3. the feeling of worry and nervousness |
| d) MRI | 11 | 4. someone who has enrolled in the doctoral degree program. |
| e) to conflict | 9 | 5. confused |
| f) tendency | 2 | 6. a moment of sudden revelation and realisation |
| g) dread | 8 | 7. chaos |
| h) anxiety | 3 | 8. to wait for something in fear |
| i) mayhem | 7 | 9. to clash or disagree with smth. or so. |
| j) PHD student | 4 | 10. to stay up all night |
| k) an epiphany | 6 | 11. a machine that takes pictures of the inside of the body |



6. Watch the video up to 2m55s '[Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arj7oStGLkU&ab_channel=TED)'² and answer the following questions.

1. What was his major at university? *He was a government major.*
2. How did he usually write his papers? What plan did he have to write his thesis? How did it go in the end? *He would always leave it until the last minute. His plan for his thesis was to write it gradually over the year. However, he ended up leaving it until the end again.*
3. Did he write a good thesis?
No, he didn't.

² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arj7oStGLkU&ab_channel=TED



7. Watch the video up to 7m06s

1. What does he do?
He's a writer/blogger.
2. Why did he decide to write about procrastination? *He wanted to explain to the non-procrastinators of the world what goes on in the heads of procrastinators, and why we are the way we are.*
3. What's the difference between the brain of a non-procrastinator and procrastinator?
Both brains have 'rational Decision Maker' in them but the procrastinator also has the 'instant Gratification Monkey'
4. Why don't you want the 'instant gratification monkey' behind the wheel?
He lives entirely in the present moment. He has no memory of the past, no knowledge of the future, and he only cares about two things: easy and fun.
5. What is 'the dark playground'?
It's where leisure activities happen at time when leisure activities are not supposed to be happening. The fun you have in the Dark Playground isn't actually fun, because it's completely unearned and the air is filled with guilt, dread, anxiety, and self-hated.



8. Watch the rest of the video.

1. Who is the procrastinators guardian angel? *The panic monster.*
2. What happened when he opened the website and saw his picture? *The Panic Monster starts losing his mind, and a few seconds later, the whole system's in mayhem.*
3. What was the response to his blog post about procrastination ? *Literally thousands of emails came in, from all different kinds of people from all over the world, doing all different kinds of things. These are people who were nurses, bankers, painters, engineers and lots and lots of PhD students. And they were all writing, saying the same thing: "I have this problem too." But what struck me was the contrast between the light tone of the post and the heaviness of these emails. These people were writing with intense frustration about what procrastination had done to their lives, about what this Monkey had done to them.*
4. What is the second type of procrastination and what's the problem with it? *The second type of procrastination happens in situations when there is no*

deadline. So if you wanted a career where you're a self-starter -- something in the arts, something entrepreneurial -- there's no deadlines on those things at first, because nothing's happening, not until you've gone out and done the hard work to get momentum, get things going.

5. What epiphany did Tim have after reading all of the emails? *That everyone is a procrastinator.*



9. Extra task: Write a 100 word summary about procrastination and ways to overcome it.