

Time Flies: Make the most of it!

Introduction

Succeeding in life after high school requires effectively managing time. This activity gives students the opportunity to practice prioritizing tasks and working efficiently (as a team) by presenting them with a list of tasks to complete in a limited time frame.

Materials

- Paper
- Pencil or pen
- Any necessary supplies for additional listed tasks
- List of tasks with point values (see suggestions below)

Instructions

- Compile a list of tasks and point values, either by posting them on the board (covered) or printing lists for each team (distribute face-down). You can use the suggested tasks and point values below, or come up with your own. Make sure your final task list would take longer than 10 minutes to finish, and that no one sees it before you start the clock!
- Divide your students into groups of five to eight. Make sure each group has paper, pen or pencil, and any other materials needed to complete the tasks you have chosen.
- Read the following instructions aloud: "You will have 10 minutes to earn as many points for your team as you can. You must decide as a team which tasks to perform. Unless otherwise noted, every member of the team must partake in the task in order to earn the points. As you complete a task, write down that it is complete and add the points to your total."
- After confirming that everyone understands the rules, unveil the list and start the timer! Call out how many minutes are left throughout the game, doing a final countdown in the last ten seconds.
- At the end of the game, instruct each group to add up their total points. The team with the most points is the winner.

Discussion

- Was it possible to complete all the tasks?
- Did your team develop a strategy for maximizing points?
- Were any tasks not worth the time they would take? How did you decide?
- What did the winning team do that allowed them to get the most points? Why were they successful?
- Most groups will analyze the time the task will take and/or the difficulty level, compare it with the value (possible number of points), and prioritize as a result. We

do this when managing our time, too: we often choose the high-yield, low-effort tasks over the low-yield, high-effort tasks (and rightly so!).

- Were any decisions based on task dependencies? For the name card task, for example, teams received bonus points if they used team nicknames. Performing these two tasks together would triple the points received. This often happens in life, too – batching tasks increases your results exponentially.
- What group dynamics came into play? If participants knew each other before, they may feel more comfortable performing a personally risky activity, like singing a song. This comes into play when prioritizing tasks, too; we're more likely to stay within our comfort zone, especially if we're working in a team.

Reflecting & Connecting

- After high school, you have increasing control over your own time, and must be able to manage your time effectively. College classes may meet only a few times weekly (or even once weekly), but assignments, preparation for class, reviewing notes, and studying for tests must be fit into your schedule throughout the week.
- A general rule of thumb for college classes is that you should expect to study about 2 to 3 hours per week outside class for each unit of credit. Based on this rule of thumb, a student taking 15 credit hours should expect to spend 30 to 45 hours each week studying outside of class. You can see why time management is important!
- To manage your time effectively in college, you can recreate the game we just played. Make a list of everything you must complete, and mentally assign a point value to each task. Make sure you note when each task must be completed. Then, prioritize the order in which you will finish the tasks. Here are a few strategies you can try, find out which ones work for you:
 - **Take care of a small task first to get the ball rolling!** Some people find that this helps them feel accomplished and ready to take on larger tasks after being able to cross off an item on the list.
 - **Tackle the whole list chronologically!** Order your list by which task is "due" first and proceed straight down the list, making sure you leave enough time for each.
 - **Focus on deliverables!** A "deliverable" is another word for something you turn in. Some people find that they manage their time best by making assignments, papers, and projects a priority and then filling their remaining time with reviewing notes and studying for tests.
 - **Do a little of everything every day!** If you need variety, this strategy might work best for you. An open afternoon might see you outlining a paper and writing the first paragraph, then doing the first five problems of a math assignment, then reading a chapter for another class and reviewing some notes from your morning lecture.
 - **Start with what you dislike!** This strategy works well if you tend to procrastinate. Getting through topics or assignments you dread before moving on to projects that are easy can help you stay accountable to yourself.

Time Flies Task List

- Do a lap around the room (5 points)
- Out of paper, create something for the facilitator to wear (10 points; bonus 5 points if the facilitator actually wears it)
- Sing a song together (15 points)
- Get everyone in the room to sign a single piece of paper (5 points)
- Count the number of pets owned by your group (20 points)
- Assign a nickname to each member of the team (5 points)
- Create name cards for each team member (5 points; bonus 5 points if you use your team nicknames)
- Convince a member of another team to join you (20 points)
- Name your team and come up with a slogan (5 points for the name, 5 points for the slogan)
- Re-create the sounds of the Amazon rainforest with your voices (15 points)
- Make a list of colleges that members of your team would like to attend – one for each team member (15 points)
- Form a conga line and conga from one end of the room to another (10 points; bonus 10 points if anyone joins you)
- Line your team up in order of birthday (5 points; bonus 5 points if someone's birthday is today)
- High-five everyone on the team (5 points)
- Play a round of tic-tac-toe with another team (10 points; bonus 5 points to the team that wins)
- Draw and name a mascot for your team (10 points)