

B1-B2 English Worksheet

Procrastination and Performance: The Habit Students Struggle With Most

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Article

A large study of nearly 66,000 university students in the United States has found that procrastination is one of the biggest problems affecting academic performance. More than seven in ten students said they had struggled with it during the previous year, and about 45% said it had harmed their studies. Procrastination can seem like a simple habit of choosing to put off work, but researchers say it can have a serious effect when tasks build up and students start to fall behind.

Experts argue that procrastination is not always the same as laziness. People may avoid a task because it feels boring, difficult or stressful, and they may turn to easier activities that give quick relief. A student might check messages, tidy a room or watch videos instead of starting an essay. This can get in the way of progress, and the pressure may build up as the deadline gets closer. Poor sleep and stress can then make it harder to catch up on work, creating a cycle that is difficult to break.

Researchers say better support should deal with the reasons behind the delay, not just tell people to manage their time. One useful approach is to break down a large task into smaller steps, start on the first one and work through the rest gradually. Students can also remove distractions or ask someone to help them keep up with a plan. The same ideas can apply beyond university. At work or at home, many people struggle to get round to unpleasant jobs. The challenge is to notice when a short delay is harmless and when putting something off is becoming a pattern.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	The study involved tens of thousands of university students in the United States.	
2	Fewer than half of the students said they had experienced procrastination during the previous year.	
3	The article presents procrastination as simply another word for laziness.	
4	People may choose easy activities because they provide quick relief from an uncomfortable task.	
5	Stress and poor sleep can make it harder for someone to recover from delaying work.	
6	Researchers say giving people time-management advice is always enough to solve the problem.	
7	Dividing a large task into smaller steps is suggested as one useful strategy.	
8	The article says procrastination is a problem that only affects university students.	

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. put off	A. finish work left undone earlier
2. build up	B. fail to keep pace with expected progress
3. fall behind	C. begin working on something
4. turn to	D. block or obstruct progress
5. get in the way	E. finally do something after a delay
6. catch up on	F. delay doing something
7. break down	G. deal with something step by step
8. start on	H. accumulate gradually
9. work through	I. divide something into smaller parts
10. get round to	J. seek help or relief from someone or something

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. large	A. straightforward
2. previous	B. helpful
3. serious	C. strain
4. simple	D. earlier
5. difficult	E. rapid
6. pressure	F. disagreeable
7. support	G. substantial
8. quick	H. challenging
9. useful	I. assistance
10. unpleasant	J. severe

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words or phrases from the worksheet and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. Which kinds of task are you most likely to put off?	1. Is procrastination mainly a personal habit, or are phones, apps and workplaces designed in ways that make it harder to focus?
2. What do you usually turn to when you want to avoid a difficult task?	2. Should schools teach specific strategies for dealing with procrastination?
3. Do deadlines help you focus, or make you more stressed?	3. Can perfectionism cause more procrastination than laziness?
4. Which distractions most often get in the way of your plans?	4. Is it helpful or harmful to feel guilty after putting something off?
5. Have you ever had to catch up on a lot of work at the last minute?	5. Do strict deadlines improve performance, or encourage last-minute work?
6. Does breaking a large task down into small steps work for you?	6. Should employers care when work is done if the final result is good and on time?
7. What household or life-admin jobs do you struggle to get round to?	7. Could AI tools reduce procrastination by breaking down tasks, or create new distractions?
8. When do you work best: early, late, or under pressure?	8. At what point does taking a break become procrastination?

Answer Key

True/False	1=T, 2=F, 3=F, 4=T, 5=T, 6=F, 7=T, 8=F
Phrase Match	1=F, 2=H, 3=B, 4=J, 5=D, 6=A, 7=I, 8=C, 9=G, 10=E
Synonym Match	1=G, 2=D, 3=J, 4=A, 5=H, 6=C, 7=I, 8=E, 9=B, 10=F

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	I sometimes put off difficult emails until the end of the day.
2	Small unfinished jobs can build up surprisingly quickly.
3	It is easy to fall behind when several deadlines arrive together.
4	Some people turn to social media when a task feels uncomfortable.
5	Constant notifications can get in the way of concentrated work.
6	After a busy week, I often need the weekend to catch up on paperwork.
7	It helps to break down a large project into smaller tasks.
8	I try to start on the hardest task before checking messages.
9	We worked through the list one item at a time.
10	I finally got round to organising the files I had ignored for weeks.