

[See this page in the course material.](#)

Learning Objectives

- Describe typical ratios of in-class to out-of-class work per credit hour and how to effectively schedule your study time

Class- and Study-Time Ratios

After Kai decides to talk to his guidance counselor about his stress and difficulty balancing his activities, his guidance counselor recommends that Kai create a schedule. This will help him set time for homework, studying, work, and leisure activities so that he avoids procrastinating on his schoolwork. His counselor explains that if Kai sets aside specific time to study every day—rather than simply studying when he feels like he has the time—his study habits will become more regular, which will improve Kai's learning.

At the end of their session, Kai and his counselor have put together a rough schedule for Kai to further refine as he goes through the next couple of weeks.

Although Kai knows that studying is important and he is trying to keep up with homework, he really needs to work on time management. This is challenging for many college students, especially ones with lots of responsibilities outside of school. Unlike high school classes, college classes meet less often, and college students are expected to do more independent learning, homework, and studying. The amount of time students spend on coursework outside of the physical classroom will vary, depending on the course (how rigorous it is and how many credits it's worth) and on the institution's expectations. However, a general rule is that the ratio of classroom time to study time is 1:2 or 1:3. That means that for every hour you spend in class, you should plan to spend two to three hours out of class working independently on course assignments. For example, if your composition class meets for one hour, three times a week, you're expected to devote from six to nine hours each week on reading assignments, writing assignments, etc.

If you account for all the classes you're taking in a given semester, the study time really adds up—and if it sounds like a lot of work, it is! The only way to stay on top of the workload is by creating a schedule to help you manage your time. You might decide to use a weekly or monthly schedule—or both. Whatever you choose, the following tips can help you design a smart schedule that's easy to follow and stick with.

Start with Fixed Time Commitments

First off, mark down the commitments that don't allow any flexibility. These include class meetings, work hours, appointments, etc. Capturing the "fixed" parts of your schedule can help you see where there are blocks of time that can be used for other activities.

Kai's Schedule

Kai is taking four classes: Spanish 101, US History, College Algebra, and Introduction to Psychology. He also has a fixed work schedule—he works 27 hours a week.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM		Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	
10:00 AM		US History I		US History I		US History I	Work
11:00 AM		College Algebra	Intro to Psychology	College Algebra	Intro to Psychology	College Algebra	
12:00 PM			(ends at 12:30)		(ends at 12:30)		
1:00 PM		Work (start 12:30 end 4:30)		Work (start 12:30 end 4:30)		Work (start 12:30 end 4:30)	
2:00 PM			Work		Work		
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							

Consider Your Studying and Homework Habits

When are you most productive? Are you a morning person or a night owl? Block out your study times accordingly. You'll also want to factor in any resources you might need. For instance, if you prefer to study very early or late in the day, and you're working on a research paper, you might want to check the library hours to make sure it's open when you need it.

Kai's Schedule

Since Kai's Spanish class starts his schedule at 9:00 every day, Kai decides to use that as the base for his schedule. He doesn't usually have trouble waking up in the mornings (except for on the weekends), so he decides that he can do a bit of studying before class. His Spanish practice is often something he can do while eating or traveling, so this gives him a bit of leniency with his schedule.

Kai's marked work in grey, classes in green, and dedicated study time in yellow:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM		Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	
9:00 AM		Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	
10:00 AM		US History I	Spanish 101	US History I	Spanish 101	US History I	Work
11:00 AM		College Algebra	Intro to Psychology	College Algebra	Intro to Psychology	College Algebra	
12:00 PM		Spanish 101	(ends at 12:30)	Spanish 101	(ends at 12:30)	Spanish 101	
1:00 PM	Spanish 101	Work (start 12:30 end 4:30)		Work (start 12:30 end 4:30)		Work (start 12:30 end 4:30)	Spanish 101
2:00 PM	US History I		Work		Work		Intro to Psych
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM		College Algebra		College Algebra		College Algebra	
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM		Intro to Psych		Intro to Psych			
9:00 PM			US History I		US History I		
10:00 PM							

Plan Ahead

Even if you prefer weekly over monthly schedules, write reminders for yourself and keep track of any upcoming projects, papers, or exams. You will also want to prepare for these assignments in advance. Most students eventually discover (the hard way) that cramming for exams the night before and waiting till the last minute to start on a term paper is a poor strategy. Procrastination creates a lot of unnecessary stress, and the resulting final product—whether an exam, lab report, or paper—is rarely your best work. Try simple things to break down large tasks, such as setting aside an hour or so each day to work on them during the weeks leading up to the deadline. If you get stuck, get help from your instructor early, rather than waiting until the day

before an assignment is due.

Consider Leisure Time

It might seem impossible to leave room in your schedule for fun activities, but every student needs and deserves to socialize and relax on a regular basis. Try to make this time something you look forward to and count on, and use it as a reward for getting things done. You might reserve every Friday or Saturday evening for going out with friends, for example. Or, if a club you're interested in meets on Thursdays during a time you've reserved for studying, try to reschedule your study time so you can do both.



Kai's Schedule

When you look at Kai's schedule, you can see that he's left open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. While he plans on using Sundays to complete larger assignments when he needs to,

he's left his Friday and Saturday evenings open for leisure.

Now that you have considered ways to create a schedule, you can practice making one that will help you succeed academically. [The California Community College's Online Education site](#) has a free source for populating a study schedule based on your individual course load.

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