

Worksheet: Monthly Planning for Writing

Introduction:

Planning is a powerful tool that helps you keep your priorities clear, stay focused, and ultimately get more done. Without a clear plan, it's easy to get lost in day-to-day demands and lose sight of your bigger goals. Writing is often the thing that falls to the wayside when we don't have a plan in place. This worksheet is designed to help you create a manageable monthly plan that keeps your priorities in focus and allows for flexibility as life inevitably happens.

Step 1: Set Your Monthly Priorities

Instructions: Start by creating a priority list for the upcoming month. This isn't just a to-do list—it's a way to identify what's most important. Align these priorities with your larger academic and career goals.

Prompt 1: Identify Key Projects

- What are the key writing projects or research goals you need to focus on this month?
- Are there any deadlines you must meet?
- How do these monthly priorities align with your yearly goals?

Reflection: (Write your responses here):

Prompt 2: Align with the Bigger Goals

- Why are these priorities important for your long-term goals?
- How will focusing on these priorities help you progress in your academic career?

Reflection: (Write your responses here):

Step 2: Map Out Your Typical Week

Instructions: Once you've identified your monthly priorities, think about where these tasks fit into your typical weekly schedule. This step helps you ensure that your weekly plan reflects your priorities and is realistic.

Prompt 1: Weekly Schedule

- What does your typical week look like in terms of teaching, research, meetings, and personal commitments?
- When are you most productive during the day? Can you block out this time for your highest-priority tasks?
- *The goal is not to stick to this schedule each and every week but rather to have a general understanding of where your time will be allocated.*

Weekly Schedule Outline: (Write your responses here):

If you'd like to map out your typical weekly schedule, you can copy and use [this schedule](#) in Google Sheets.

Prompt 2: Time Blocking

- How will you allocate time for your writing projects each week?
- Remember to include breaks and downtime to avoid burnout. What activities help you recharge?

Time Blocks: (Write your responses here):

Pro Tip: Avoid blocking off too much time each day for intellectual work. Most of us cannot do intellectually demanding tasks for 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, for months on end. Instead, accept the fact that you can make regular progress on writing projects with only 2-10 hours per week.

Step 3: Schedule Weekly Meetings

Instructions: To stay on track, schedule a weekly meeting with yourself every Friday afternoon or Monday morning. This time is for planning the week ahead and making any necessary adjustments to your schedule.

Prompt 1: Weekly Planning Meeting

- What day and time will you set aside for your weekly planning meeting?
- What are the key tasks you need to focus on during this meeting?

Weekly Planning Details: (Write your responses here):

Prompt 2: Adjusting the Plan

- How will you adjust your tasks and time blocks based on what happened the previous week?
- How can you stay flexible while keeping your priorities front and center?

Plan Adjustments: (Write your responses here):

Step 4: End-of-Week Wrap-Up

Instructions: At the end of each week, take some time to wrap up any unfinished tasks—especially higher-priority ones. This practice helps you start the new week prepared and focused.

Prompt 1: Wrapping Up

- What tasks do you need to wrap up before the week ends?
- Are there any high-priority tasks that require extra attention?

End-of-Week Checklist: (Write your responses here):

Prompt 2: Preparing for the Next Week

- How can you ensure that you start the next week prepared and focused?
- What steps will you take to avoid playing catch-up on Monday morning?

Preparation Steps: (Write your responses here):

Final Reflection: Customizing Your Planning Approach

Instructions: Just because this approach works for some does not imply it will work for everyone. Reflect on your experience and consider how you might customize this planning approach to suit your needs.

Prompt 1: Reflecting on the Month

- How did this monthly planning approach work for you?
- What adjustments might you make to better fit your work style and life circumstances?

Reflection: (Write your responses here):

Prompt 2: Exploring Other Approaches

- What other planning methods have you tried in the past? How did they work for you?
- Are there aspects of those methods you can incorporate into your monthly planning?

Reflection: (Write your responses here):

Conclusion:

By breaking down your planning into manageable monthly chunks and keeping your priorities clear, you can stay on track without feeling overwhelmed. Remember, the key is finding a planning approach that works best for you. Give this method a try, and feel free to adapt it as needed to better suit your academic and personal lives.