

Getting started: Chunking

Difficult tasks

Sometimes we procrastinate because tasks or assignments seem overwhelming, enormous or terrifying.

One way to conquer these scary tasks is to break them down into a few smaller tasks. These smaller tasks are less intimidating and easier to start.

This is called **chunking**.

How to chunk a big task

1. Break it down

- Write down all the tasks you need to complete the assignment.

2. Give yourself deadlines

- Work backwards from the due date.
- Estimate how long each task will take.

3. Look for gaps in your timetable

- Breaks between lectures.
- Commuting time.

4. Schedule specific tasks

- For example: create an outline, write a paragraph, find three articles.

Examples of chunking

Essay	Report	Presentation
Choose a topic ↓ Background reading ↓ Research the topic ↓ Read and take notes ↓ Create an outline ↓ Write a draft ↓ Revise and edit ↓ Proofread, format and reference ↓ Submit!	Work out what's required ↓ Create an outline ↓ Write up methods ↓ Create figures and tables ↓ Write up results ↓ Research and write introduction and discussion ↓ Revise and edit ↓ Proofread, format and reference ↓ Submit!	Work out what's required ↓ Research topic ↓ Draft an outline ↓ Create and format slides ↓ Work out what you're going to say ↓ Practice ↓ Present!

Advice from students

At least read assignments on the day you get them...to get you thinking about them.

Go see your course coordinator early if you are stuck.

Invest in a calendar and plan how many hours a week you need for each assignment before it's due.

Don't be afraid to ask questions!

Even if you doubt your work – hand it in!

All-nighters are not your friend! Start researching early... Give yourself space to complete it and edit it.

Try it yourself

1. Choose an upcoming assignment.
2. Write down the specific tasks you are required to complete the assignment.
3. Give yourself some deadlines and start scheduling these tasks in your calendar.
4. Remember to be flexible and budget some extra time just in case!

Remember: Everyone works differently. The time and order tasks are completed will vary between individuals.

Find a system that works for you and be prepared to trial different strategies.