

Luis's Story

Luis's alarm began blaring at 6:00 in the morning. He had decided to get up early to finish an oral presentation that was due that day. Thinking that a few extra minutes of sleep would make him feel well rested and help his presentation, Luis reached out and pressed the snooze button.

After dozing for what felt like seconds, Luis reached over to hit the snooze button again, and saw that it was 7:00, his usual wake-up time. He jumped out of bed and got ready for school. He had about five minutes to look over his presentation before he ran out the door.

When school ended at 3:30, Luis's day hadn't gone well. Not only had he been unprepared for his presentation, but he had also forgotten about an essay that had been due that day. Luis really wanted to pass his classes this semester. He needed good grades in order to get into the school that his brother attended. Frustrated, Luis decided that he needed a break from schoolwork. He walked home and turned on the TV to help him unwind.

At 4:30, he realized that he only had 30 minutes before he had to leave for work. He lugged his backpack to his room and dumped his books out on the desk. Luis knew that he had written down his math assignment somewhere, but he couldn't find it. When Luis finally found the assignment, he realized that he needed a pencil and went to the kitchen to get one.

In the kitchen, Luis saw a bag of chips sitting on the counter and started eating. His boss never let him eat on the job, so he decided to fix himself a sandwich.

Glancing at the clock, Luis sat down with his sandwich and realized that he only had 10 minutes before he had to leave for work. He knew that he could never get anything done in such a short time. He felt as if he'd never catch up with his homework.

When Luis got home from work at 9:00, he was exhausted. His favourite show was on, so he watched TV with his brother. When the show ended at 10:00, he sat down at his desk to do homework. He had to complete the essay and that math assignment.

Luis figured he could rush through the math assignment because his teacher didn't always check homework, so he started with that. Luis finished the math and moved on to the essay. As he was digging through his papers looking for the right text and notes to answer the question, the phone rang—it was his girlfriend. They'd had an argument the day before, and Luis hadn't spoken to her since. He talked to her for a while.

When Luis finally got off the phone, it was close to midnight. He looked at the papers scattered on his desk. There was no way he could finish this tonight anyway.

Questions to consider

1. Did you relate to Luis's story? Why or why not?
2. How did Luis's own feelings of frustration affect his studies?
3. What things distracted Luis from getting his homework done? Give specific examples from the story.
4. What could Luis have done differently to better manage his time?

5 STEPS TO CHECK ON YOUR FRIEND

We all want to help our friends, but sometimes we don't know how to. Here's 5 easy steps to check in on your friends and let them know you care. Remember, you don't have to fix anything...

1. Prepare

- Before you check in on a mate, you should be sure that you're in a sound headspace.
- Can you give as much time as is needed?
- Are you prepared to respond if someone says "no"?
- Have you chose somewhere relatively private and comfortable?

2. Ask "R U OK?"

- Four simple letters can make a huge difference!
- Mention specific things that you've noticed that are out of the ordinary.
- Try those questions:
 - "I noticed you haven't been to class in a couple of days, I just wanted to check... is everything ok?"
 - "I don't know much about you, but this week has been stressful for me, how are you coping?"

3. Listen without judgement

- Don't interrupt or rush the conversation, listen to everything they have to say. Never underestimate the importance of just being there when someone is stressed, anxious or vulnerable. They might just want someone to watch a movie or get ice-cream with.
- Embrace the awkward pause to give them a chance to keep talking.
- Show that you've listened by repeating back some of the things you've heard.
- Demonstrate that you're feeling empathetic by acknowledging that it must be hard.

4. Encourage Action

Find out what they have done the past that has helped them. Put the choice on them for their next step and get them to verbally commit.

- What do they enjoy?
- What helps them relax?
- How did they get through a similar situation?
- Can they make time for one of these things in the next week?

5. Check-in

After a reasonable amount of time has passed, make a time to check back in-person, over text, Facebook, or phone call.

Put the reminder in your diary straight away so you don't forget.

Ask yourself and them, "have that step taken been helpful so far?"

If they haven't tried it, or it hasn't helped, go back to step 3.

Note:

If you see their mood not improving and their performance at school is significantly decreasing, then encourage them to seek a teacher or health professional for help.

Top Achievers Education
Study Skills Work Sheets

GOAL

Date to be achieved

**Why I want to achieve
this goal?**

**What is holding me
back?
What obstacles will I
face?**

**How am I going to
accomplish this goal?
What are the steps?**

My Reward

Example goal setting table

GOAL	To achieve 17/20 in next creative writing task
Date to be achieved	Term 3, Week6
Why I want to achieve this goal?	To maintain, if not increase my rank in English. (Linked to mid-term goals) To practice the skill of storytelling because I want to study Creative writing at USyd. (Linked to long-term goals)
What is holding me back?	Not understanding the rubrics completely
What obstacles will I face?	Speed of writing Story structure → need to consider the bigger picture more
How am I going to accomplish this goal? What are the steps?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask for feedback2. Act on feedback3. Ask for more feedback (weekly mentoring session?)4. Ask for opinions from other students (perhaps a tutor)5. Read and understand rubrics6. Proof read other students' essays and tell them what they did well.
My Reward	Relax by going down to Double Bay on a Wednesday night. (Only if I got that 17/20)

Timetable/To-Do

Always be true to yourself when giving estimations.

Steps to creating an effective study timetable

1. Find a calendar. (i.e. Google Calendar, iCal, Excel spread sheet, etc.)
2. Fill in mandatory time slots
 - a. Classes
 - b. Sports training/competitions
 - c. Music rehearsals
3. Highlight free time
4. Input tasks from a to-do list into free slots
5. Re-evaluate progress weekly

Steps to planning for an exam/assessment

Good planning avoids cramming

1. Put dates into calendar
2. List out what you need to study, write them down (brain dump).
 1. 20 Past-papers?
 2. 5 more draft essays?
 3. Topic tests?
3. Divide work between now and the date of exam
4. Input tasks into to-do list
5. Follow task manager and view these tasks as smaller goals
6. Input tasks into calendar by estimating a competition time for each task.

Sample HSC exam period timetable

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Good luck! You can do it. Just keep pushing forward. *Love, Jenny.*

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30 September – 6 October	<i>Mathematics:</i> 2014 HSC paper	<i>Chemistry:</i> work on Industrial Chemistry Notes	<i>Mathematics:</i> 2003 HSC paper	<i>Modern History:</i> continue memorising Ho Chi Minh/work on Essays	BIRTHDAY LUNCH	<i>English:</i> practice Paper One Question One	<i>Mathematics:</i> 2014 HSC paper
		<i>English:</i> start memorising Module B	<i>Modern History:</i> start/fully memorise Ho Chi Minh			<i>Modern History:</i> start memorising Indochina	<i>Legal Studies:</i> finish Human Rights and start memorising Family
	<i>Chemistry:</i> work on Industrial Chemistry notes	<i>English:</i> fix Brother and Sisters paragraph/other	<i>Chemistry:</i> finish/study Industrial Chemistry	<i>English:</i> watch The Hours/better Module A	<i>English:</i> continue memorising Module B		
7 October – 13 October	<i>Maths Extension 1:</i> 2002 HSC paper	<i>Chemistry:</i> 2015 HSC paper	<i>Legal Studies:</i> past HSC multiple choice since 2011	<i>Modern History:</i> continue memorising Indochina/start memorising Germany	<i>English:</i> better AOS, Module B, Module C notes	<i>Mathematics:</i> past HSC paper	<i>English:</i> start memorising AOS and Creative
	<i>Legal Studies:</i> start/fully memorise Human Rights	<i>English:</i> start memorising Module A	<i>English:</i> start memorising Module C			<i>Legal Studies:</i> start memorising Crime and World Order	<i>Maths Extension 1:</i> past HSC paper

(My study timetable in the lead-up to the HSC exams which started on the 18th of October [which also happened to be my birthday!]. Keep in mind I still set aside time for myself [note: BIRTHDAY LUNCH] and wrote an inspirational, albeit cheesy, quote to myself to keep motivation levels high.)

Additional Reading

To-Do Lists vs Calendars: It's Okay to Have Both

To-do lists are tactical, calendars are strategic.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/335358>

What's Your Learning Style?

20 Questions to identify your learning style

<http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles-quiz.shtml>

6 Tips for Goal-Setting That, Trust Me, They Don't Teach You in College

Your goals will not achieve themselves and will regrettably require your vigorous participation.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/282514>

How to survive your HSC exams: tips from those who know!

<https://www.skillsroad.com.au/blog/life-hacks-blog/health-wellbeing/september-2019/how-to-survive-your-hsc-exams-tips-from-those-who#.Xm9o7pP7SqA>