



PROCRASTINATION



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
15BR-6248-TNMI

1 Warm-up

Study the definition below.

procrastinate (*verb*)
to keep delaying something that must be done, often because it is unpleasant or boring

Do you procrastinate? What kind of tasks do you delay doing?

2 Phrasal verbs

Read the sentences and match the underlined phrasal verbs to the definitions.

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|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you <u>put off</u> cleaning the kitchen, it will be more work for you later. 2. Peter would never <u>shy away</u> from hard work. 3. I can't <u>get on with</u> my homework with all that noise. 4. Our choice of hotel will <u>come down to</u> money in the end. 5. I still have a lot of work to <u>finish off</u>. 6. Everybody was surprised when he managed to <u>follow up on</u> his decision to stop smoking. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. avoid doing something that you dislike or don't feel comfortable about b. be most influenced by c. complete d. continue doing something e. delay, postpone f. take further action connected with something |
|---|--|



3 Reading

Read the article on the next page and find the answers to the questions below.

1. Why do we put off tasks according to Dr Steel?

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2. What are the four most popular types of tasks that people delay doing?

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3. What are the benefits of procrastinating less?

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4. How does our brain make us procrastinate?

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5. How does telling your friends about your deadlines make you less likely to procrastinate?

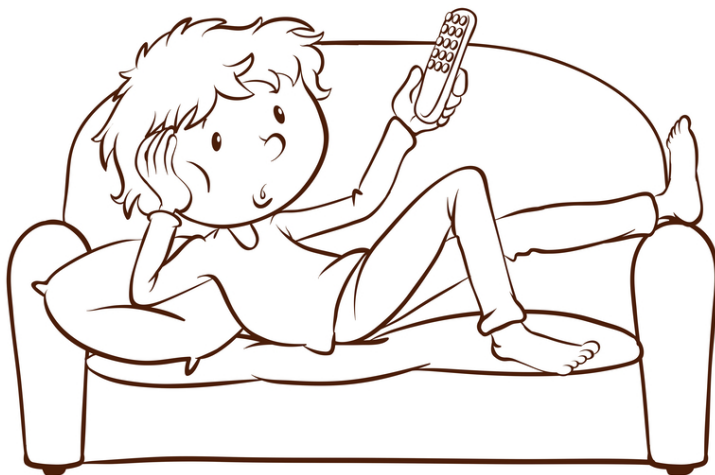
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6. What other procrastination-prevention strategies are mentioned in the article?

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Procrastination: Not now, I'm busy

From paperwork to paying the bills, we're all guilty of putting off tasks we know we can't avoid. But confronting the real reasons for procrastination can help us beat it.

1. Procrastination is in our genetic make-up; we shy away from dull jobs, inventing reasons why we cannot get on with them, clicking "refresh" on Twitter until it's too late to do anything else. Some people, a fortunate minority, are able to get on with things, but what about the rest of us?
2. "Procrastination is putting things off despite knowing that it will make life harder and more stressful," says Dr Piers Steel, author of *The Procrastination Equation*. "If these tasks were fun, we'd just do them now, but we put off what is difficult or unpleasant."
3. The most popular delayed task is housework, followed by dieting or fitness regimes, treating illness and going to the dentist, and working on your career or education.
4. "You can put off anything," Dr Steel continues. "We know we should be doing these things like saving for retirement, or studying for exams. The fact is, the less people procrastinate, the more money they have, the better relationships they have, and the healthier they are."
5. This is obvious for the couples who don't argue about whether anyone has repaired the toilet seat yet, for the young go-getters who rise straight to the top at work, for the health freaks who simply go for that run instead of endlessly rescheduling it in their own heads.
6. "You have two decision-making systems in your brain," Dr Steel says, "one is responsible for the short term, and the other deals with the future – it's responsible for civilisation. We bounce between long-term goals and short-term temptations, so we need goals that will translate our plans for the short-term system."
7. Consider writers: they set themselves targets and word counts per day, translating an abstract, seemingly endless task into something concrete with easily measured progress. Dr Steel recommends such techniques. Telling other people about your task a month before the "deadline" makes it much more likely that the task will be completed. The benefit is that you avoid the embarrassment of not following up on something people are expecting you to do – for example, telling all your friends you are going to stop smoking makes you more likely to do it.
8. Procrastination ultimately comes down to planning, which, if you're not careful, becomes procrastination in itself. But it's worth making sure you have everything in place to improve your strategies – for example, a separate computer log-on for work and for play, the former with a plain background, fewer applications and limited internet access.
9. Novelist Jonathan Franzen famously blocks the internet connection on his computer with glue to prevent him from procrastinating instead of writing, but there are programs available that will block your internet access for as long as you specify – just give the password details to your more strong-willed partner. Victor Hugo, the 19th century French poet and novelist, often wrote naked, ordering his valet to hide his clothes until he had finished writing. These days, this seems less effective: there are plenty of things you can do at a computer naked.
10. "Successful people don't pretend they don't procrastinate," Dr Steel says. "People who pretend they have willpower are less successful." Instead, plan for procrastination: make your work environment a temple of productivity by removing distractions.

Adapted from The Independent, Tuesday 14 February 2012, by Harriet Walker



4

Find the word

Find a word or phrase in the text which means ...

1. part of our genes (*phrase, P1*)
2. boring (*adjective, P1*)
3. people who are very energetic and determined to be successful (*plural noun, P5*)
4. people who are obsessed with keeping fit and healthy (*plural noun, P5*)
5. things that you want to have or do but that you know you should not have or do (*plural noun, P6*)
6. mentally strong, determined not to change your position (*adjective, P9*)
7. a male servant of someone who is very rich (*noun, P9*)
8. determination, ability to control your thoughts and desires (*noun, P10*)

Discuss any of the questions below:

1. What tasks or resolutions do you need willpower to accomplish?
2. What other behaviours are in our genetic makeup?
3. Describe an occasion when you couldn't resist temptation.
4. What kind of tasks do you find dull?
5. Do you know any go-getters or health freaks?

5

Talking point

What do you think of the suggestions in the article? Do you think they could work or is willpower enough? Do you have any tips of your own?