Planning Backwards

Often, when we try to plan from the current date forward in regards to assignment due dates, test dates and when to study, and other important life goals and tasks, we can find ourselves procrastinating and waiting until the very last minute to finish drafts and papers or assignments for class. When we plan from the current date forward, we give ourselves more of an opportunity to procrastinate, making it easier to rationalize that a couple days less won’t make that much of a difference. A couple days here or there makes a significant difference in our ability to put out our best work.

We’re encouraging you to flip that idea on its head and instead plan backwards from the due date to the current date. This method will trick your brain into recognizing how much time you actually have to complete a paper or an assignment. You can find an example below. The **objective** is the specific task or goal related to that paper or assignment that you want to complete. The **timeline** is the timeframe in which you want to complete it and may be adjusted to your own learning and working needs and preferences. The **date** is the actual date to which you are holding yourself to complete the objective.

Planning backwards will give you a better idea of how soon you need to start a project, assignment or paper. You can also use this to create a study schedule for tests in your courses as well as any other personal or professional endeavors you may have.

## Example of Planning Backwards

Class Assignment: Research Paper

**Objective: Timeline Date:**

Date Paper/Project is due December 7th

Final Paper turned in 1 or 2 days before Due Date December 5th

Final Paper Written 1 or 2 days before Turned in December 3rd

Revision of Rough Draft Revision by self, professor, ACE November 26th

Rough Draft Written 2 or 3 weeks before Due Date November 23rd

Outline or Mapping 1 or 2 weeks before writing rough draft November 16th

Research 1 or 2 weeks before outlining October 19th

Organization of Paper 1 week before researching for paper October 12th

## Your Turn

Class Assignment:

**Objective: Timeline: Date:**