

Effort Activity 3: Questify

This is a great tool to use if you've got a task ahead of you that you're dreading. We all have pieces of work like this; ones that feel so horrible, such a terrible slog, that we just can't summon the effort and we do anything we can to put them off.

If that's the case with a task you've got on your plate, *try turning it into a quest*.

Questify the whole experience. Make it epic. Set aside a whole afternoon to tackle it; take snacks with you, tell everybody you're off to battle the dreaded job in hand, then put your phone on airplane settings. And on the day, keep going until, exhausted, you finally defeat it.

We've seen it work for many students in the past because they've included some important elements in their quests. There are five common characteristics. Don't skip these! They're the elements that make the quest feel real and they seriously increase your chances of success.

1. Location

The best quests take you away from familiar spaces. Don't choose your usual study spots and certainly don't stay at home – there are way too many temptations for you there. Quests should require you to travel, taking you away from your usual habits and routines.

Consider a library you don't go to often, a coffee shop on the other side of town, a hotel lobby you can reach by a short ride on public transport, your gran's house. Or go in to work with a parent and borrow a corner of their workspace. All of these options make the quest feel real.

2. Food and drink

You're not going to be hijacked by hunger. Pack a couple of sandwiches or take two or three snacks that you'll enjoy breaking open when things get tough. You'll need plenty of water too.

3. Publicity

One of the ways you'll find quests motivate you is by *putting you on the hook*. If you tell your parents, peers or friends that you're off to slay a terrible task and by the evening it'll all be done – you're going to feel a fool if you end up bailing out. Force yourself to do it by telling others about your plan.

4. Radio silence

For the duration of the epic battle, you need to make sure you've got no contact with the outside world. The only call you'll make or take are from your parents to sort out lifts or other issues. Make sure you go totally dark apart from this one important exception. You'll need complete concentration during the quest, so switch off all alerts. Find a study playlist – search 'music for concentration' and you'll discover loads of them – and make sure that's the only thing you listen to until you've slayed the beast.

5. Celebration

Finally, all great quests finish with the hero (that's you!) returning from afar having defeated the dreadful monster. Then there's a big party in the square and you're lifted up on the shoulders of the townsfolk while a band plays celebratory music. OK, you might not be able to get that to happen, but make sure you've lined up something great to enjoy when you're done!

And that's it – the five rules to successful questing. Good luck out there, adventurer...

How will you use this activity to improve your own study skills?