

## 14. Effort Activity: The Ten Minute Rule

If you are in a position where you are regularly putting up barriers to work, the Ten Minute Rule is a good way of breaking them down. What do we mean by 'barriers'? Many students will avoid A level classwork or homework because it is hard. Instead they will:

- » Do something more comfortable but less useful. They might copy out some notes or make a mind-map when really they know they should be doing the exam paper their teacher has set them under timed conditions.
- » Claim that homework or independent work 'isn't realistic' as a way of avoiding it. ('This is pointless. The real exam will be totally different so why bother?')
- » Get into a deep discussion about something related so they feel like they are working.
- » Look for someone else who isn't doing it. Or in extreme cases, tell themselves that no one is doing it.

You may recognise these behaviours in yourself and others – putting up barriers to independent work to avoid it.

If this is you, the Ten Minute Rule is a good way to break through barriers. It's very simple:

- 1 Tell yourself you are going to do ten minutes of intense work. That's all.
- 2 Decide what work the ten minutes is going to be spent on.
- 3 Clear a space and sit down with the right materials to hand.
- 4 Start.

You can, of course, stop after ten minutes. Even if you do, you've done ten minutes more work than you would have done. But what often happens is that ten minutes becomes twenty. Sometimes even half an hour or longer.

### Final Thoughts

What do we learn from this experiment? Hopefully, you will realise that the thought of work is often much worse than the work itself. Try using the Ten Minute Rule with a task you are dreading.

Which task is currently the least pleasant on your to-to list? Plan to tackle it today. Use the Ten Minute Rule. Set yourself up somewhere quiet where you won't be disturbed, and go for it! Make your plans here:

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