



B1-B2 • Business English

# Time Management Myths at Work

---

## 1. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1. What "productivity hacks" have you tried? Did they help?
2. Is multitasking real or a myth? Why?
3. How do you decide what to do first on a busy day?
4. Do you plan your day or go with the flow?
5. When are you most productive—morning or evening?

## 2. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Match the words with their meanings:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. multitask          | a. to try to do several things at the same time      |
| ___ 2. prioritize         | b. long, uninterrupted focus on a demanding task     |
| ___ 3. context switching  | c. to decide what is most important                  |
| ___ 4. deep work          | d. to promise more than you can actually do          |
| ___ 5. time-blocking      | e. leftover focus from a previous task               |
| ___ 6. busyness           | f. work expands to fill the time available           |
| ___ 7. Parkinson's Law    | g. a tendency to do urgent tasks over important ones |
| ___ 8. urgency bias       | h. the state of being very active without results    |
| ___ 9. overcommit         | i. scheduling specific periods for specific tasks    |
| ___ 10. attention residue | j. frequent shifting of focus between tasks          |

## 3. READING

### Doing More vs. Doing What Matters

We love to believe simple tricks can rescue our schedules: wake at 5 a.m., answer emails instantly, and squeeze more into every hour. But many "rules" of time management fall apart

in real workplaces. Multitasking often produces shallow work and more mistakes. Constant context switching drains energy and leaves attention residue that makes the next task slower, not faster.

What actually works is boring but effective: prioritize by impact, block time for deep work, and protect that time like a meeting. Batch low-value tasks, set realistic limits, and accept that you can't do everything. Parkinson's Law reminds us that vague deadlines invite waste. Shorter, clearer time boxes can do more than any magical app. Productivity isn't about doing more—it's about doing what matters, on purpose.

Another trap is mistaking tools for habits. A beautiful planner cannot rescue a calendar that treats every request as urgent. Try a weekly review: choose one to three outcomes that would make the week a win, block two chunks for deep work, and pre-schedule breaks. Say no with alternatives—'I can't do Friday, but I can send a summary'—so you protect focus without sounding unhelpful. Small, repeatable moves beat heroic all-nighters.

## 4. COMPREHENSION

1. Why is multitasking described as producing shallow work?
2. What does 'attention residue' mean in the text?
3. How does Parkinson's Law affect deadlines?
4. Which practices does the text say are actually effective?
5. What does the text suggest productivity is really about?

## 5. VOCABULARY REVIEW

Fill in the blanks with words from the vocabulary list:

1. Many people try to \_\_\_\_\_ during meetings and emails, but quality drops.
2. When your day is crowded, you need to \_\_\_\_\_ your tasks by impact.
3. Frequent emails cause \_\_\_\_\_ that slows your next task.
4. Use \_\_\_\_\_ to protect time for focused work.
5. After constant \_\_\_\_\_, your brain gets tired and errors rise.
6. Beware of \_\_\_\_\_: being active isn't the same as being effective.
7. We \_\_\_\_\_ when we say yes to every request.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ means spending long, uninterrupted periods on hard tasks.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ pushes us to react to pings instead of doing important work.
10. According to \_\_\_\_\_, work grows to fill the time we give it.

## 6. WORD FORMATION

One cell is blank in each row. Complete the missing form.

Verb	Noun	Adjective
------	------	-----------

_____	priority	prioritized
commit	_____	committed
focus	focus	_____
_____	production	productive
distract	_____	distracting

## 7. COLLOCATIONS

Match the words that go together:

- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. meeting | a. priorities |
| 2. hard    | b. switching  |
| 3. clear   | c. deadline   |
| 4. task    | d. work       |
| 5. urgent  | e. requests   |

## 8. ERROR CORRECTION

Find and correct the mistakes:

1. People is doing more when they multitask.
2. He don't block time for deep work since years.
3. Emails are answering by me immediately every five minutes.
4. If she would prioritize, she finish faster.
5. There is too many tasks and no plan.

## 9. GRAMMAR REVIEW

Complete the sentences:

1. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (set) shorter deadlines, you'll reduce waste.
2. You can't focus if you \_\_\_\_\_ (keep) switching tasks.
3. Had I \_\_\_\_\_ (know) the real priority, I would have started earlier.
4. Only after the meeting \_\_\_\_\_ (end) did he start the report.
5. If we blocked the morning, we \_\_\_\_\_ (do) the hard work first.

## 10. PASSIVE VOICE TRANSFORMATIONS

Change to passive voice:

1. Managers set vague deadlines.
2. People chase urgent emails all day.
3. The team has completed the deep-work block.

## 11. DISCUSSION

1. What is one time myth you believed and later dropped?
2. How could your team protect deep work?
3. When should you be reachable vs. intentionally offline?
4. What one rule would improve meetings in your workplace?

## 12. CRITICAL THINKING

Choose one common time myth (e.g., multitasking works, long hours mean productivity). Write 150-200 words explaining why it persists, when it fails, and what to do instead.

### Answer Key

Vocabulary Preview: 1-a, 2-c, 3-j, 4-b, 5-i, 6-h, 7-f, 8-g, 9-d, 10-e

Vocabulary Review: 2. multitask; 3. prioritize; 4. attention residue; 5. time-blocking; 6. context switching; 7. busyness; 8. overcommit; 9. deep work; 10. urgency bias; 11. Parkinson's Law

Word Formation: prioritize/priority/prioritized; commit/commitment/committed; focus/focus/focused; produce/production/productive; distract/distraction/distracting

Collocations: 1-a, 2-c, 3-d, 4-b, 5-e

Error Correction: People are doing more when they multitask. ❌ People think they do more when they multitask, but they usually don't. | He hasn't blocked time for deep work for years. | Emails are answered by me every five minutes. ❌ I answer emails every five minutes. | If she prioritized, she would finish faster. | There are too many tasks and no plan.

Grammar Review: 2. set; 3. keep; 4. known; 5. ended; 6. would do

Passive Voice: 1. Vague deadlines are set by managers.; 2. Urgent emails are chased all day.; 3. The deep-work block has been completed by the team.