



## LEARN THE ART OF PRIORITIZATION

by the student editors of ***NAVIGATING YOUR FRESHMAN YEAR***,  
a Students Helping Students™ book

In high school you were probably able to get all or most of your work done without much of a problem. In college, there's so much material to read and absorb, and papers and exams take longer to finish and study for. Sometimes it feels like you can hardly keep your head above this pool of work.

The only way to get through it is by mastering the art of prioritization. Some work is more important than other assignments and you have to get it done first. For example, if you have a paper due tomorrow and a reading assignment for another class, you have to tackle the paper first, and see how much time you have left for the reading.

Here are some tips that we've found useful:

- Buy one of those weekly planners and write down your assignments as soon as you get them. This will give you a good picture of what you have to get done by when. You'll also see when there's an avalanche of work coming your way and be able to prepare by finishing up other assignments before then. If you know what you have to get done it's much easier to prioritize your work.

*"Most courses will have a syllabus that tells you when big papers and exams are coming up. This makes it easier for you to plan out your semester and know when your sleep time is about to dwindle."*

**Recent Grad,  
Wesleyan University**

- Try to at least glance at most of the reading you have to do. There's no need to read everything in detail—many professors like to assign hundreds of pages while only focusing on topics covered by a few. Figure out the most important parts of the reading, and skim through the rest.
- If you know in advance that there's just no way that you can get all of your "must do" assignments done on time, talk to your professors. Be reasonable and don't make this a habit, but explain your situation and ask for a modest extension. Not all profs are this kind, but some will give in.