

1. Time availability

It is always difficult to think objectively about how you spend your time. It is even more difficult to think of descriptions of human activities which are applicable to the many different situations in which people live and work. The following list of categories is a compromise which will, hopefully, meet most people's requirements without being too embarrassingly personal.

You may be using this questionnaire within a tightly structured programme so that your responses to some questions may not be "normal" for you in your home background. For this reason a column has been left blank for you to fill in the picture for your home programme in case you want to plan your work later.

Clearly not all days are the same and it is sometimes difficult to make averages. It is probably simplest to think of what happens on a typical day.

How much time to you spend each day on average on the following (be honest!)

	<u>Time</u>		
Activity	1st Assessment	2nd Assessment	Home
a.			
i. Sleeping			
ii. Getting up			
b. Eating			
i. Preparing for and eating 3 main meals			
ii. Short breaks (snacks, coffee, etc)			
c. Work			
i. Your main routine commitment in office or classroom - the 9-5, or whatever, day			
ii. Travel to and from work			
iii. Preparation for work (at home)			

Activity	1st Assessment	2nd Assessment	Home
----------	----------------	----------------	------

d. Domestic

i. Routine Admin:
(letters, bills, etc.)

ii. Routine chores
(washing up,
shop-cleaning,
children to bed,
going to bank etc)

e. Leisure

i. Chatting with
friends/neighbours
who have called/
been called on

ii. Watching TV,
films, plays

iii. Reading

iv. Sport
(including indoor
games, like cards)

f. Other :

You may have other
commitments like
political
or other organisation
meetings.
Make a list here:

i.
ii.
iii.
etc.

Total

You will probably find on your first assessment that you either

- a. have long hours in the day when you appear to do absolutely nothing or
- b. there are not enough hours in the day for all you do!

If (a) is your problem try taking a typical day and thinking through everything you do. Have you perhaps not allowed enough time for preparing for eating meals?

(At one end of the scale it is a matter of peeling the potatoes, while at the other end, Victorian Britishers used actually to "dress for dinner", an hour, an hour and a half?) Use the column marked 2nd Assessment. :

If (b) is your problem this probably reflects the inclusion of activities which you would normally only undertake say once or twice a week. Try taking a typical day and fill out the column under 2nd Assessment to get the balance of time right. But bear in mind the different activities that might fill up your time

Now you are probably in a position to think which of these activities you can do without. And don't forget that you are going to have to give something up. And don't choose sleep. That is only a very short solution, or you will soon have to be short term/timetabling 15 minutes here and there in the afternoon for the times you doze off!

You can organise your work on a daily or a weekly basis. Of course everyone is different, but it is probably not worth scheduling less than half an hour at any one time. And it is probably unrealistic to schedule more than 2 hours at any one time. Few of us get even that long undisturbed.

Now work out your weekly time allowance and multiply it by the length of time your course will run in weeks.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{_____} \text{ hrs.} \\ \times \text{_____} \text{ weeks} \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Total : _____ hours

That is the total number of hours you have for study. Does It surprise you?

2. Methods of Assessment

The first question to be asked under this heading Is clearly

- a. i. Are you working for an examination _____

Your calculation of the time you have to study in, may make you think carefully about whether preparation for a public examination is really feasible in the time available.

However, if you are working for an examination you can further ask:

- ii. Are previous papers, available _____
- iii. Do the papers equate with my objectives _____
- iv. If not how can I equate them?
(What courses could I follow?)

However, whether or not you are working for a public examination you may want to consider some ways in which you can measure your progress towards your aim. Here there are basically 2 considerations:

- i. the availability of test material
- ii. the availability of people to assess your efforts.

Under (i) you might like to consider:

- b.
 - i. Are the materials programmed? _____
 - ii. Do the learning materials themselves contain any tests? _____
 - iii. Can you set aside some tests to measure progress at a later date? _____
 - iv. Can you devise a description of the criterion (critical behaviour) at which you are aiming (what exactly it is you want to be able to do)? _____
 - v. Can you devise tests like the ones in your course of the same criterion? _____
 - vi. Are there any published tests relevant to materials? _____
 - vii. Are there any informal test situations that will measure the criterion (e.g. does a native speaker react to you more or less like another native speaker, do you understand the same thing as a native speaker from a reader in the Times/a BBC news broadcast)?
- viii. Can you make use of a "cloze" test? (In a close test you delete words — e.g. every seventh - and then try to replace them. It can be done with any material, for example with newspaper. All you have to do is to cut out or paste over the words and then photocopy.)

Under (ii) the availability of people to assess your efforts, you might like to consider:

i. Can I make use of the judgement of a native speaker?

- A. An expert _____
- B. A peer (student like myself) _____

ii. Can I make use of the judgement of a non-native

- A. An expert _____
- B. A peer like myself _____

iii. Can I devise a way of getting someone to judge my level of achievement?

(This is like the problem of criterion above - what exactly is the other person supposed to notice/not to notice e.g. will he/she accept your right to "buy a round" in a pub as a member of the (perhaps native speaking) group? Does "the shopkeeper assume that you know the conventions that govern what you can buy where in Britain or does he obviously feel the need to explain (i.e. as to a foreigner) !)

iv. Can you devise situations where you can test this out (e.g. can you get a group/your informant to accept a recording you have made as from a native speaker? Can native speakers detect your country of origin, and so on).