

MEMO

To: Brandon Gaille
From: Marianna Dionysiou, Rachel Prather, Sydney D'Orso, Zoe Behrman
Date: December 5, 2022
Subject: Developmental Editing Letter

Dear Brandon Gaille,

We're glad to have you on the *Two Weeks to Transform* team. Your article "25 Time Management Tips for Students (Skills and Strategies)" is certainly a topic our readers will value, and the article's authoritative simplicity will transform wonderfully into a short book for the series.

There is so much to appreciate about this article: the concise and easy-to-follow tips, a positive and encouraging tone, and specific actions that readers can take to improve their time-management skills. Your knowledge of time management and study skills is evident. As we work to transition the article's content into a printed book, we would like to offer a few suggestions to help your content impact as many readers as possible.

Specifically, we recommend: A restructuring of the material from 25 tips into 14 (to fit the *Two Weeks to Transform* series format); suggested content revisions or supplementary content to add in each section; adding visuals to support the text; and finally, suggestions on style, including tone consideration, defining uncommon terminology, and revisions to the title. After you've had a chance to read through everything, let's meet again to discuss what comes next.

Proposed Restructuring

The article is currently structured into 25 sections. While this can be beneficial when offering time management tips, it is not an ideal format for our *Two Weeks to Transform* series. The series provides readers with a 14-day plan to improve something about themselves. We've divided your 25 sections into 14 in a way that can be followed chronologically. Below is a proposed restructuring of your article.

- **Day 1: Get good sleep**
 - Get a good night's sleep
- **Day 2: Set your goals**
 - Set goals for study time
 - Set realistic goals
- **Day 3: Prepare your study space**
 - Create a study space
 - Remove distractions and time-wasters
- **Day 4: Make a study plan**
 - Create a master schedule
 - Block off study sessions
- **Day 5: Prepare your study materials**
 - Prepare before studying
- **Day 6: Practice good study techniques**
 - Try the pomodoro technique
 - Break up tasks into reasonable chunks
- **Day 7: Find apps and tools that will help you**
 - Take advantage of apps
- **Day 8: Don't leave things until the last minute**

- Don't leave things until the last minute
- Complete tasks in one sitting
- **Day 9: Do important tasks first**
 - “Eat your frog”
 - Do important tasks first
- **Day 10: Join a study group**
 - Join a study group
- **Day 11: Make use of “dead time”**
 - Make use of “dead time”
- **Day 12: Take breaks - large and small**
 - Take mini breaks
 - Take time off
- **Day 13: Practice Daily Review**
 - Practice daily review
- **Day 14: Adjust and stay on track**
 - Avoid multitasking
 - Switch tasks if you're struggling
 - Find your best time to study
 - Work while you're working

These changes will allow your article to fit into our *Two Weeks to Transform* series. It will also make your article more condensed, which will increase the readability factor. The condensed version of your article will likely also decrease unnecessary repetition since similar sections are now grouped together. Lastly, your tips will be easier for readers to follow because they will have a day-by-day plan.

Potential Improvements

In the following sections, we will detail some improvements to the text that we recommend in terms of content, visuals, and style.

Content Areas

Your article offers many excellent suggestions for students to manage their time better, but to make these most effective, it is important to frame them as tangible, actionable tasks. Further, these suggestions for tasks and changes must be feasible and accessible for a diverse variety of readers (which may include students who are neurodivergent or have learning limitations/differences), and your claims should be supported. To best accomplish this, you should avoid broad generalizations and “one size fits all” solutions, offer more examples that students may choose from to implement into their daily schedules, and back up certain claims for credibility. Below are some examples you may consider expanding upon or updating to be conscious of how different students learn and succeed in different ways.

Avoid generalizations and “one size fits all” solutions

Instead of giving broad statements to “avoid procrastination” and “not leave things to the last minute,” you could provide some examples of tips or resources (such as specific apps) that help to combat procrastination or keep students motivated – the goal is suggesting actionable tasks! A related improvement would be to remove blanket suggestions such as “don’t watch TV while studying” (some students focus better with background noise) or “do one thing at a time” (some students find tasks more enjoyable or manageable when they are able to switch between them, and you also mention switching tasks if a student is struggling, so you could be more consistent with this point). Instead of these blanket suggestions, you could recommend that students find and stick with the specific methods that work for them. It would also be a great idea to emphasize that procrastination and other potential stumbling blocks are not moral failings, as time management and focus do not come easily to everyone.

Extra options for study techniques

Include more comprehensive options for study techniques – pomodoro is a great suggestion, but it may not work for everyone. Some other popular techniques that you could mention include the SQ3R method, mind mapping, and spaced practice. This can also apply to your suggestions for sleep habits, scheduling tools, setting goals, etc. Here are some great resources for you to peruse and consider:

[10 Effective Study Tips and Techniques to Try This Year | USAHS](#)

[10 Sleep Tips for College Students | Badger Nation Blog \(snow.edu\)](#)

[10 Best Planner and Reminder Apps for Students | Educational App Store](#)

[8 Goal-setting tips for students - SchoolHabits](#)

Back up claims for credibility

In your article, you claim that multitasking does not work and that doing the most important tasks first makes everything else easier. To lend credibility to such claims, you should consider backing them up by citing relevant research, professional theories, or expert support.

Introduction and Conclusion

As a final note here, we recommend adding an introduction and conclusion to the book, both to fit with our series and to concisely introduce/wrap up your material for readers. In your introduction, we recommend introducing your reader to the book's topic, giving some context with the rest of the series, and offering a brief summary of what they will be learning. In your conclusion, we recommend a concise wrap-up of the material and information on where to find more about you and your work.

Visuals

Your article is relatively long, so we feel it is beneficial to insert visuals in some sections. Having a lot of text with no visuals to provide a break for the reader can decrease readability. Including visuals will make your text more digestible and will likely encourage more people to read it.

For day three, including a picture or a graphic of a desk and labeling what you suggest to include will be helpful for visual learners. If someone is skimming through the sections, having a picture with everything needed can be beneficial since people are more likely to gravitate toward pictures than text.

For day four, including a picture or a downloadable template of a master schedule (for the e-book version) will allow readers to visualize what they need to create. It will also give them a place to start if they have never made a master schedule before.

For day eight, including a humorous comic detailing someone leaving something for the last minute will likely make your ideas about procrastination more impactful. Everyone has procrastinated at one point in their life, so having a character to connect to will likely emphasize to readers why they should try to avoid procrastination.

For day ten, including a picture or a graphic of people studying can allow the reader to envision themselves in a study group. You can even get a picture of someone who joined a study group and saw improvements in their academic life. You can provide a caption that quotes the student.

For day fourteen, include a side by side of someone studying at night and someone studying in the morning. This will emphasize your points about how different people thrive at different times of the day. This will encourage people to think about what works best for them.

Adding some visuals, like the ones mentioned above, will break up your text so it doesn't feel daunting for the reader. Visuals can also work to emphasize the main points of your text.

Style

Currently, your article excels in concise, clear, and direct phrasing. These qualities are exactly what we are seeking in the *Two Weeks to Transform* series. Your use of description and specificity in giving your readers actionable tasks in conjunction with your tips will be an essential aspect of the book's success. More specifically, the use of the phrase "To do this..." several times throughout this article is an especially helpful way to cue your readers into important steps that they can take to succeed. With this phrase, you include several examples of useful task descriptions that a reader can follow. The following quote shows a specific example from your article that we think exemplifies this idea and would fit well after a "To do this" phrasing:

"This calendar should be broken up into days and hours and also tailored to your individual needs. Make a plan for each hour of the day. This should include your daily tasks like attending lectures, things you have to do, and when you plan to study. Update this plan with new information as the week progresses. You may want to use a different color to highlight various tasks. This makes it easy to view your schedule at a glance."

In addition, in sections such as "Get a Good Night's Sleep," "Avoid Multitasking," and "Join a Study Group," your use of bullet points to break up ideas is especially successful, and this is something we would like to see in your finalized *Two Weeks to Transform* book. By breaking up your text into easily digestible bullet points, we believe that your readers will reap the most benefit from your writing.

Another style choice in your article that we would like to see more throughout your finished book is a supportive and encouraging tone. Specifically, we enjoyed your concluding statement that reads:

"Ultimately the only way to do this is with practice. You may find it difficult the first time you implement these tips, but with more experience, they will eventually become effortless. Go ahead – the best time to get started is now!"

We found this choice of tone and phrasing incredibly successful in achieving your goal of helping your readership.

While your article succeeds in many aspects of its purpose on your blog, there are a few style adjustments that we recommend making for book's success in our series, including tone considerations, explanations, and your title.

Tone Considerations

To better fit with the positive tone of the rest of our series, there are a few tone considerations that you may want to consider when revising. While your article succeeds in providing constructive and helpful tips for your readers, there are a few instances where a larger audience, who may be unfamiliar with your previous work, may view your phrasing as more negative than positive. For instance, your intro statement may be rephrased in a more positive light:

Current phrasing: "Effective time management skills are something that all college students must learn. Unless you master this important skill, you'll struggle to hit due dates for assignments. In fact, poor time management may even result in flunking out."

Revised phrasing: As a college student, it is essential to learn effective time management skills. Without ample practice in time management, you may struggle to succeed in your academic pursuits. But — do not fret — this book will break down all you need to know to achieve your goals and manage your time effectively!

By rephrasing this and any other perceived negative voice, you can better connect with the larger audience that will be reading your book and avoid offending or scaring away any unsure readers from your excellent content.

In addition, consider rephrasing certain sections of your tips to have a more friendly tone. We greatly enjoy your direct and concise phrasing, but we fear that certain sections may be perceived as demanding by some readers. For example, the sentence, “If you’re a full-time student, then every moment of your week should be scheduled,” may seem daunting to a reader who is coming to your book feeling overwhelmed. Rather than cueing in your actionable steps and tips with words like “should,” you may consider rephrasing to soften the tone. For example, you may rephrase the previously mentioned sentence as: “As a full-time student, it is often helpful to have your entire week scheduled.” By presenting a positive, encouraging, and friendly tone, we believe that you will be able to achieve great success with this book and help a wider range of readers.

Explanations of Confusing or Unknown Phrasing

Your article provides a wealth of information that readers can benefit from. In order to allow your readers to fully gain the benefits from your work, there are a few phrases and topics that we ask that you consider providing more explanation on:

- Eat your frog
- Pomodoro technique
- Parkinson’s Law

Since this book will be targeting a large range of readers, phrases that may not require as much explanation on your blog may need to be elaborated for understanding and comprehension. Although it is not necessary to go into excessive depth into these ideas, by giving your readers a bit more context, you will be able to have an even bigger impact with your finished work.

Title Considerations

Since your article will be fit into a *Two Weeks to Transform* book, we would recommend considering a title that will complement the image of the rest of the series. An example for your consideration would be something such as “*Two Weeks to Transform: Taking Control of your Time as a Student.*”

Conclusion

We believe that making our suggested adjustments to the structure and content, adding some visuals, maintaining a consistent tone, defining unknown terms, and revising the title will allow you to easily transmute your material from a web-based article into a short book. For further reference on what we are looking for in these changes, please view other books in this series such as *Two Weeks to Transform: Secrets to Sound Sleep*. Your mastery of time management techniques and your proficiency in sharing those techniques with readers makes your writing the perfect addition to the *Two Weeks to Transform* series. We are confident that this is a book our readers will value. Feel free to reach out with any questions about these suggestions or about this process as a whole. We look forward to hearing back from you and working with you to create our next great book.