

Is That Necessary?

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Time Frame 70-95 minutes (1-2 sessions)

Essential Question(s)

How can we make the best use of our time?

Summary

Students will learn to evaluate and prioritize tasks by making personal timelines. Students will then use the Eisenhower Matrix to categorize tasks by importance and timeliness. Then, they will revise their timelines and reflect on what they learned about priorities and task management.

Learning Goals

- Reflect on tasks students need to do in a week.
- Analyze if those tasks are necessary or time-sensitive.
- Revise plans based on analysis.

Attachments

- Activity Slides—Is That Necessary.pptx
- Blank Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort—Is That Necessary - Spanish.docx
- Blank Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort—Is That Necessary - Spanish.pdf
- Blank Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort—Is That Necessary.pdf
- Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort—Is That Necessary - Spanish.docx
- Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort—Is That Necessary - Spanish.pdf
- Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort—Is That Necessary.docx
- Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort—Is That Necessary.pdf
- Personal Timeline—Is That Necessary - Spanish.docx
- Personal Timeline—Is That Necessary - Spanish.pdf
- Personal Timeline—Is That Necessary.docx
- Personal Timeline—Is That Necessary.pdf
- What's on Your Plate—Is That Necessary - Spanish.docx
- What's on Your Plate—Is That Necessary - Spanish.pdf
- What's on Your Plate—Is That Necessary.docx
- What's on Your Plate—Is That Necessary.pdf

Materials

- Activity Slides (attached)
- Personal Timeline handout (attached; one half-sheet per student)
- Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort and Mat (attached; one per group)
- Blank Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort and Mat (attached; optional)
- What’s on Your Plate (attached; one per student)
- Paper
- Scissors
- Device with internet connection
- Classroom objects for balancing in a tower (optional)

10 minutes

Engage

Using the attached **Activity Slides**, begin by sharing the activity title, essential question, and learning objectives on **slide 2–4**.

Move to **slide 5** and explain to students that they will have 3 minutes to build the tallest tower they can in an online game. Have students navigate to the Box Tower game through the URL or QR code on the slide. Once students are ready, start the embedded 3-minute timer and have students build their towers. After the time runs out, have students share their best scores with their elbow partners.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=iISP02KPau0

Explain to students that, during the game, they had to put each piece in the correct spot to balance the tower and continue building. Share with them that, in life, sometimes we have to keep our schedules balanced too like the towers. Then, ask students, "What made balancing the tower difficult in the game?"

Possible Student Responses

Where to place the items, how much they weigh, their size, their speed, and that everything was moving, etc.

After having students share their thoughts, ask students, "What makes it hard to balance our schedules in life?"

Possible Student Responses

Time, pace of life, how much you have to do, how big or important a job is, etc.

After hearing students' responses, draw the connection between the previous two questions by informing students that, just like the Box Tower game, it can be hard to keep all of the tasks in our life balanced. However, before we go falling over from the weight of our responsibilities, we can learn methods to manage our tasks and keep our lives balanced.

Teacher's Note: Alternative Activity

If students do not have access to devices for the online game, students can build the towers with hands-on materials (example: blocks, Legos, books, etc.). In this case, replace **slide 5** with custom instructions. Keep in mind safety as students could stack objects higher than themselves.

15 minutes

Explore

Move to **slide 6** and introduce the Quick Write strategy. Inform students that they will take 2 minutes to create a list of big and small tasks they need to manage in the next week or so. Give students examples of possible tasks, like assignments, doctor appointments, practices, games, performances, social events, chores at home, etc.

After you introduce the activity to students, provide them with a sheet of paper to write on. Start the embedded 2-minute timer and have students write their task lists.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=HcEEAnwOt2c

Teacher's Note: Struggling Students

If students struggle to come up with tasks for their lists, encourage them to think about club activities, classes they have, afterschool activities, and things they need to do at home. You can also suggest to them to look at their agendas or calendars.

Once the timer stops, move to **slide 7**. Pass out the **Personal Timeline** handout to each student. Explain to students that they will use their task lists to create their own personal timeline for the next week(s). On the personal timeline, they will record when their tasks are taking place or need to be completed. Then, give students time to create their personal timelines.

After some work time, assign students into small groups. Display **slide 8**, and ask them to discuss the following questions:

- Do you have any tasks in common with peers in your group?
- What on your personal timeline is a big task?
- What on your personal timeline is a small task?

Teacher's Note: Personal Timelines

Have students write the beginning date and end date in the boxes. All tasks should be written below the line. Students can add additional dates above the line if needed. They will use their personal timelines in the Extend part of the activity. So, consider collecting their timelines or encouraging them to keep their timelines in a safe place.

25 minutes

Explain

Teacher's Note: Activity Prep

Have students work in groups of 3–4. Students can work with their timeline discussion group, or you can assign them to new groups. You also need to provide students a few minutes to cut out the cards for the card sort. A blank card sheet is provided with the handout if you would like to create club-specific tasks for the sort.

Display **slide 9** and share with students the term Eisenhower Matrix. Explain to students that Eisenhower Matrix is a method to help us think about the big and small tasks in our lives. Show students the Eisenhower Matrix video embedded in the slide which explains what the method is and where it came from.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=tT89OZ7TNwc

After the video, move to **slide 10**. Inform students that the video mentioned the word "delegate". Discuss as a class what the word delegate means in school. Emphasize that, when students delegate in school, they are equally sharing the workload. Sometimes this will play toward students' strengths and experiences. Delegating doesn't mean making one person do all the work or getting angry if another person does not have the time to take over a task.

Display **slide 11** and introduce students to the Card Sort strategy. Inform students that they will work in groups of 3–4 for this activity. Pass out the **Eisenhower Matrix Card Sort and Mat** handout to each group. Give students a few minutes to cut out the cards. Once students finish cutting out the cards, have them discuss in groups each task on the cards and decide where to place the task on the Eisenhower Matric mat according to the task's importance and urgency.

Once student completes the Card Sort activity, move to **slide 12**. Introduce the Fist to Five strategy to students. Together as a class, take time to compare and contrast where students decided to place the tasks on the mat. Ask for a few volunteers to share a task, where they placed it, and why they chose to place it in that part of the matrix. Each time a volunteer shares their task, have each group use the scale on the slide to show their agreement or disagreement toward the volunteer's reasoning in putting a task in a certain quadrant. Ask the groups who disagree to explain their reasoning. Continue the discussion until all cards are shared or time runs out.

Teacher's Note: Fist to Five

Slide 12 shows a 1–5 rating scale for Fist to Five. You might take time to share with the class what each rating stands represents.

For example:

1 = “Nope, I strongly believe the task belongs in a different quadrant.”

2 = “I think the task belongs to a different quadrant, but I could be wrong.”

3 = “I see how the task fits in that quadrant, but I also see other quadrants that fit.”

4 = “I believe the task fits in that quadrant, but I’m not absolutely sure.”

5 = “Yes. I strongly believe the task belongs in that quadrant.”

10 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Activity Prep

Students need their personal timelines for this part of the activity.

Move to **slide 13** and pass out the **What's on Your Plate?** handout to each student. Inform students they will use their personal timeline handout to fill this handout. Encourage students to think about the following:

- The tasks you had in common with your peers.
- Ways that you might be able to share the workload together with them.

Teacher's Note: Sharing School Workload

You might also explain to students that sharing a school workload does not mean students are allowed to copy or plagiarize each other's work.

Then, give students time to discuss and fill their handouts.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Once students finish filling their handouts, move to **slide 14**. Inform students they will now revise their personal timelines using the information on their What's on Your Plate? handout. Have students flip over their personal timelines and create a new one on the back. Give them some time to make their revised timelines.

Once students are finished, display **slide 15**. Ask them how their timelines have changed. Did their tasks become more manageable? Have some students share their thoughts.

After reflecting on the revised timelines, move to **slide 16**. Read the quote on the slide out loud to remind students of President Dwight Eisenhower's quote at the end of the Eisenhower Matrix video they previously watched. To conclude the activity, encourage students to use their personal timelines over the next week to help them with their tasks.

Research Rationale

Regardless of the focus of the extracurricular activity, club participation can lead to higher grades (Durlak et al., 2010; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Kronholz, 2012), and additional benefits are possible when these clubs explore specific curricular frameworks. Club participation enables students to acquire and practice skills beyond a purely academic focus. It also affords them opportunities to develop skills such as self-regulation, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking (Allen et al., 2019). When structured with a strong curricular focus, high school clubs can enable participants to build the critical social skills and "21st-century skills" that better position them for success in college and the workforce (Allen et al., 2019; Durlak et al., 2010; Hurd & Deutsch, 2017). Supportive relationships between teachers and students can be instrumental in developing a student's sense of belonging (Pendergast et al., 2018; Wallace et al., 2012). These support systems enable high-need, high-opportunity youth to establish social capital through emotional support, connection to valuable information resources, and mentorship in a club context (Solberg et al., 2021). Through a carefully designed curriculum that can be implemented within the traditional club structure, students stand to benefit significantly as they develop critical soft skills.

Resources

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