

THESIS ASSIGNMENT: "Procrastination" (opened Jan. 21 / due Jan. 25.)

Due Friday by 11:59pm **Points** 5 **Available** Jan 21 at 12am - May 3 at 11:59pm 3 months

ENG 105 – Thesis Assignment

DIRECTIONS: In order to understand argumentative writing, you must understand the importance of the 3-Part Thesis Statement. READ both articles on procrastination.

Procrastination #1 (<https://www.verywellmind.com/the-psychology-of-procrastination-2795944>)

[AND]

Procrastination #2 (<https://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/a-procrastination-gene>)

THEN:

- For Procrastination #1, WRITE
- 1 Thesis Statement in favor of or FOR procrastination
- 1 Thesis Statement out of favor or AGAINST procrastination
- For Procrastination #2, WRITE
- 1 Thesis Statement in favor of or FOR procrastination
- 1 Thesis Statement out of favor or AGAINST procrastination

That means (4) FOUR 3-Part Thesis Statements all together.

Please SUBMIT your Assignment in a WORD Document.

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The Psychology Behind Why We Wait Until the Last Minute to Do Things

By Kendra Cherry 

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Procrastination is something that most people have at least a little experience with. No matter how well-organized and committed you are, chances are that you have found yourself frittering away hours on trivial pursuits (watching TV, updating your Facebook status, shopping online) when you should have been spending that time on work or school-related projects.

Whether you're putting off finishing a project for work, avoiding homework assignments, or ignoring household chores, procrastination can have a major impact on your job, your grades, and your life.

Why Do We Procrastinate and Wait Until the Last Minute?

We all procrastinate at some time or another, and researchers suggest that the problem can be particularly pronounced among students. An estimated 25 to 75 percent of college students procrastinate on academic work.

One 2007 study found that a whopping 80 to 95 percent of college students procrastinated on a regular basis, particularly when it came to completing assignments and coursework. A 1997 survey found that procrastination was one of the top reasons why Ph.D. candidates failed to complete their dissertations.

According to Ferrari, Johnson, and McCown, there are some major cognitive distortions that lead to academic procrastination.

Students tend to:

- Overestimate how much time they have left to perform tasks
- Overestimate how motivated they will be in the future
- Underestimate how long certain activities will take to complete
- Mistakenly assume that they need to be in the right frame of mind to work on a project

As you read through that list, you can probably recall a few times in the past that the same sort of logic has led you to put things off until later. Remember that time that you thought you had a week left to finish a project that was really due the next day? How about the time you decided not to clean up your apartment because you "didn't feel like doing it right now."

We often assume that projects won't take as long to finish as they really will, which can lead to a false sense of security when we believe that we still have plenty of time to complete these tasks. One of the biggest factors contributing to procrastination is the notion that we have to feel inspired or motivated to work on a task at a particular moment.

The reality is that if you wait until you're in the right frame of mind to do certain tasks (especially undesirable ones), you will probably find that the right time simply never comes along and the task never gets completed.

Self-doubt can also play a major role. When you are unsure of how to tackle a project or insecure in your abilities, you might find yourself putting it off in favor of working on other tasks.

The Negative Impact of Procrastination

It's not just students who fall into the "I'll do it later" trap. According to Joseph Ferrari, a professor of psychology at DePaul University in Chicago and author of *Still Procrastinating: The No Regret Guide to Getting It Done*, around 20 percent of U.S. adults are chronic procrastinators.

These people don't just procrastinate occasionally; it's a major part of their lifestyle. They pay their bills late, don't start work on big projects until the night before the deadline, delay holiday shopping until Christmas Eve, and even file their income tax returns late.

Unfortunately, this procrastination can have a serious impact on a number of life areas, including a person's mental health. In a 2007 study, researchers found that at the

beginning of the semester, students who were procrastinators reported less illness and lower stress levels than non-procrastinators. This changed dramatically by the end of the term when procrastinators reported higher levels of stress and illness.

Not only can procrastination have a negative impact on your health; it can also harm your social relationships. By putting things off, you are placing a burden on the people around you. If you habitually turn in projects late or dawdle until the last minute, the people who depend on you such as your friends, family, co-workers, and fellow students can become resentful.

The Reasons Why We Procrastinate

In addition to the reasons *why* we procrastinate, we often come up with a number of excuses or rationalizations to justify our behavior.

According to Tuckman, Abry, and Smith, there are 15 key reasons why people procrastinate:

1. Not knowing what needs to be done
2. Not knowing how to do something
3. Not wanting to do something
4. Not caring if it gets done or not
5. Not caring when something gets done
6. Not feeling in the mood to do it
7. Being in the habit of waiting until the last minute
8. Believing that you work better under pressure
9. Thinking that you can finish it at the last minute
10. Lacking the initiative to get started
11. Forgetting
12. Blaming sickness or poor health
13. Waiting for the right moment
14. Needing time to think about the task
15. Delaying one task in favor of working on another

How Do Procrastinators Differ From Non-Procrastinators?

In most cases, procrastination is not a sign of a serious problem. It's a common tendency that we all give in to at some point or another. It is only in cases where procrastination becomes so chronic that it begins to have a serious impact on a person's daily life that it becomes a more serious issue. In such instances, it's not just a matter of having poor time management skills; it's an indication of what Ferrari refers to as a maladaptive lifestyle.

"Non-procrastinators focus on the task that needs to be done. They have a stronger personal identity and are less concerned about what psychologists call 'social esteem'—how others like us—as opposed to self-esteem which is how we feel about ourselves," explained Dr. Ferrari in an interview with the American Psychological Association.

According to psychologist Piers Steel, people who don't procrastinate tend to be high in the personality trait known as conscientiousness, one of the broad dispositions identified by the big 5 theory of personality. People who are high in conscientiousness also tend to be high in other areas including self-discipline, persistence, and personal responsibility.

Falling prey to these cognitive distortions is easy, but fortunately, there are a number of different things you can do to fight procrastination and start getting things done on time.

Sources:

American Psychological Association. (2010). The Psychology of Procrastination: Why People Put Off Important Tasks Until the Last Minute.

Green, K. E. (1997). Psychosocial Factors Affecting Dissertation Completion. In Goodchild, L. F., Green, K. E., Katz, E. L., & Kluever, R. C. (Eds.), *Rethinking the Dissertation Process: Tackling Personal and Institutional Obstacles*. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 99, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 57-64.

Steel, P. (2007). The Nature of Procrastination: A Meta-Analytic and Theoretical Review of Quintessential Self-Regulatory Failure. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(1), 65-94.

Tice, D. M. & Baumeister, R. F. (1997). Longitudinal Study of Procrastination, Performance, Stress, and Health: The Costs and Benefits of Dawdling. *Psychological Science*, 8(6), 454-458.

Tuckman, B.W., Abry, D.A., & Smith, D.R. (2008). Learning and Motivation Strategies: Your Guide to Success (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.