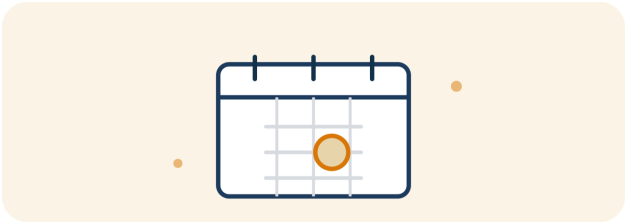
The Weekly Planner

Four questions that stop the week disappearing on you



THE STUDY LAB

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01 Why the week vanishes



"I will start the essay on Friday" feels like a plan and behaves like a wish. Friday arrives, the week has vanished, and nothing got done. This is not a motivation failure. While every task lives inside your head, the brain spends genuine energy simply not-forgetting them, holding a dozen loose threads open at once. That background load leaves less capacity for the actual work, and it makes the week feel heavier than it is.

A weekly planner moves that load off your mind and onto paper, and doing so changes three things on its own. It forces a choice about what matters this week, instead of juggling everything with equal weight. It makes the actual workload visible, which is almost always smaller than the dread suggested. And it surfaces slippage early, while there is still time to recover, rather than at 11pm on Thursday. The planner is not about colour-coding your life. It is about getting the week out of your head so you can act on it.

The core idea

- **An in-head week costs energy.** The brain burns effort remembering tasks instead of doing them.
- **Writing it down forces a choice.** You cannot list everything as the priority, so you finally rank.
- **Narrow beats detailed.** Four answered questions hold better than thirty colour-coded boxes.

Why four questions and not a full timetable

The instinct is to plan every hour, which feels thorough and collapses by Tuesday. A rigid timetable has no room for a late class, a low-energy day, or a task that runs long, so the first disruption breaks it and you abandon the whole thing. Four questions are different. They set direction without pretending to predict every hour, which means the plan bends instead of snapping. The aim is a week you will actually follow on Wednesday, not a beautiful grid you obey for one day.

02 Answer four questions



1. Pick a fixed weekly slot to plan, before the week starts. Sunday evening is the natural one. The same time each week is what turns this from an idea into a habit.
2. Answer question one: what is the single focus for this week? One subject, one skill. Not five.
3. Answer question two: which subject needs the most attention right now? The one that costs the most if neglected, not the favourite or the easiest.
4. Answer question three: what is one paper or task to finish before Saturday? Specific and completable, so you can tick it.
5. Answer question four: what is one question to ask my tutor that would clear up something confusing? Naming the confusion is half of solving it.

In practice. Leave deliberate buffer time when you plan. Something always comes up, and a week planned to the minute has no capacity to absorb it. Empty slots are not wasted, they are the reason the plan survives contact with an actual week.

A worked example

Say it is Sunday evening in the middle of term. You sit down for ten minutes and answer the four questions. Focus this week: essay analysis. Subject that needs the most attention: English, because the last mark slipped and the next task is close. One task to finish before Saturday: a full body paragraph on the current text, redrafted twice. One question for the tutor: why the analysis keeps getting marked as description. You leave Wednesday evening open on purpose. By Saturday the paragraph is done, the tutor question got answered on Tuesday, and the week did not disappear, because you decided its shape before it started.

03 Do not overplan



Watch out. The most common mistake is overplanning, and it hides as diligence. Twelve tasks a day is anxiety in another format, and a planner that demands the impossible gets ignored by Wednesday, taking the useful parts down with it. Keep it to the four questions and the one focus. A plan you follow beats a fuller plan you abandon.

Plan one week using only the four questions, and do it before the week begins rather than partway through. Judge it on Saturday by one measure: did the week hold its shape, or did it slip away again.

Plan the coming week

Cover the guide and fill these from memory. No marks, just recall.

The single focus for this week:

The subject that needs the most attention right now:

One paper or task I will finish before Saturday:

One question to ask my tutor:

The buffer slot I am leaving deliberately empty:

Make it stick. Come back in two or three days and redo the exercise from memory, without looking. The gap between attempts is what fixes it.

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