

Bell-ringer

Directions: Read the quote below. Write to explain what this means to you.



Establishing a new routine for distance learning

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How to be successful when you're learning from home? Stick to a routine. Illustrations: Elena Hartley, Newsela staff

Schools are closed across the country due to the coronavirus, and many teachers and students have transitioned into a period of distance learning. This is a big adjustment for most of us. You probably miss seeing your friends and teachers. Maybe you miss going to special events like games and dances or even regular parts of the school day, like lunch. You might also miss — without realizing it — the routine that school brings to your life.

A school-day schedule helps us define our time. It tells us when the day begins and when it ends. It also tells us what we should do in between. The school day builds in time for learning, physical activity, socializing, eating and taking breaks. Without something of a routine, a school day at home can feel endless.

Luckily, you can create a daily routine that works for you and provides some of the structure you're missing. You'll want to make sure your new routine allows you time for work, play and rest.

Every family situation is different, so talk with your family members about making a schedule for you. Together, you can write down a list of what you need to do in a single day. Remember to include the important stuff and the fun stuff! Take note of how much time is needed for each activity. Then decide what time of day is best to tackle each thing.

Now that you have planned your daily routine, write out a final version. Post it somewhere so your family can see it. It helps if others in your household know how you have planned out your days. It may take time to figure out what works best for you, and that's OK. You don't have to follow your routine minute by minute. You can change your routine in the days and weeks ahead. It will help, though, to check your routine from time to time. It will keep you on track.

To get you started, here are suggestions for blocks of time to schedule in your new routine!

Get Ready For The Day

You no longer have to rush to school. Still, it's a good idea to wake up at the same time every morning. Set an alarm. Stick to it each weekday. Getting dressed right away is also a good idea. Sure, it is comfy to hang out in pajamas. But fresh clothes is a signal to your brain that you're going to be up and about and getting things done today. Comb your hair, wash your face and brush your teeth before starting your at-home school day. You would usually do those things before running out the door to school anyway.

Once you're dressed and ready, review your schedule for today. What do you want to achieve? What NEEDS to get done? What would you LIKE to do or work on? Share your day's goals with a sibling, parent or someone else in your household. It will help motivate you.

Breakfast

How do you like to start the day? Do you eat a bowl of cereal for breakfast? Or maybe you like pancakes and eggs? Either way, be sure to block off time for breakfast. It's smart to give your body some food. That way you will have energy to start your "at-home" school routine.

Quiet Study

Aim to schedule at least two stretches of time during the day for quiet learning. Quiet time is the best time for studying. This time can include reading new material, completing homework or taking tests or quizzes.

Try to find a quiet space for these study times. It is best to be away from the flow of family "traffic." If you can, close the door to a room or wear headphones to help you focus.

You may have siblings or cousins at home who want to play with you. They may be noisy around you. Why not set them up with something to keep them busy while you're studying? You can give them an "assignment" to color. Or they can read their own book. When you're planning quiet study blocks in your day, think about when it is calm in your home. Maybe during younger family members' nap times?

Group Study

This block of time might include virtual class or lectures if your school is offering that option. Or maybe you have a group project to work on. You may need to reach out to some classmates. Your

school or teacher might suggest specific times for this kind of learning. If they do, build your schedule around those blocks of time. You may want to plan on some extra group time, too. That's when you can chat with your classmates and ask questions about your schoolwork.

Lunch

Make sure to stop your studies to eat lunch. Remember, you would take a lunch break in school, so do the same at home. Perhaps there is a caregiver in your house making lunch for you. If so, be sure to thank them! If not, no worries. Now is the time to practice your sandwich-making skills. Take a break while you eat. If someone is at home with you, have a chat with them. Or you can look out the window. Try to eat away from your workspace and not in front of a screen.

Reading Time

Many students have to read for a certain amount of time every day for school. If you're one of them, be sure to make time for that in your routine. You might also want to add in time to read for pleasure. When you read, you can be an armchair traveler. This is especially nice when you feel stuck at home.

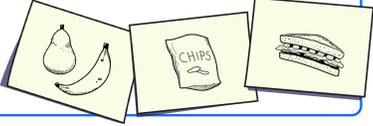
Writing Time

You can work on writing assignments during blocks of quiet study time. If you like to write, consider creating a separate space in your routine for open writing time. If you don't have any writing due, try recording your thoughts and observations in a journal. We are living through a very unique time in history. Why not record what is happening now for future generations?

Elective Time

Electives are activities like music, languages or art. They are just as important now as they were in the ordinary school day. Make time to practice your instrument, create artwork or explore another activity you are excited about. Use the time to work on a special project. Here are some ideas: perfecting your free throw, coding online, learning to knit or solving a Rubik's Cube.

Morning

8:00 - 8:30 am	
Get ready	
8:30 - 9:00 am	
Breakfast	
9:00 - 10:15 am	
Quiet Study	
10:15 - 10:30 am	
Break!	
10:30 am - 12:00 pm	
Group Study	
12:00 - 12:45 pm	
Lunch!	

Afternoon

12:45 - 2:00 pm	
Reading Time	
2:00 - 2:15 pm	
Break	
2:15 - 3:00 pm	
Quiet Study	
3:00 - 5:00 pm	
Elective Time!	

Evening

5:00 - 7:00 pm	
Dinner!	

Breaks

Make sure you put regular breaks into your daily routine. After about an hour or so of study time, walk away from the computer, book or paper in front of you. Need fun ideas for five-minute breaks? Check out this [list](#) of suggestions.

Dinner

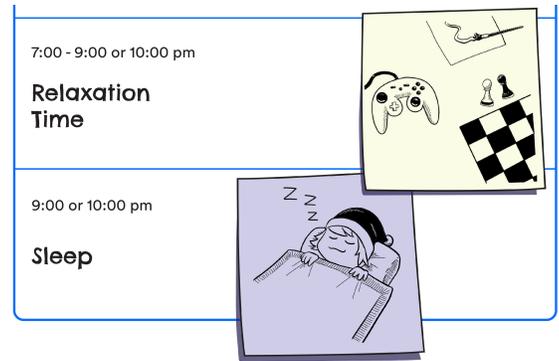
Wrap up your routine with end-of-day tasks. You can help plan or prepare dinner, for instance. Perhaps you can slice vegetables and boil the water for pasta. Be sure to ask for adult supervision if you need it. Over dinner, share something about your day with your family members. They can do the same with you. And after dinner try to help with clean-up, too. You can take out the garbage or offer to do a chore to help someone in your household.

Evening/Relaxation Time

Thanks to your new routine, you've accomplished quite a lot! End the day with something that helps you relax and unwind. It could be playing a board game, watching a TV show, reading a book or making art. The choice is yours.

Sleep

Going to bed around the same time each night helps your body settle into a healthy rhythm. Challenge yourself to be ready for sleep at the same time each weeknight. This way, you'll get the real, deep rest you need to start your routine all over again tomorrow.



Quiz

1 Read the following paragraph from the Introduction [paragraphs 1-6].

Every family situation is different, so talk with your family members about making a schedule for you. Together, you can write down a list of what you need to do in a single day. Remember to include the important stuff and the fun stuff! Take note of how much time is needed for each activity. Then decide what time of day is best to tackle each thing.

What conclusion can a reader make based on this paragraph?

- (A) Family members will argue over who gets to do the best activities.
- (B) Things that are important will take more time than things that are fun.
- (C) Most families do all of the same activities together at the same times.
- (D) Everyone's schedule will be a little different based on what they need to do.

2 Which selection from the article helps the reader to understand that people should do all the same things they would usually do to get ready for their day?

- (A) But fresh clothes is a signal to your brain that you're going to be up and about and getting things done today. Comb your hair, wash your face and brush your teeth before starting your at-home school day.
- (B) Share your day's goals with a sibling, parent or someone else in your household. It will help motivate you.
- (C) You can give them an "assignment" to color. Or they can read their own book. When you're planning quiet study blocks in your day, think about when it is calm in your home.
- (D) You may want to plan on some extra group time, too. That's when you can chat with your classmates and ask questions about your schoolwork.

3 Select the sentence that summarizes the article.

- (A) Students who are distance learning need to go to sleep at the same time each night to get real, deep rest to complete their work.
- (B) Making an at-home schedule with time for learning, breaks and family time will help students adjust to distance learning.
- (C) Activities for students on breaks from their distance learning include coding online, learning to knit or solving a Rubik's Cube.
- (D) When students take time to read or write, they can think carefully about the time in history and the reasons for distance learning.

4 How does the information in the section "Dinner" support the MAIN idea of the article?

- (A) It explains that taking out the garbage is an important part of everyone's routine.
- (B) It explains that all the members of a family should help with cleaning and cooking.
- (C) It shows that activities besides school work can be an important part of a routine.
- (D) It shows that students should ask for adult supervision with cutting and cooking.