

A

Timeframes and schedules

'Time is money,' says the famous phrase. The **timescale** or **timeframe** is the overall period during which something should happen or be completed. The **lead time** for something is the period of time it takes to prepare and complete or deliver all or part of something.

The times or dates when things in a plan should happen are its **schedule** or **timetable**. If a project is completed at the planned time, the project is **on schedule**; completion before the planned time is **ahead of schedule** and later is **behind schedule**. If something happens later than planned, it is **delayed**: there is a **delay**. If you then try to go faster, you try to **make up time**. But things can **take longer than planned!**

A period when a machine or computer cannot be used because it is not working is **downtime**.



Note

Schedule is far more frequent than **timetable**, **timeframe** or **timescale**.
Schedule is also more used in expressions like **ahead of schedule**, etc.



B

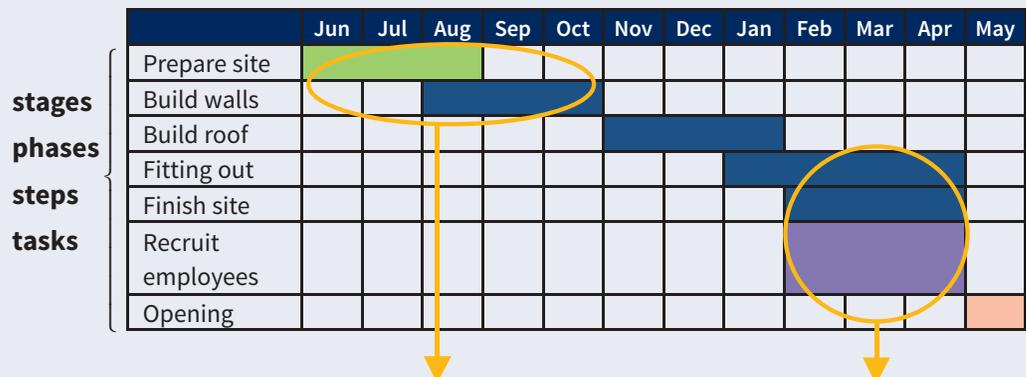
Projects and project management

A **project** is a carefully planned piece of work to produce something new.

Look at this **Gantt chart** for building a new supermarket.



Building a new supermarket



These stages **overlap** – the second one starts before the first finishes.

These stages are **simultaneous**: they **run in parallel** – they happen at the same time.

Project management is managing these stages. Big projects often include **bonus payments** for **completion** early or on time, and **penalties** for late completion.

C

Time tips

Everyone complains that they never have enough time to do things. Lots of company employees go on **time-management** courses – looking for guidance on how they should organize their time. Here are some tips for time management:

- Use a **diary** (BrE) or **calendar** (AmE) to plan your day, week, etc., also known as **personal organizers**. The most modern form are smartphone apps which can display messages and help you organize your **events** and even make **notes** about them.
- Plan your day in advance. Make a **realistic plan** (not just a list) of the things you have to do and **prioritize** them – put them in order of importance. Work on the things that have the highest **priority** and leave the others until later.
- Avoid **interruptions** and **distractions** – things which stop you doing what you had planned.
- Do jobs to a realistic level of quality in the time available, and only to a level that is really necessary. Don't always aim for **perfectionism**. Try to balance **time**, **cost** and **quality**.

Exercises

- 42.1** This is what actually happened in the building of the supermarket in B opposite. Use appropriate forms of expressions from A and B opposite to complete the text.

	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	
Prepare site																		
Build walls																		
Build roof																		
Fitting out																		
Finish site																		
Recruit employees																		
Opening																		

'The overall **(1)** (2 expressions) was originally 12 months, but the project took 17 months. The project started on **(2)** in June, but site preparation took **(3)** because of very bad weather in the autumn. Site preparation and building the walls should have **(4)**, but the walls were started in January. We were able to **(5)** a bit of time on the roof: it took two months instead of three, but we were still **(6)** schedule. The next **(7)** (4 expressions) was fitting out the supermarket, but there was a series of strikes by the electricians, so there were **(8)** here too. The store opened in October, but now there's a lot of **(9)**, when the computers don't work. Everyone seems to have had bad luck with this project!'

- 42.2** Harry is a magazine journalist. Give him advice based on the ideas in C opposite. The first one has been done for you.

- Harry started the day by making a list of all the things he had to do.
You should make a realistic plan and prioritize the things you have to do, not just make a list.
- He started writing an article, but after five minutes a young colleague came over and asked him for help on an article he was writing. Harry helped his colleague for half an hour and then they chatted about last night's television.
- He started work again on his article, but he heard police cars outside and went to the window to look.
- He wanted to make the article look as good as possible on the page, so he spent a lot of time adjusting the spacing of the lines, changing the characters of the text, etc., even though an editor would do this later.
- At 6 pm he realized that he hadn't started on the other article he had to write, but he went home. On the train home, he realized that he had arranged to have lunch with an important contact, but had completely forgotten.
- Harry decided he needed some training to change his behaviour.

Over to you

- What can a company do if it is behind schedule on a project? Is it always a good idea to increase the number of people working on it?
- What is your best personal tip on time management?

A

When work is stimulating

'My name's Patricia and I'm a university lecturer. I chose this profession because I wanted to do something **rewarding** – something that gave me satisfaction. Ten years ago, when I started in this job, I had lots to do, but I enjoyed it: preparing and giving lectures, discussing students' work with them and marking it. I felt **stretched** – I had the feeling that work could sometimes be difficult, but that it was **stimulating**, it interested me and made me feel good. It was certainly **challenging** – difficult, but in an interesting and enjoyable way.'

B

When stimulation turns to stress

'In the last few years there has been more and more administrative work, with no time for reading or research. I felt **pressure** building up. I began to feel **overwhelmed** by work – I felt as if I wasn't able to do it because the pressure and my employer's **demands** – what they wanted – were too high. On Monday mornings I began to feel so worried about the week ahead that I felt quite ill. I'm sure this feeling was caused by **stress**. My doctor agreed and said that it was **stress-induced**.



'Luckily, I was able to deal with this by starting to work part-time. I was luckier than one of my colleagues, who was also continually **under stress**. He **became** so **stressed out** because of **overwork** that he had a **breakdown**. He's completely **burned out** – so stressed and tired by his work that he will never be able to work again.'

C

Downshifting

'More and more people want to escape the **rat race** and get off the **treadmill** – the feeling that work is too competitive – and are looking for **lifestyles** that are less **stressful** or completely **unstressful**.



'Some people choose to work from home so as to be nearer their families. People are looking for a better **quality of life** – a more relaxed way of living, perhaps in the country. Or perhaps they are looking for

more **quality time** with their children – more than just preparing meals for them, taking them to school, etc. All this is part of **work-life balance** – a better balance between the demands of their job and the need for relaxation time with family, friends, etc.

'Choosing to work in less stressful ways is known as **downshifting** or **rebalancing**, and people who do this are **downshiffters**.'

Exercises

43.1 Rearrange these sentences containing expressions from A and B opposite into a logical order.

- a and stimulating. I felt pleasantly stretched. But then the pressure got to be too much and I felt overworked
- b and under a lot of stress: I found the travelling very tiring and stressful. I had the feeling of being overwhelmed by my work. I started getting very bad headaches, and I'm sure they were stress-induced.
- c challenging to change professions in this way, but now I can feel the stress building up again! I must do something to avoid complete breakdown and burnout.
- d Hi, my name's Piet. I'm an engineer, at least I was. For twenty years I worked for a Dutch multinational. I was based here in Holland, but my work involved a lot of travelling, visiting our factories, and at first I liked my job: technically it was very rewarding
- e So, when I was 45, I made a big change. I started a little wine shop in Amsterdam, working on my own. But now, after five years, I have 15 employees. At first it was

43.2 The underlined expressions below refer to different aspects of stress. Complete what the speakers say with appropriate words and expressions from B and C opposite.

- 1 I don't like all this competition towards objectives that are not that worthwhile – I don't like the and I want to get off the
- 2 I'm ok now, but I had these feelings of being unable to do what I was supposed to do – I was totally and
- 3 My partner and I decided to make a change for the better by going to live in the country – we wanted to and
- 4 Another good thing you get by living there is a better
- 5 I think my illness was caused by feeling tense and irritable all the time because of work – I'm sure it was
- 6 We spent a lot of time arguing with our children over basic things and we wanted to spend more time doing interesting activities with them – we wanted more
- 7 It felt like there was a great weight pressing down on me. But my colleagues told me that it was probably because of my work – all that and
- 8 The things my employer was asking me to do were impossible – I just couldn't face their
- 9 Seventy hours a week is not normal – no one should be asked to accept this level of
- 10 It's a feeling you hear but never think will happen to you. I retired at the age of 51 because I couldn't face work any more and I knew I would never go back – I was completely

Over to you

- Do you sometimes get stressed at work or college? What do you do about it?
- What are some of the symptoms of stress?
- What are the possible disadvantages of downshifting?