

## Beginning of Term Backwards Planning

Backwards Planning is used to put your priorities in perspective. You should use this in combination with learning strategies, so you may implement those strategies in a way that will positively impact your academic performance. Having a plan, even a basic one, will give you a structure to follow and guide you toward your goal. It is far better to have a basic plan and basic structure than to 'hope' things will improve. Take intentional action, form your strategy, write it down, and revise as needed.

Remember, with all your studying and organization strategies, your goal should be to use the time you have wisely. Don't spend MORE time, use the time you have more efficiently. Be prepared for your 'scary' weeks! Do not let those weeks pull you under and put you in survival mode. You can be prepared for scary weeks, and that doesn't mean they will be easy. It will still be stressful, however, you should come out of a busy week not feeling behind and in survival mode for the rest of the semester. Plan ahead and do your best to prepare and adjust your strategies as needed.

To complete Backwards Planning, follow the instructions below.

### Supplies Needed:

- Monthly Calendar - You need 1 month for each month of this semester.
- Syllabus for each class you are in, or any other document or resource which reflects major deadlines such as exams, project due dates, etc
- Other deadlines that may include important deadlines or events for the organizations you are involved in, conferences, personal events such as birthdays, holidays, etc
- A pencil

### Instructions:

- 1.) Write in important deadlines for each class, student organization, or other personal obligations that have a time commitment and deadline
  - a. Example – If you are in Physics, write your test dates on the calendar. If you are in a humanities or writing class, write the dates your papers are due. If your Mom's birthday is on a Sunday and you will be spending half the day with her, write that in too.
  - b. Make sure to indicate what the deadline is, example "Physics test"
- 2.) Indicate where you will need to start preparing for each deadline.
  - a. For example, if you know you want to start writing your paper 5 days before it's due, write that on the calendar. Example "Start paper for [class name]".
  - b. Do this for each class, or other commitment for your personal life. No need to be very detailed yet.
- 3.) After you have written in all of your major deadlines and when you need to start working on things, take a look at your calendar.
  - a. Identify the "scary" weeks, when you have a lot of deadlines at once. Indicate this clearly on your calendar.
  - b. Adjust when you are starting to prepare for deadlines so you can get to this week and manage it!
    - Are there any weeks where you have a significant amount of work or commitments?

- Are there any weeks where your deadlines are overlapping?
- What is realistic for you to be committed to during those weeks? Can you begin assignments or studying for exams earlier (such as the week prior) to off load busy weeks?
- **Please adjust your “when to start” deadlines to reflect your strategy**

**Example Calendar:**

Below is a table, which contains an exam calendar for a student, using the Backwards Planning model. On this table, the example student has listed their due dates for assignments or tests, when they plan to begin working towards those due dates, and other important dates such as their Mom’s birthday. Also included on this example is a note that says, “Scary week!” on a week where the student has a lot going on at once. With Backwards Planning the student would ideally adjust when they begin working on deadlines in their ‘scary week’ so it is more manageable.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Start HUEN 1010 Paper	10	11 Physics Test	12	13 Study Calc I
14 Study Econ & Bio	15 Study Calc I	16	17 Study Bio	18 Calc I Test Writing Center For HUEN	19 Study Econ	20
21 Finish HUEN Paper Last prep for Tests!!	22 SWE Event All Evening	23 Econ Test	24 HUEN Paper Due	25 Bio Exam	26	27
28 Mom’s Birthday	29	30				

The next six pages include blank monthly calendar templates for you to create your own Backwards Planning. This is optional, and only included in this document as a place to start. You may use any calendar you currently own, blank paper, an app, or other technology, which suits your needs.

**Month:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday