

PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT: Timekeeping!

Due on OpenLab by 8am Tuesday, March 21! 5 points toward homework grade.

Instructions: Choose any four-hour period between now and the end of Monday, March 20, when you will be busy doing various tasks like schoolwork, chores, shopping, etc., and/or tasks that can be broken down into multiple steps (like grocery shopping, as in the example below). Then, during those four hours, keep a record of how much time you spend on each task in quarter-hour (15-minute) increments. See the OL post titled "Coughlin's timekeeping assignment" as an example. Please list your tasks vertically (like below, and the example) and use these decimal figures, as law firms require:

15 minutes = 0.25 (one-quarter hour)

30 minutes = 0.50 (one-half hour)

45 minutes = 0.75 (three-quarters of an hour)

60 minutes = 1.0 (one hour) *etc.*

Please round up or down to the nearest quarter-hour, as appropriate. For example, if you spend 12 minutes walking to the supermarket, that's close to 15 minutes, so record it as "0.25" (one-quarter hour, or 15 minutes). If you spend 40 minutes shopping for groceries, that's close to 45 minutes (three-quarters of an hour), so record it as "0.75." However, if you spend 50 minutes shopping for groceries, that's closer to 45 minutes than to one hour, so record it as "0.75" (three-quarters of an hour, or 45 minutes).

Some additional guidance:

- *Choose the period in advance!* Think about your plans for the next few days and figure out when you will be busy doing several short-term tasks, or a task that can be broken down into many steps, for four hours straight. This will make it much easier to record your time accurately, rather than trying to backtrack.
- *Record your tasks and time as you complete them!* Doing so will make this assignment (and your job at a law office) much easier and more accurate. It's tough to recall everything later!
- *Break large tasks down into steps, and be specific!* That's what law firms and clients usually want. For example, rather than "went to the supermarket – 1.25," break it down like this:
 - walked to Key Food supermarket—0.25
 - selected groceries (quart of milk, wheat bread, Apple Jacks cereal, Twinkies)—0.50
 - waited on line, bagged, and paid for groceries—0.25
 - walked home—0.25.
- *Provide other details!* (as you see above, as much as you feel comfortable) If you went to a store, what store was it? What did you buy? If you talked on the phone or texted, with whom? About what? As noted above, firms and clients generally require this much detail.
- *Tell us what you thought about your experience!* As you complete this assignment, think about how it feels to keep track of your time, and to do so in such a detailed, regimented way. Is it fun, or annoying, or something else, and why? Were you surprised at how you spent your time, or how much or how little time you spent on particular tasks? Or anything else you thought or felt about your experience? Tell us about it!

By 8am Tuesday, March 21, please write a post on OpenLab that includes your timekeeping record, plus a few sentences describing your thoughts/reflection on the experience. See "Coughlin's timekeeping assignment" on OL as an example. Choose "timekeeping" as the category.

Have some fun with this! It's possible!! ☺