- What makes a successful team?
- Do you prefer to be part of a team or to do things on your own? Why? Tell about your experience.
- Do you like being involved in short-term or long-term projects? Why? Tell about your experience.
- Have you ever worked on a project with people from different cultures? If so, did you experience any difficulties or did you notice any different ways of working?
- When you start / manage a project, what factors are really important to consider?
- Have you ever been involved in a project that went wrong? If so, what happened?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 Projects

Starting point

1 What makes a project successful?

2 Do you prefer to lead a project or be part of the team? Why?

3 Do you like being involved in long-term projects? Why/Why not?

Working with words | Projects

1 How can a business help a charity? What are the benefits for the company and its employees?

2 Read the article and decide if sentences 1–4 are true (*T*) or false (*F*).

1 The idea of volunteerism is increasingly popular in business.
2 Employees at Timberland have to do some voluntary work.
3 Companies like Timberland and Credit Suisse also benefit from the projects.
4 Samira uses the same skills in the volunteer project as in her usual job.

A COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEERISM

For many employees, work rarely involves helping local communities in the rainforests of the Amazon or teaching children in schools with little or no access to modern technology. However, these examples of volunteer projects are becoming more and more common in the business world, and many companies now offer their employees the opportunity to take part in volunteer programmes.

Timberland is one such company with a commitment to volunteerism. The global clothing manufacturer encourages staff to spend up to 40 paid hours a year on community and social projects. The community benefits from the company's **resources**, and staff gain new skills and **teamwork** improves.

Another example is the financial services firm Credit Suisse. It sends employees overseas to help educational and microfinance projects in developing countries. These projects can last for up to three months. The two **objectives** are to offer expertise to regions of the world that lack access to highly-qualified professionals and for the employees to develop new transferable skills.

Samira Khan is one employee who took advantage of her company's volunteer scheme. Samira normally spends her days behind a desk as a software engineer but currently she's also managing a volunteer project to redecorate a community centre for the elderly in Chicago. Managing a project like this means that Samira is learning new skills such as organizing the **schedule** so that they complete each **milestone** by its **deadline**. She also has to control a limited **budget**, and every few days she gets **updates** from her project team to check on their progress. She finds working on this project very rewarding and is pleased to be learning new skills.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 Does your company or its staff ever take part in volunteer projects?

- If you answer 'yes', describe one of the projects.
- If you answer 'no', what kind of volunteer project do you think it could offer?

4 Replace the words in *italics* with a word in **bold** from the text in **2**.

1 Can you email the *plan of all the work you have to do and the key dates*? schedule
2 We only have a limited *amount of money available for the project*. _____
3 The main problem is that no one knows what anyone else is doing. We need *a situation where everyone works together* for this project to succeed. _____
4 Could you send me regular *reports with the most recent information* about our progress? _____
5 We have to finish the project by a *certain point in time*. _____
6 This project has three main *things we are trying to achieve*. _____
7 I really feel we are making progress now because today we completed a *very important stage* in the project. _____
8 The reason we're behind schedule is because I don't have all the *supplies and human expertise* that I requested at the beginning. _____

5 ▶ 3.1 Samira is telling someone about the volunteer project that she is working on. Listen to these extracts from the conversation and answer the questions.

1 Which items in **4** does she talk about?
2 What does she say about each one?

6 ▶ 3.1 Listen again and complete the phrases that Samira uses in column A.

A		B
1 _____ the deadline	=	finish on time
2 fall _____ schedule	=	make slow progress
3 catch _____	=	make up lost time
4 be back _____ track	=	return to the original schedule
5 finish _____ schedule	=	finish before the planned date
6 _____ resources	=	make use of people, money and time
7 stay _____ budget	=	spend the right amount of money
8 _____ tasks	=	give people different responsibilities
9 get _____ with a task	=	do a job
10 _____ updates	=	receive reports on progress

7 Work with a partner. Take turns to cover the phrases in column A while your partner tests you using the definitions in column B.

Example: *A How can you say 'finish on time'?*
B 'Meet the deadline'?
A Yes.

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 3** on page 110.

8 Work with a partner. Read the comments describing a problem in four current projects. Say what the problem is and what the project manager needs to do, using phrases from **6**.

Example: *The project is falling behind schedule, so the project manager needs to make sure we catch up again so we can meet the deadlines.*

1 'We didn't expect so many delays.'
2 'We're currently spending 50% more than we planned.'
3 'I'm working late every night. I can't do everything on this project.'
4 'No one knows what each other is doing. There's no communication!'

9 Think of a project you, your department or company are currently working on. Make notes on the following and then tell your partner about the project.

- The objectives of the project
- The project team and the resources needed
- The budget
- The deadlines and milestones in the schedule
- Any problems and possible solutions

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Tip | *in time / on time*

In time means having enough time to be able to do something:

*If we leave now, we'll be there **in time** for the meeting.*

On time means at the correct time:

*I have to be at work at 9 a.m. and I always arrive **on time**. I'm never late, but I don't like to be early either.*

Match the sentences on the left with the sentences on the right which have a similar meaning:

1. We still have a lot of things to do.
2. Everybody works together really well.
3. We had a few delays.
4. We successfully completed the first stage earlier than we had expected.
5. Things often take longer than expected.
6. We don't have much money to complete the project.
7. It looks like we are going to complete the project by the deadline.

a. I think we are on schedule.
b. It's rare that a project goes exactly as planned.
c. The project is behind schedule.
d. There are many action items left.
e. We are ahead of schedule.
f. We are on a very tight budget.
g. We have very good team dynamics.

Answer any of the questions below.

1. Do your projects always go as planned?
2. What do you do if a project is behind schedule?
3. Are you always on a tight budget?
4. How important are good team dynamics?
5. What kind of action items are typical in your company projects?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The team

The success of projects depends on teamwork. The team leader should support team members, and every individual needs to be a good team player. You can:

lead/head (up)/run *a team*
build/form *a team*
join *a team*
work together as *a team*
team up with *somebody* (= work together with them)
be a team leader/team member/team player

Often your team includes external partners with whom you have common ground (= shared goals in certain areas). You work with them for your mutual benefit (= both sides gain something). When outside people are involved in the team and have the same goals, they are 'on board'.

There is a lot of ***common ground*** *between us – I think we can* ***work together for our mutual benefit****.*
Welcome to the team. It's great to have you ***on board****.*

Time and money

Projects have a schedule (= time plan) and a deadline (= final date). You can:

fall behind *schedule and then* ***catch up***
be on *schedule*
finish ahead of *schedule*
agree/confirm/set/extend *a deadline*
meet/miss *a deadline*

Projects also need a budget (= money available to spend). Before the project starts you can:

estimate (or ***underestimate***) *costs*
make a ***rough*** (= approximate) *estimate of costs*

And once it is running you should try to:

keep within *the budget*
stick to *the budget* (also *stick to the schedule*)

Getting started

At the beginning of a project you:

- Allocate resources (= decide how to use money, time, people and materials).
- Brief team members (= give them information and instructions).
- Delegate tasks.

If you are doing a project for an outside client, you:

- Meet with the client and discuss the specifications (= detailed instructions).
- Produce a breakdown (= detailed list) of the costs.
- Draw up (= prepare and write) a proposal and present it to the client.
- Get feedback from the client, and then modify the proposal based on the feedback.
- Discuss the details of the contract and then sign it once everything is agreed.
- Appoint subcontractors, usually after putting the work out to tender (= announcing publicly that work is needed and giving different companies the opportunity to bid for the work).

Finally you set a start date. If you have any issues (= problems), you might have to delay (= postpone/put back/push back) the start date.

Progress

Everyone gets on with their work (= continues with it). The team leader gets regular updates from team members and makes sure that:
a) everything is on track (= developing in the right way and likely to be successful), and
b) everyone is kept in the loop (= kept informed).

- ***Where are we with*** *Phase 1 of the project?*
- *We've* ***already*** *done it./We have****n't*** *done it* ***yet****./Don't worry, everything's* ***on track****.*

- *Is everything going OK?*
- *We* ***had an issue*** *with a subcontractor but we're* ***back on track*** *now.*

- *Can you send me* ***regular updates****?*
- ***Leave it with me.***

- ***What's happening with*** *Phase 2? I'm* ***out of the loop****.*
- *Good news. We're slightly* ***ahead of schedule****. And up to now we've managed to* ***keep within the budget****.*

- ***How's everything going with*** *Phase 3?*
- *We're* ***short of time****./Time's* ***running out****.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

21.1 Match an item on the left with an item on the right to make phrases from the text opposite.

1	be the team	estimate
2	be back on	resources
3	allocate	a start date
4	set	leader
5	make a rough	track
6	be kept in	tasks
7	fall behind	within the budget
8	finish ahead	of schedule
9	delegate	schedule
10	keep	the loop
11	find common	a proposal
12	brief (v)	ground
13	draw up	with our work
14	put work out	team members
15	get on	to tender

21.2 Complete the sentences with a whole phrase from Exercise 21.1.

1 Juliana has little experience in this area. Is she ready to *be the team leader* ?

2 It's difficult to give a detailed breakdown of the costs, but I think we can _____ .

3 We've had a few problems but we should _____ in a day or two.

4 We should know our budget next week. The senior management team are having a meeting on Monday to _____ for all the planned projects.

5 Phase 2 of the project is taking much longer than we thought. We're definitely going to _____ .

6 I won't be involved in the project on a day-to-day basis, but I would still like to _____ .

7 It's not vital that we stick exactly to the time plan – what really matters is the money side of things. We really have to _____ .

8 Everything's moving very quickly. Believe it or not I think we might even _____ .

9 I'm sure we can _____ with our competitors on the issue of internet piracy. We need to work together to do something about it.

10 Great! The contract is signed and the budget is in place. Now we can finally _____ .

11 We can't just offer this job to our usual subcontractor. EU legislation requires that we _____ .

12 On Monday morning there's a kick-off meeting to _____ on the new project.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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.

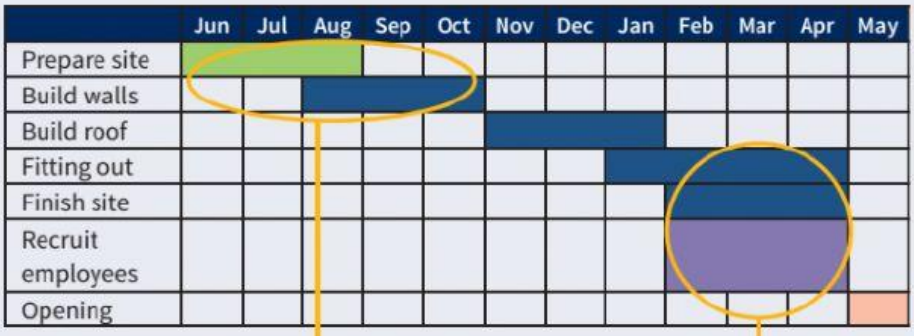
B Projects and project management

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

stages
phases
steps
tasks

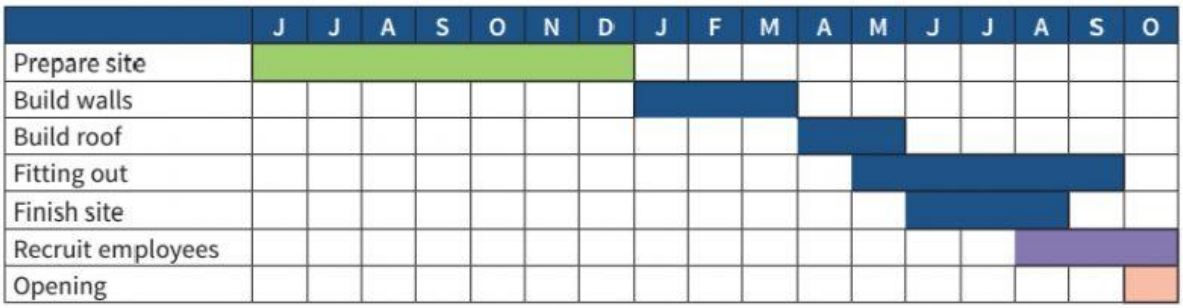


These stages **overlap** – the second one starts before the first finishes.

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.

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.



'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!'

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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**.

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

1 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.
2 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.
3 He started work again on his article, but he heard police cars outside and went to the window to look.
4 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.
5 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.
6 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?

LIVEWORKSHEETS