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# Balance

## Reading

1 Read the article from a business website and find the following information:

1 Two kinds of problems that President Eisenhower talked about

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2 Two ways of organizing these two kinds of problems

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3 The number and names of categories in the grid

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4 Two examples of tasks and the categories they belong to

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4 Think of 10–12 things you need to do at work, in your studies, and in your life in general. Categorize your tasks in the grid at the bottom of the page.

2 Read the article again and choose the correct word for the gaps (1–6).

1 a meeting      b party      c reunion

2 a do      b draw      c make

3 a already      b immediately      c then

4 a arrive      b get      c reach

5 a be      b last      c take

6 a boss      b friend      c person

3 Underline the reasons given in the article that answer these questions. Then write the words that introduce the reasons.

1 Why do you sometimes need more than lists?

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2 Why do you need to understand the difference between important and urgent?

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3 Why is it a good idea to draw a grid?

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	urgent	not urgent
important		
not important		

## The Eisenhower Principle: how to decide what to do first

*"I have two kinds of problems: the urgent and the important.  
The urgent are not important and the important are never urgent."*

These are the words of former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower. He was speaking at a <sup>1</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ of world leaders, but his idea is useful in all kinds of situations, especially in the business world. His idea is now known as the "Eisenhower Principle," and it is an essential strategy when you need to organize your tasks.





The Eisenhower Principle lets you sort the things you have to do into different categories, helping you decide the things you should do first. Making lists is a good starting point for this kind of organization. Sometimes, you need to do more than list things. The reason for this is it can be hard to

see the connections between tasks on your lists. You can <sup>2</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ one list of urgent things and another list of important things, but how do you know which order to do the tasks in? In fact, the first step is to be clear about the difference between *important* and *urgent*, because without understanding this, you will make limited progress. Urgent tasks are things that you need to do

<sup>3</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ and are often things someone else needs you to do. Sometimes they are quick and simple jobs, such as contacting someone who is waiting for information. Important tasks, as Eisenhower said, are not necessarily urgent, but they will help you <sup>4</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ your goals.

One way to see your priorities clearly is to draw a grid with one column showing "urgent" and the

other column showing "important," since this gives you a single space to write all the tasks in (as shown in the diagram), instead of separate lists. It's a simple and effective idea to start your working day with!

	urgent	not urgent
important	Do it TODAY 	PLAN when to do it 
not important	Decide WHO can do it 	DON'T do it! 

The grid has four smaller squares. The top corner, square 1, is for the tasks that are both "important" and "urgent." Obviously, these are the tasks you need to do today. An example could be dealing with an unexpected problem. Square 2 is for jobs that are still important, although not so urgent. The focus here is to decide *when* you need to do them. How much time will they <sup>5</sup>\_\_\_\_\_? Most of your tasks that you need to plan are here. Square 3 is for urgent jobs that you may be able to pass to another <sup>6</sup>\_\_\_\_\_. In other words, it's not important for you to do them, but it is necessary that someone does them. So the focus of this square is *who*. And the final square is for the things that you didn't really need to put on your to-do list at all!