

Project Management Planner

How to Gantt

Lara Kjeldsen
Student Academic Resource Center
University of Central Florida

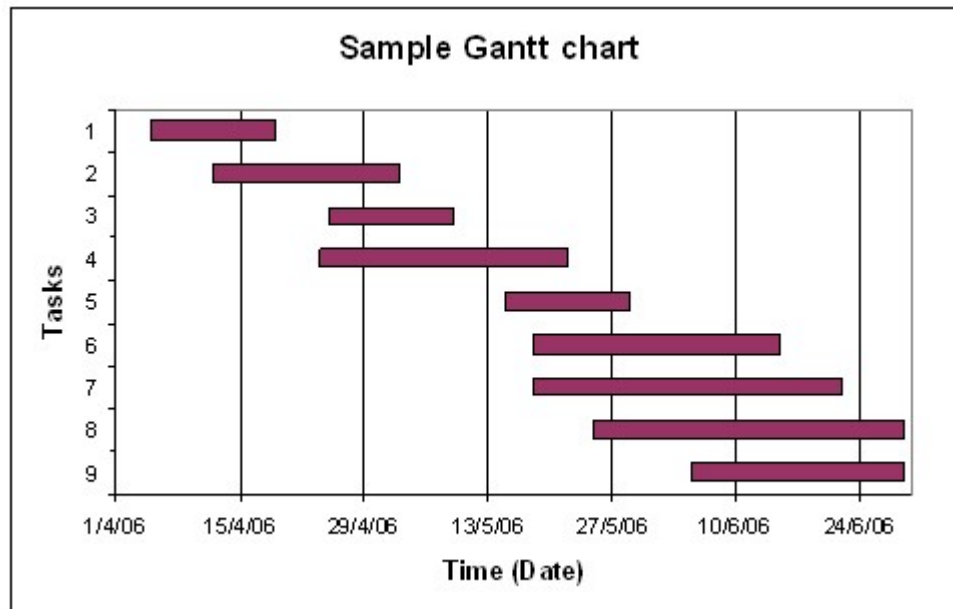
Complex or long-term projects can be overwhelming. Breaking a task into smaller subtasks can help it feel more manageable, and backwards planning has been shown to increase motivation to complete a project¹.

In addition to making the project easier, learning how to break down a project into smaller chunks, to delegate tasks within a group, and schedule a timeline for successful execution of a project will be invaluable to any future career.

One method to manage projects this way is called a Gantt Chart.

What is a Gantt Chart?

A Gantt Chart is a visual project management timeline. It consists of horizontal bars, usually color coded, that show all the tasks of a project, when they are due, who is responsible, and how long each task will take.



Who uses Gantt Charts?

Businesses, the military, and any organization that manages projects commonly use Gantt Charts.

¹ Jooyoung, P., Lu, F., Hedgcock, W. (2017). Forward and Backward Planning and Goal Pursuit. *Psychological Science*. DOI:10.1177/0956797617715510

Create a Gantt Chart

First, define the project you would like to plan. This can be a homework assignment, test to study for, or even a whole class or semester.

Project Name: *Psychology Group Presentation* **Due:** *March 31*

Step 1. Define tasks.

List every task you will need to complete to finish this project. If it's a test, list every topic you know that will be on the test, whether you already know the topic or not.

- How do you know what is needed?
- Where can you find this information?
- Be specific.

Tasks:

- *Interview sources*
- *Choose topic*
- *References page*
- *Literature review*
- *Present PowerPoint to class*
- *Write body*
- *Write introduction*
- *Create PowerPoint*
- *Write conclusion*
- *Write abstract*

Step 2. Define chronological order.

Put each task in order of when it needs to be done.

- Do some tasks depend on others?
- Does a certain task need to be completed before you will be able to move to the next task?
- Can any tasks be in progress at the same time?

Task Order

- 1. Choose topic*
- 2. Literature review*
- 3. Interview sources*
- 4. Write body*
- 5. Write introduction*
- 5. Write abstract*
- 5. Write conclusion*
- 6. References page*
- 7. Create PowerPoint*
- 8. Present PowerPoint to class*

Step 3. Define time.

Estimate how much time it will take you to complete each task to a level of quality you would be proud of. If it's a test, how much time will you need to study and master each topic?

- What might happen if you estimate too much time for a task? What might be the result of estimating too little time?
- Do you have enough time between now and the due date to complete all the tasks?
- Alternatively, you can calculate the total time you have available for this project and divide up the time to each portion. *Example: I have 4 weeks to write my final paper, which consists of 5 tasks. That give me about 5 days per task (28 days/5 tasks = 5.6 days/task).*

Task Time

1. Choose topic (1 hour)
2. Literature review (5 hours)
3. Interview sources (4 hours)
4. Write body (5 hours)
5. Write introduction (2 hours)
5. Write abstract (1 hour)
5. Write conclusion (2 hours)
6. References page (1 hour)
7. Create PowerPoint (4 hours)
8. Present PowerPoint to class (1 hour)

Step 4. Define due dates and start dates.

Working backward from the final date and using the time you defined in step 3, schedule realistic due and start dates for each task.

- Does your timeline go backward until today? A day before today? A day after?
- Are your times to complete accurate? Revise now if you see you will need more time.

#	Task	Time	Due Date	Start Date
8	Present PowerPoint	1 hour	Monday, March 31	Monday, March 31
7	Create PowerPoint	4 hours	Friday, March 28	Wednesday, March 26
6	References page	1 hour	Wednesday, March 26	Wednesday, March 26
5	Write conclusion	2 hours	Wednesday, March 26	Tuesday, March 25
5	Write abstract	1 hour	Wednesday, March 26	Tuesday, March 25
5	Write introduction	2 hours	Wednesday, March 26	Tuesday, March 25
4	Write body	5 hours	Tuesday, March 25	Thursday, March 20
3	Interview sources	4 hours	Thursday, March 20	Monday, March 17
2	Literature review	5 hours	Monday, March 17	Friday, March 14
1	Choose topic	1 hour	Friday, March 14	Friday, March 14

Step 5. Assign tasks to project members (optional)

- If this is a group project, define who is responsible for each task.

Step 6. Fill in Gantt chart.

Project: *Psychology Group Presentation*

Due Date: *3/31*

Date		3/14	3/15-16	3/17	3/18	3/19	3/20	3/21	3/22-23	3/24	3/25	3/26	3/27	3/28	3/29	3/30	3/31
Task	Notes																
Choose topic	Group mtg Friday	█															
Literature Review		█	█	█	█												
Interview sources				█	█	█	█	█									
Write body							█	█	█	█	█	█					
Write introduction											█	█	█				
Write abstract											█	█	█				
Write conclusion											█	█	█				
References page												█	█				
Create PowerPoint												█	█	█	█		
Present PowerPoint																	█

Step 7. IMPORTANT! Update and refine.

Continuously update your Gantt chart with actual timelines.

- If a task took longer than you anticipated, what is a more realistic time estimate for your remaining tasks?
- Does a task need to be shortened or started earlier in order to complete the project in time?

Project Name:

Due Date:

Tasks:

#	Task	Time Required	Due Date	Start Date	Person Responsible
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					

