

# EISENHOWER MATRIX

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# *What is Eisenhower matrix*

Eisenhower matrix is a time management tool that helps to organize time and priorities by urgent and important. It is a framework pictured as one big square divided to four smaller squares. The x-axis represents urgent matters, and the y-axis represents important matters. According to boxes (squares), in the upper left box are important and urgent items on a schedule and in the lower right box are the unimportant and not urgent. The framework looks like this:

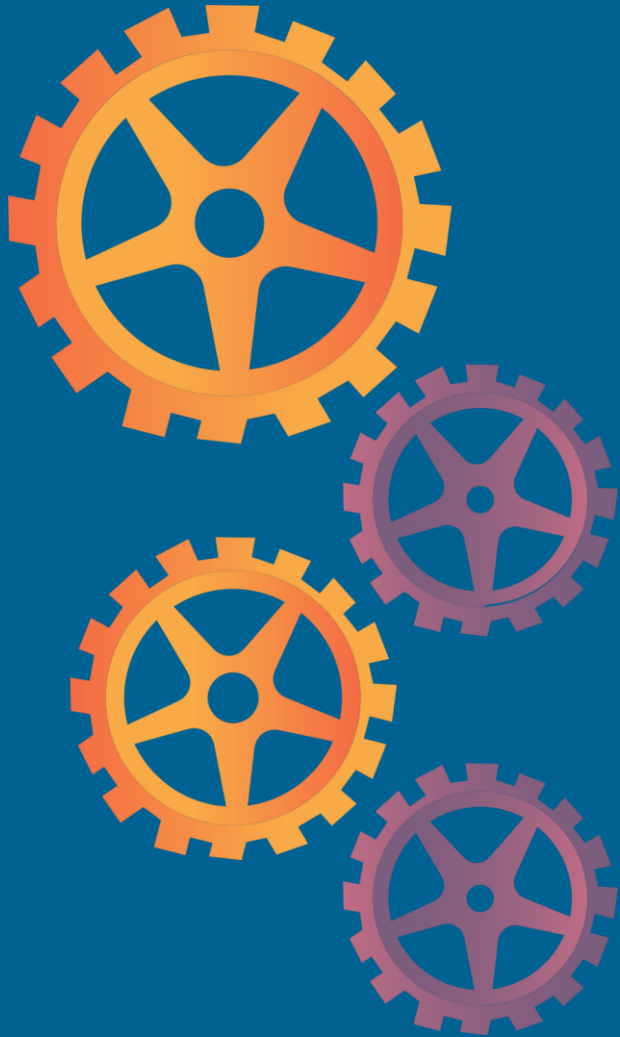
This time-management tool is based on important/urgent items principle. Eisenhower's strategy is for taking action and organizing tasks according to this key:

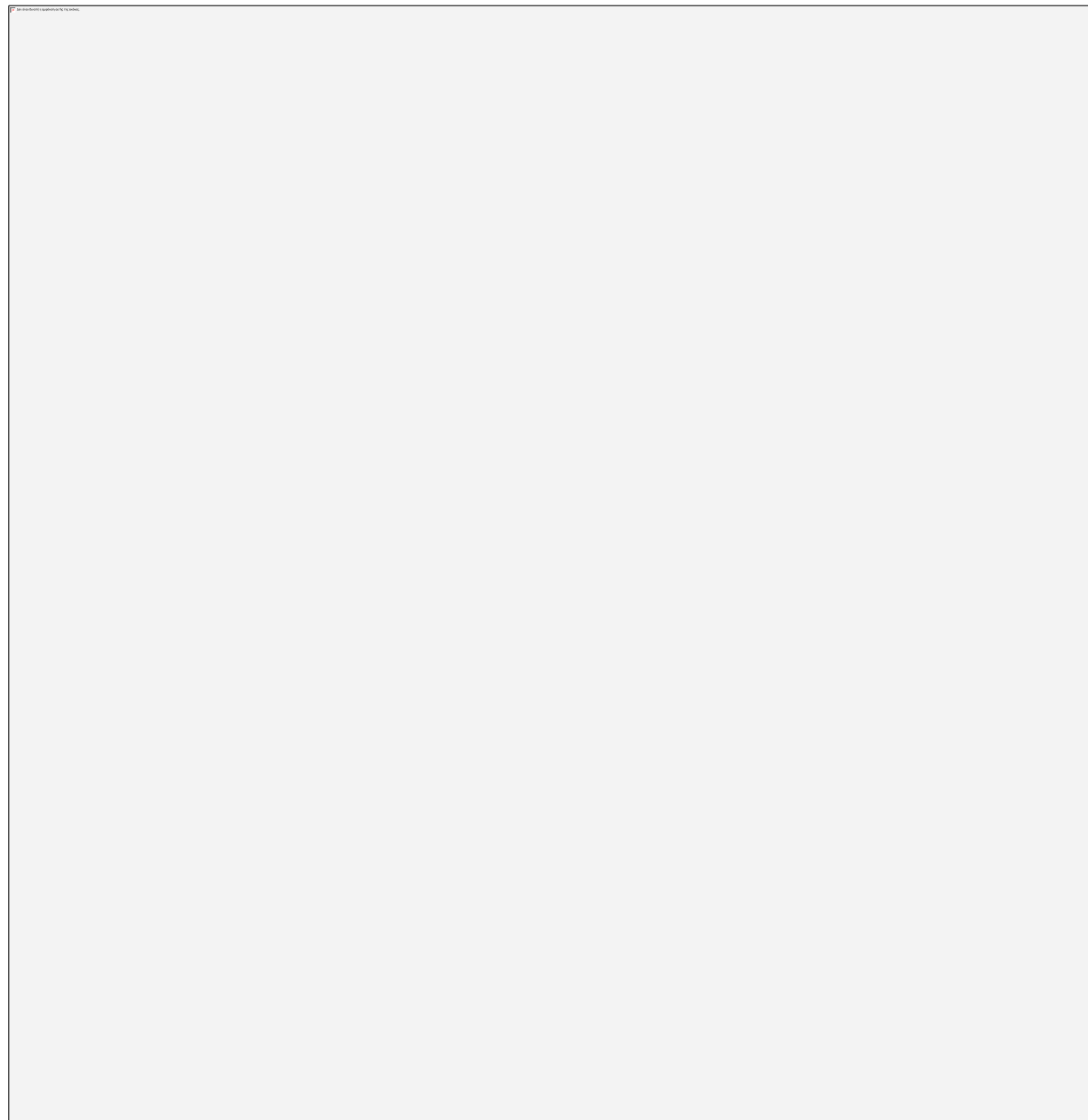
**Urgent and important** (tasks you will do immediately).

**Important, but not urgent** (tasks you will schedule to do later).

**Urgent, but not important** (tasks you will delegate to someone else).

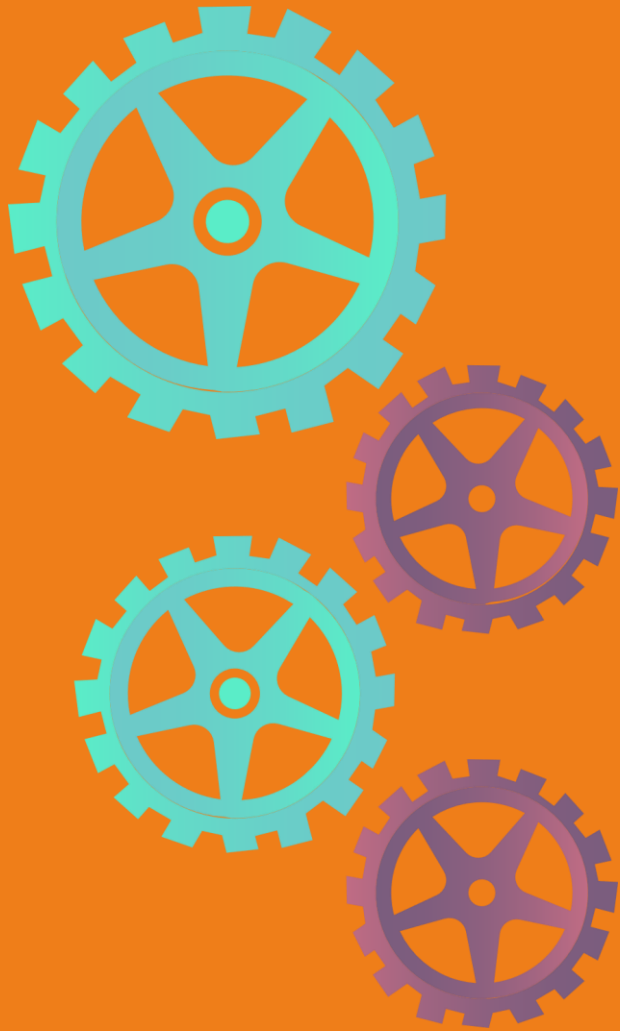
**Neither urgent nor important** (tasks that you will eliminate).





# *History of Eisenhower matrix*

The origin of Eisenhower matrix comes from US former president and a five-star general during World War II, Dwight D. Eisenhower. He had many responsibilities on his schedule and had to make important and urgent decisions, so he developed a simple box to help him prioritize and deal with the many high-stakes issues he faced. The matrix has been popularized a few decades later by Stephen Covey's book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. As a result, Eisenhower matrix is now widely known and used time management tool.



# *How to use Eisenhower matrix?*

The first step is to list all the activities and projects you do at work, that consumes your time, and you need to do them (however unimportant they may seem). Then put each activity into the box you think it belongs. But first, know the **difference between important and urgent**.

The difference between important and urgent is not seen on the first sight, however in the Eisenhower theory the difference is crucial. **Important tasks** refer to long term goals and visions, therefore they do not produce immediate results and may not require immediate attention. Their less urgency does not mean irrelevancy, just other point of view. **Urgent tasks** require immediate attention and need to be solved now. Usually there are some consequences when the urgent task is not done on time. These activities produce more stress so we should handle them with reason and calm.



# Activity



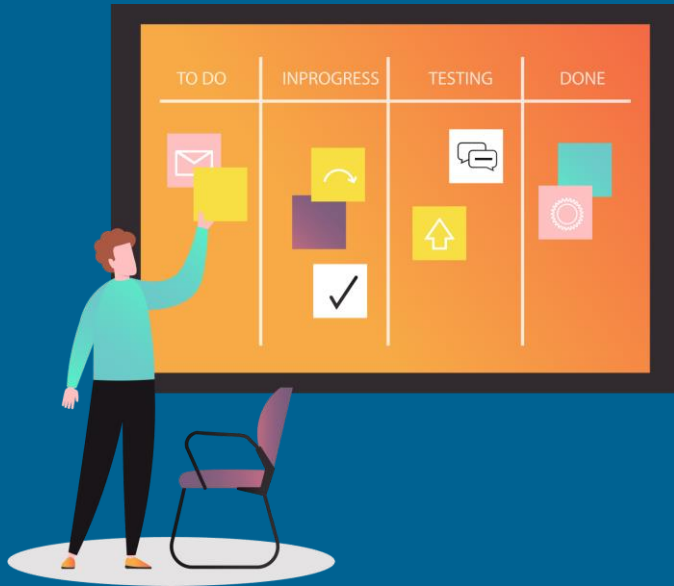
## Activity

Here are some duties, urgent and important, and your task is to define them whether they are important or urgent.

*Imagine you are a project manager and you run several projects. Every one of them has deadlines and people wait for you to give them some job. Plus, there are some administrative things to sort out and your license on a software (your firm use it daily) does not work. Organize these following tasks into Eisenhower quadrants:*

- *Facilitate ordering of equipment/materials/licenses required to complete projects*
- *Plan/run PROJECT meetings*
- *Hiring technical staff*
- *Organize team-building activities*
- *Inform partners about the stage of the project*
- *Get missing information holding back implementation*
- *Review project budget vs. actual*
- *Call software support*
- *Identify resource/skill gaps*
- *Assign tasks to project assistants*

# 4 Quadrants



## *1<sup>st</sup> Quadrant*

### **1 Quadrant: Important and Urgent**

Also called DO quadrant, gathers things both important and urgent. These tasks must be done now because they have deadlines, they have clear consequences, and they affect long-term goals. Tasks in first quadrant can be predictable or unexpected, but usually stress us the most. Here are some teacher tasks examples:

#### *Do Now Tasks:*

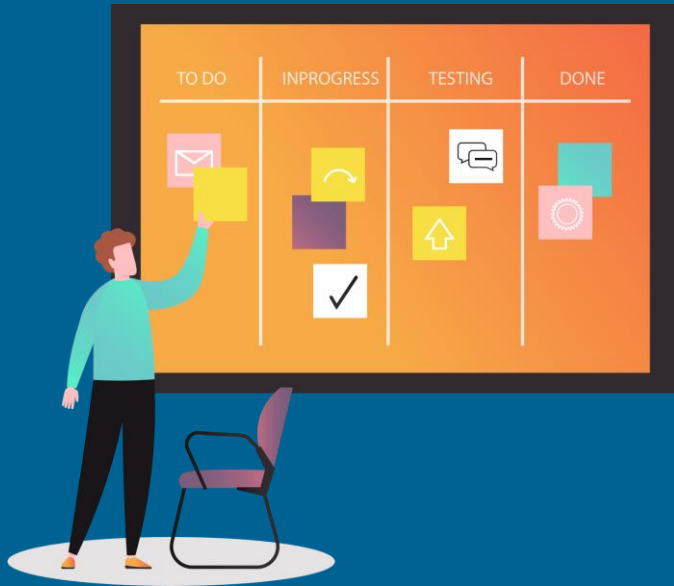
Grade submission and reporting

Student injury/illness

Student disciplinary actions

Parent communication

# 4 Quadrants



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Quadrant

### 2 Quadrant: Important and Not Urgent

Otherwise called SCHEDULE quadrant (or quality quadrant), groups important but not urgent tasks. They directly affect your long-term goals but can be done later - you schedule them for later. If you are done with quadrant one, you move to quadrant two. Covey at his book says, that successful people spend most of their time here. They focus on important things helping them to achieve the goal.

#### Schedule Tasks:

Lesson planning

Co-teacher/Administrator support

Professional development

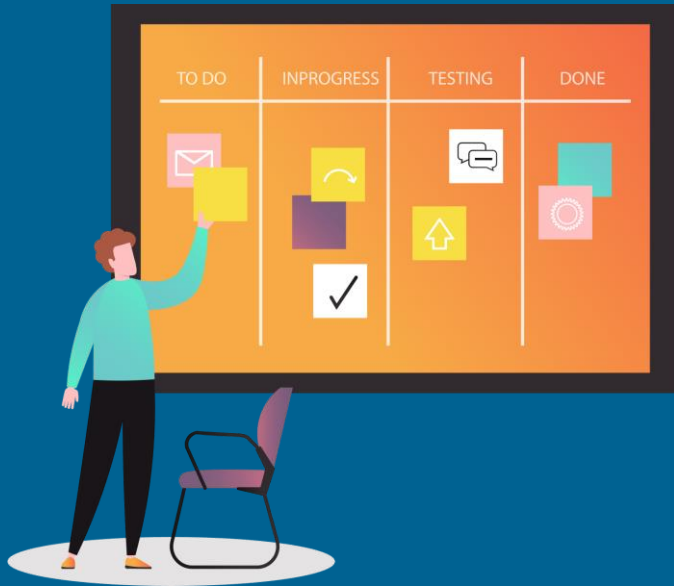
Family time

Health/Exercise

Hobbies



# 4 Quadrants



## 3<sup>rd</sup> Quadrant

### 3 Quadrant: Not Important and Urgent

This is the DELEGATE quadrant where you place urgent tasks, but not important. They do not affect your long-term goals but need to be done now. These tasks do not require your special skills or your time, so you can delegate them to other colleagues. Delegating is a way to give your team the opportunity to expand their skills. Or sometimes it is wise to say no to people politely, or to encourage them to solve the problem themselves.

#### Delegate Tasks:

Gradebook logging

Copying

Filing

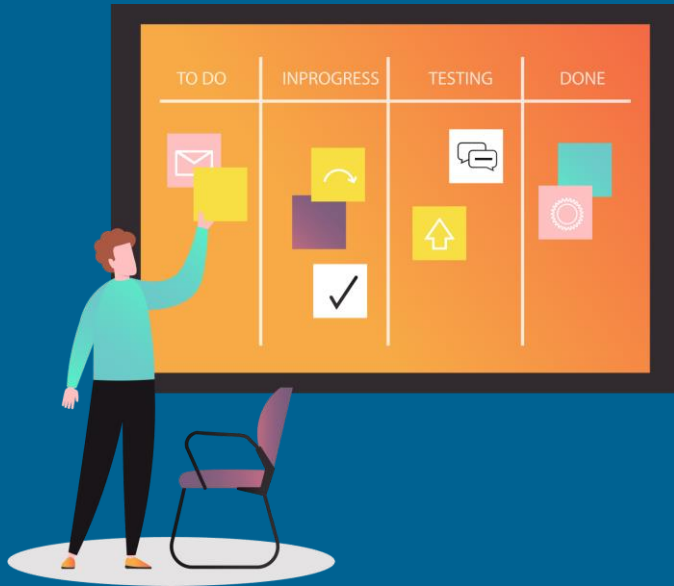
Email management

Special committees

Favors for other teachers

Above-and-beyond tasks

# 4 Quadrants



## 4<sup>th</sup> Quadrant

### 4 Quadrant: Not Important and Not Urgent

Named also DELETE. When you selected your tasks to previous quadrants, there are still some that fall to not urgent and unimportant quadrant. These tasks usually distract you from the ultimate goal and you can delete them from your to do list. These are for example: checking Facebook, playing games and so on. Tasks from forth quadrant are vital when you free have time or need a break at work, otherwise be careful not to spend much time in here during work time. Other activities from this quadrant can be tasks from other people. Polite 'no' is an answer too and furthermore, healthy boundaries helps you to achieve your long-term goals.

#### Eliminate Tasks:

Gossip and worry

Shopping for supplies

Social media

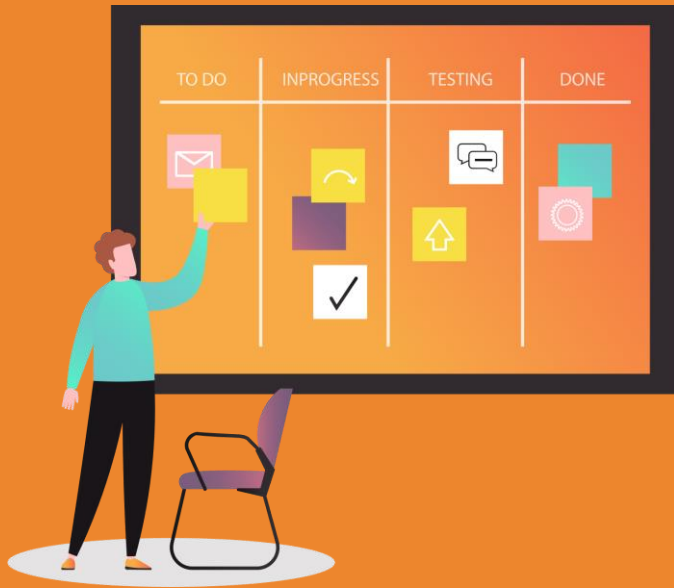
TV watching

# Video



# *Video explanation*





## Resources

- Mind Tools content team, 2022. Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle. Online article. Available on: <https://www.mindtools.com/a11e0k5/eisenhowers-urgentimportant-principle>
- Product plan, 2022. Eisenhower Matrix. Online article. Available on: <https://www.productplan.com/glossary/eisenhower-matrix/>
- Clear, J. How to be More Productive and Eliminate Time Wasting Activities by Using the “Eisenhower Box”. Online article. Available on: <https://jamesclear.com/eisenhower-box>
- Schmidt-Davis, J., 2019. THE EISENHOWER MATRIX: A TOOL TO HELP SCHOOL LEADERS FOCUS THEIR TIME. Online article. Available on: <https://www.sreb.org/blog-post/eisenhower-matrix-tool-help-school-leaders-focus-their-time>
- Covey S.R., 1989. The seven habits of highly effective people: restoring the character ethic, published by Simon and Schuster, New York, NY.

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