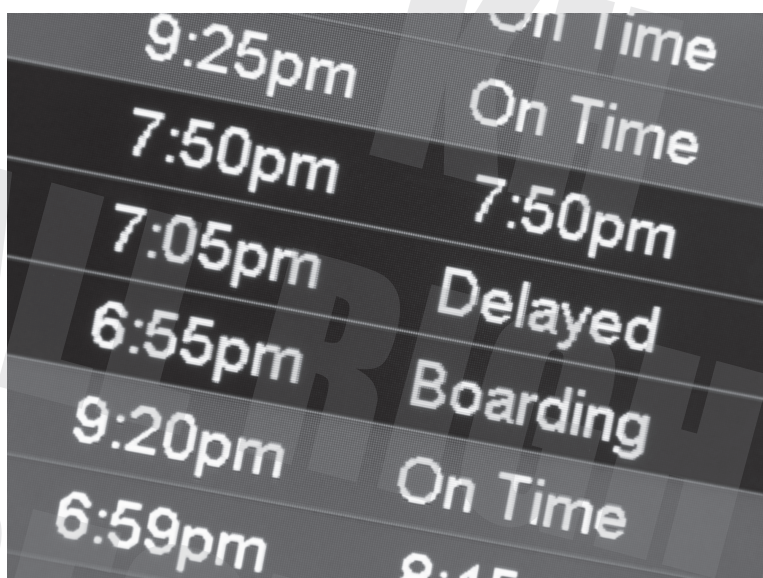


## Chapter 9

# Time Messages



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### CHAPTER TOPICS

#### Psychological Time

- Past Orientation
- Present Orientation
- Future Orientation

#### Interpersonal Time

- Punctuality
- Wait Time
- Lead Time
- Duration
- Simultaneity
- Talk Time

#### Work Time

- Relationship Time
- Synchronicity and Asynchronicity
- Response Time

#### Cultural Time

- Formal and Informal Time
- Monochronism and Polychronism
- Displaced and Diffused Orientation
- The Social Clock

#### Biological Time

- Biorhythms
- Daytime Preferences
- Time Management

#### Summary

#### Key Terms

#### And in Addition



## CHAPTER EXERCISES

[Identifying Your Psychological Time Orientation]  
Distinguishing between Appropriate and Inappropriate Time Responses  
Explaining Interpersonal Time

Analyzing Time Expressions  
Making Self-Disclosure Decisions  
Charting Your Biorhythms  
[Identifying Your Daytime Orientation]  
Analyzing Your Own Time Management



## ON THE JOB

Workplace Promptness

Multitasking



## POLITENESS IN NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Being polite with time messages



## IF YOU WANT TO

Appear a professional **leader/in control of the situation**, especially at meetings

Express **intimacy/connection/liking for/warmth/affection**

## CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Define *psychological time* and explain the different psychological time orientations.
2. Define *interpersonal time* and explain its essential dimensions.
3. Define and distinguish between formal and informal time and between monochronism and polychronism.
4. Define *social clock* and apply its implications to your own thinking about time.
5. Explain the nature of biological time and the nature of biorhythms.

**BEFORE** reading about time messages, consider your own time orientation. For each of the following statements, indicate which is TRUE and which is FALSE in terms of your general attitude and behavior.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I often turn to the past for guidance in the present.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Old people have wisdom that I can learn from.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I enjoy learning about and from the past.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Knowing about the past helps me in the present.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I enjoy life as it comes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I avoid looking too far ahead.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I frequently put off work to enjoy the moment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I look for immediate payoffs/rewards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I work hard today basically because of tomorrow's expected rewards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I enjoy planning for tomorrow and the future generally.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I'm willing to endure difficulties if there's a payoff/reward at the end.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I prepare "to do" lists fairly regularly.

These questions were designed to raise the issue of time orientation, whether you focus more on the past, the present, or the future. The idea for this test and the insights on psychological time owe their formulation to Gonzales and Zimbardo (1985). Past-oriented individuals would (as you can tell from the questions) respond with TRUE to Questions 1–4 and with either TRUE or FALSE for the remaining statements. Present-oriented individuals would respond with TRUE to Questions 5–8, FALSE to Questions 9–12, and either TRUE or FALSE for Questions 1–4. Future-oriented individuals would respond with TRUE to Questions 9–12, FALSE for Questions 5–8, and either TRUE or FALSE for Questions 1–4. As you'll see, your time orientation has important implications for both your college and your professional career.

The study of temporal communication, known technically as **chronemics**, concerns the use of time—how you organize it, react to it, and communicate messages through it (Bruneau, 1990, 2009/2010). We identify four types of time: psychological time, interpersonal time, cultural time, and biological time. In addition, we offer some suggestions on effective time management.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL TIME

Psychological time is concerned with a person's orientation to the past, present, or future. Let's look at each.

### Past Orientation

With a **past orientation**—which is relatively rare in much of the United States but quite prevalent in other parts of the world—individuals look to the past for guidance. They believe that what was done in the past is good enough for the present. In these cultures, there is particular reverence for older people who are seen as having the

wisdom necessary to guide us in the present and in the future. In some cases, present ways of doing things are looked upon with suspicion and they often resist innovations. They fight against embracing technology, for example.

## Present Orientation

With a **present orientation**, you live in the present—for now—without planning for tomorrow or think back to the past. Present orientation is strongest among lowest-income males and also among those with high emotional distress and hopelessness (Zaleski, Cycon, & Kurc, 2001). One of the problems with present orientation is that you're left with an unprepared-for future. This is the person who spends his or her money early and is left with no retirement funds. This is the person who parties rather than studies and fails to develop the skills and competencies needed for profitable employment. The problems with present orientation, not surprisingly, are taught to us early. Consider, for example, the story of the Three Little Pigs. The pigs that didn't plan for the future and didn't protect themselves against the wolf had their houses blown away.

## Future Orientation

With a **future orientation**, you look toward and live for the future. You follow the model of the little pig who spent his time building his house to withstand the wolf rather than play. You save today, work hard in college, and deny yourself luxuries because you're preparing for the future. In fact, college itself is a future-oriented activity. The fact that you are in college means that you are future oriented, at least to some major extent. This is not to deny that there aren't immediate rewards in college; there certainly are, probably every day. And yet, the activity itself—the investment of 4 years time and considerable money and forfeiture of earnings—is clearly future oriented. Not surprisingly, future income is positively related to future orientation; the more future oriented you are, the greater your income is likely to be (Gonzalez & Zimbardo, 1985).

The time orientation you develop depends on your culture, your socioeconomic class, and your personal experiences (Gonzalez & Zimbardo, 1985). Children with parents who work in unskilled occupations are brought up in a way that promotes a present orientation. Children whose parents are professionals (e.g., teachers, doctors, lawyers, accountants) are brought up with a future orientation. They're taught the value of preparing for tomorrow. For example, children of professionals are expected to go to college; it's almost an unwritten, unspoken assumption. Children of unskilled workers may or may not go to college.

As you might expect, communication problems can easily occur between future and present-oriented people. For example, the future-oriented person who works for tomorrow's goals will frequently look down on the present-oriented person as lazy and poorly motivated for enjoying today and not planning for tomorrow. (In fact, much of the current financial debate over social security and health insurance and austerity in Europe centers on the belief that people must be future



What were you taught about time from your parents? Your teachers? Your peers? © 2013, iofoto, Shutterstock, Inc.



oriented and must plan for their future.) In turn, the present-oriented person may see those with strong future orientations as obsessed with amassing wealth or rising in status and failing to “smell the roses.” Present-oriented people may criticize future-oriented parents who pursue careers while their children are young for their failure to enjoy the present and to make the present the time that really counts.

## INTERPERSONAL TIME

**Interpersonal time** refers to a wide variety of time-related elements that figure into interpersonal interaction. Burgoon et al. (2010) discuss punctuality, wait time, lead time, duration, and simultaneity and Andersen and Bowman (1999) discuss waiting-time, talk-time, and work-time in their discussion of time and its relationship to power. To these we add relationship time, synchronicity–asynchronicity, and response time, the last two of which have taken on added importance due to the frequency with which you communicate via some kind of computer connection, and group them under the heading of *Interpersonal Time*.

### Punctuality


**Punctuality** refers to being on time for a variety of occasions—for company meetings, for class, for teacher–student appointments, for a ball game, for a movie or television show, and for completing assignments, to take just a few examples. Some people are always on time or early and others are consistently late, likely a personality difference. However, much of it is learned. If you were taught the values and appropriateness (by example as well as by explicit instruction) then it’s likely that you act in accordance with these “instructions.” One way you learn this is by observing any hierarchy such as those in most organizations. Generally, those of higher status have greater leeway when it comes to punctuality; the boss may be late but the workers need to be on time. The professor may be late for a conference but the student needs to be on time. The dean or president may be late for a conference but the professor needs to be on time. As a patient you’re expected to be on time though the doctor rarely is.



What other situations might you mention as having different rules depending on your status? © 2013, Monkey Business

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Different cultures view punctuality differently, which can on occasion create difficulties. For example, members of some Latin cultures would rather be late for an appointment than end a conversation abruptly. The Latin person sees this behavior as politeness toward the person with whom he or she is conversing—but others, especially future-oriented people, may see this as impolite to the person with whom he or she had the appointment (Hall & Hall, 1987).



**IF YOU WANT TO**

Appear a professional **leader/in control of the situation**, especially at meetings

- Arrive a bit early (not too early).
- Be totally prepared.
- End on time.
- Dress appropriately (perhaps one step up from the usual).

## Wait Time

**Wait time** refers to the amount of time it's considered appropriate to wait for something or someone. Burgoon et al. (2010) relate the practice of college students being required to wait for a late instructor a certain length of time depending on the instructor's rank, a situation I recall from my own college days. Then, we had to wait a full 30 minutes for a full professor but only 10 minutes for an assistant professor. This, by the way, was taught to all incoming students during orientation classes and it may still be a practice in some colleges today. Actually, this isn't uncommon. Police officers, firefighters, and military personnel all follow similar rules—though many are unwritten.

Consider some of the messages this type of rule might communicate, for example:

- The time of high-ranking people is more important than the time of low-ranking people.
- The value of a student's time is related to the rank of the instructor.
- Rank is crucial to all of life's relationships.

There are of course factors other than status that figure into this equation. For example, if this was the first time you were meeting face to face with someone you've communicated with for 2 years via a social network and the person was late, you'd probably wait a lot longer than if this were someone you didn't care about or if you were not looking forward to the meeting.

Wait time can also be used strategically to signal power differences and to dominate the interaction. Just being late and having someone wait for you communicates that you're more important—or at least that's the message many would get from this

situation. And since it's usually the superior who makes the other person wait, the power difference already exists and the wait time just emphasizes it.

## Lead Time

**Lead time** refers to the time needed for making decisions. For example, you'd expect to ask for a date sometime in advance of the actual date (and this will vary greatly from one culture to another), especially if it's something like a prom or a major event. You'd expect an invitation for a wedding, for example, to arrive with considerable lead time and you'd expect more lead time if the wedding were in another state or country. Similarly, you're expected to give an employer a certain amount of time if you quit (and it may well be written in your contract). Employers seem to vary; some will give terminated employees notice and others will usher the fired individual out the door with virtually no lead time.

## Duration

**Duration** refers to the length of time that a particular interaction will take. When you go to the doctor or dentist you're likely given a specific amount of time. If you use a consultant, lawyer, or accountant you may be charged for the length of time you interact and the length of time he or she works on your project. Appropriately enough, the practice is referred to as being "on the clock." The more important the topic is, generally, the longer the duration. And, not surprisingly, higher-status people will ration their time more rigidly than will a lower-status person. For example, you'd normally talk for a longer duration with your immediate supervisor than with the president of the company.

## Simultaneity

**Simultaneity** refers to whether one thing or many things are done at the same time. Again, status differences emerge here as well. The physician, for example, may take a call during your examination but it would be considered highly unusual if you interrupted the examination with a call. The boss may talk about irrelevant issues during a meeting but a trainee may not. The United States is generally considered a monochronic culture where one thing is done per unit of time as opposed to say some Arab countries in which several things may be done at one meeting. Yet, from just looking around at home, at school, or on the job, we are fast becoming (if we haven't arrived already) a polychronic culture or, in popular terms, a multitasking culture. We watch television while we text and talk on the phone; we jog while listening to music or an audio book; we eat, text, and watch television all at the same time.

## Talk Time

**Talk time** refers to, for example, who initiates and who terminates a conversation, who talks more, and who selects and directs the topics for discussion. As with so many such factors, status plays an important role here. It's the higher-status person who makes the decisions. Perhaps the best example of high status and talk time is the privilege to interrupt. The person higher up in the hierarchy interrupts lower hierarchical members and not the other way around. It's a way of saying and meaning:

“What I have to say is more important than what you have to say. And since I’m the boss, that’s the way it’s going to be.”

## Work Time

**Work time** refers to the time schedule of your working life. If you’re a low-level employee, you may have to punch a clock. And you’re probably paid per unit of time, per hour or per day. You need to arrive on time and not leave before the workday is finished. And you need to wait for your lunch break to eat even if you were hungry for the last 2 hours. If you’re a high-level employee or the boss, you may actually spend more time at work but it will be of your own choosing; you won’t have to punch a time clock, get permission to arrive late or leave early, and of course you don’t have to wait for your lunch break to eat.

## Relationship Time

**Relationship time** is similar to work time but refers to the time one gives or should give to the various people with whom one has a relationship. In our culture, committed romantic couples normally spend a considerable amount of time together and when that time is abbreviated (and considered too little by one of the partners), the relationship may be headed for trouble. Even long-distance relationships normally have relationship time—whether on the phone, through periodic visits, or via Skype. Even at social gatherings you’re expected to devote your time on the basis of the relationships you have with the other members. So, you’re expected to spend more time with close friends (especially if you’ve not seen them for a long time) than with acquaintances. Parents are expected to devote a great deal of time to their children (especially when the children are young) and those who don’t are often criticized by those who do. And adult children are expected to spend less and less time with their parents and more and more time with their romantic partner or friends.

In addition to simple amount of time, relationship time demands some measure of “quality time.” Watching television together is probably not as high in quality as having a romantic dinner at the neighborhood bistro where you had your first date.



What are some of the things you might do to increase the feeling that you are spending more time together than you really are? © 2013, bloomua, Shutterstock, Inc.

Similarly, conversation with one eye on the television or your smartphone is not as high in quality as conversation with none of these distractions, with direct eye contact and an inclusive, face-to-face, and congruent posture.



### IF YOU WANT TO

Express **intimacy/connection/liking for/warmth/affection**

- Lean forward.
- Smile.
- Gaze at other's eyes.
- Nod head in affirmation.
- Reciprocate the other's behaviors.
- Maintain shorter distance between you.
- Use a direct, face-to-face body orientation.

## Synchronicity and Asynchronicity

**Synchronicity** and **asynchronicity** refer to whether the communication takes place in real time—simultaneously, as in face-to-face communication (this would be synchronous)—or whether messages are sent at one time and received at another, as in e-mail communication (this would be asynchronous). If you want to reduce or lessen the chance for misunderstanding, brainstorm, or get a quick response, then synchronous communication will probably work better. If you wanted to communicate extremely complex messages (e.g., reports) that need to be thought about at length or messages that need to be stated with great explicitness (e.g., contracts), then asynchronous communication might work better. Table 9.1 identifies some of the differences between synchronous and asynchronous communication.

## Response Time

**Response time** refers to the time it takes a person to respond. Response time is observed in both synchronous and asynchronous communication. For example, in face-to-face communication, the response time to some statements and questions must be immediate. There should be very little response lag between one's person's "Will you marry me?" and the other's "Yes." When the response time is inappropriately long, you may sense some kind of disagreement or lack of certainty. A recent article in *The Week* (June 1, 2012, p. 12) gives a perfect example of inappropriate response time. An Indian woman filed a motion for divorce from her husband of 2 months because he took too long to change his relationship status on Facebook to



**TABLE 9.1 Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication**

Here is an overview of synchronous and asynchronous communication, highlighting some of their major differences.

	<b>Synchronous Communication</b>	<b>Asynchronous Communication</b>
<b>Definition</b>	Communication in which messages are sent and received at essentially the same time	Communication in which messages are sent at one time and received at another time
<b>Examples</b>	Face to face Telephone Chat Instant messaging Often through Skype, Ms Live, or similar programs	Mail (e-mail, voice mail, snail mail)
<b>Especially useful for</b>	Reduce ambiguity Brainstorming Getting quick action	Complex messages (e.g., reports) that need to be thought about at length Messages that may need to be stated with great explicitness (e.g., contracts)
<b>Advantages</b>	Provides opportunity for two-way communication Takes a relatively short time to accomplish a task or reach a decision	Each person can deal with the message when convenient Takes a relatively long time
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Special time is needed; often difficult to get the relevant people together at the same time	Does not allow for two-way communication

“married.” Her reasoning was that this was an indication that he was probably cheating; the judge didn’t agree and ordered them to undergo counseling.

You also expect people to respond immediately when you’re in need of support or comfort; if not, you may perceive any eventual support as forced or not genuine. Response time is also extremely important in asynchronous communication—for example, the time it takes someone to respond to your e-mail or poke or invitation to connect on some social media site will communicate some message. From different response times, you send different messages—messages of interest and concern and immediacy and messages of indicating the opposite. Sometimes our impressions are correct and sometimes not.

EXERCISE



DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN APPROPRIATE  
AND INAPPROPRIATE TIME RESPONSES

Understanding your own time responses, and the expectations that others have, will likely help you avoid a variety of interpersonal conflicts. In Column 1 are listed several situations calling for a response. Add situations you’ve experienced in the two blank spaces. In Column 2 indicate what you feel would be an appropriate time range for responding. In Column 3 indicate the rule that you feel identifies appropriate time responding such as might appear in a manual on appropriate time responses.

Situations	Appropriate time range for responding	Rule identifying time appropriateness for responding
Patient emails MD to renew prescription	<i>Immediately to 48 hours</i>	<i>MDs should respond to patient’s e-mail within 48 hours, earlier if it’s an emergency</i>
E-mail invitation to dinner (sent 2 weeks before the scheduled dinner)		
Instructor responding to student e-mail		
Leaving a phone message asking a friend to call you back		
Asking friends to “like” a cause on Facebook		
Asking a friend for a loan of \$300 via e-mail		

All of these types of interpersonal time will be influenced by a variety of factors involved in the interpersonal communication process. Status differences, as already illustrated, will influence significantly the way in which interpersonal time is treated. Other factors also come into play. For example, your personality will likely influence

your punctuality, how long you wait for someone, whether or not you interrupt others, and your response time to invitations. Similarly, the context and purpose of the communication will influence how you'll treat interpersonal time. For example, if you're interviewing for the job of a lifetime and the interviewer is late, you'll no doubt wait. In contrast, if you're simply meeting someone to walk to classes with and the person is late, you'd be more likely to move on. Also, the relationship between you and the other person or persons will influence your interpersonal time. For example, if the relationship is an important one to you personally, you'll likely excuse the lack of punctuality. In contrast, if the relationship is only a casual one or perhaps one of hostility, you might become annoyed, increase your dislike for this person who has no consideration for your time, and resolve not to wait any longer.

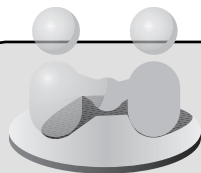
EXPLAINING INTERPERSONAL TIME

To get a better idea of how you use time and how you might improve your use of time, examine the types of interpersonal time listed in Column 1 and identified above. In Column 2 describe your general behavior in regard to your use of one, two, three, or all of the dimensions of interpersonal time. If you're unhappy or dissatisfied with the way you treat any of these dimensions of time, record in Column 3 the behavior you'd like to develop, exhibit, and make a regular part of your communication life and how you might go about achieving this.

EXERCISE



Interpersonal time dimensions	You as you are (your normal, everyday behavior)	You as you'd like to be and what you might do
Punctuality	<i>Too often late for appointments.</i>	<i>Be always on time or even a bit early; set phone/computer to give me a 30-minute reminder before any appointment.</i>
Wait time		
Lead time		
Duration		
Simultaneity		
Talk time		
Work time		
Relationship time		
Synchronicity and asynchronicity		
Response time		



POLITENESS IN NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Being polite with time messages:

- Be respectful of others’ time. Many see time as their most important possession.
- Ask if this is a good time to talk. And make it clear that a “no” answer is perfectly fine.
- Be sensitive to cultural differences. Don’t assume that all cultures treat time similarly.
- Respond to others’ messages within a reasonable time frame.

CULTURAL TIME

Culture influences time communication in a variety of ways. Before reading about the types of cultural time, try the following exercise.

Here we look at four aspects of cultural time: formal and informal time, monochronism and polychronism, displaced and diffused orientation, and the social clock.

EXERCISE

ANALYZING TIME EXPRESSIONS



Before reading about the cultural dimension of time, consider the time expressions listed in Column 1. In Column 2 indicate the meaning of these expressions (which are all cultural views of time) and in Column 3 indicate exceptions to these general cultural prescriptions.

Time Expressions	Meaning	Exceptions
Haste makes waste.	<i>Doing something too quickly often results in errors.</i>	<i>If an angry pit bull is chasing you, close the door as quickly as you can.</i>
Time is money.		
Time heals all wounds.		
A stitch in time saves nine.		
Every dog has its day.		
Time waits for no one.		
One who hesitates is lost.		

## Formal and Informal Time

In the United States and in most of the world, **formal time** divisions consist of units such as seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years. Some cultures, however, may use phases of the moon or changing seasons to delineate time periods. In the United States, if your college is on the semester system, your courses are divided into 50- or 75-minute periods that meet two or three times a week for 14-week periods. Eight semesters of 15 or 16 periods per week equal a college education. As these examples illustrate, formal time units are arbitrary. The culture establishes them for convenience.

**Informal time** terms denote approximate intervals—for example, “forever,” “immediately,” “soon,” “right away,” or “as soon as possible.” Informal time expressions create the most communication problems because the terms have different meanings for different people.



### ON THE JOB

#### Workplace Promptness

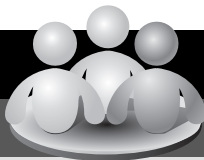
You're supervising six junior members of your firm, four of whom are prompt in arriving at work and in getting their work done. Two, however, are always late; they arrive late and their work is often late. You realize that you're a bit of a stickler for time, but these two members are clearly not doing their share in terms of moving the projects along. What are some of the things you might do to encourage greater promptness?

## Monochronism and Polychronism

Another important cultural distinction exists between monochronic and polychronic time orientations (Hall, 1959, 1976; Hall & Hall, 1987). **Monochronic** peoples or cultures such as those of the United States, Germany, Scandinavia, and Switzerland schedule one thing at a time. These cultures compartmentalize time and set sequential times for different activities.

**Polychronic** peoples or cultures such as those of Latin America, the Mediterranean, and the Arab world, on the other hand, schedule multiple things at the same time. Eating, conducting business with several different people, and taking care of family matters may all go on at once.

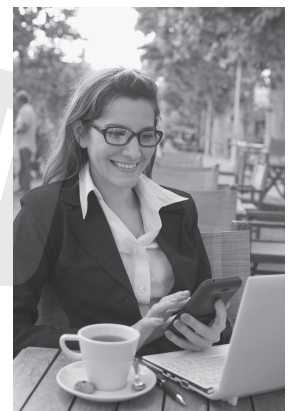
It's interesting to note that social media and perhaps especially the smartphone has brought multitasking (essentially a polychronic activity) to a new level and has turned normally monochronic cultures into polychronic cultures. For example, at meetings, at dinner, and even in many classrooms, members are multitasking with their smartphones and tablets. And, perhaps not so surprising, women are generally more polychronic than are men (Hall, 1983).



### ON THE JOB

#### Multitasking

You're leading a task group charged with improving company morale. The problem is that two of the six group members multitask throughout the meetings. They make dinner appointments, talk to their kids on the phone, and answer their e-mail when you need them to concentrate on the task at hand. What are some of the things you can do to improve this group's focus?



In what ways do you multitask? Are you offended in any way when someone—say, in a face-to-face conversation—surfs the Internet or talks on their cell? © 2013, legenda, Shutterstock, Inc.



No culture is entirely monochronic or polychronic; rather, these are general or preponderant tendencies. Some cultures combine both time orientations; in Japan and in parts of American culture, for example, both orientations can be found. Table 9.2 identifies some of the distinctions between these two time orientations.

### Displaced and Diffused Orientation

Closely related to monochronic and polychronic time is the distinction between displaced and diffused time orientation. A **displaced time** orientation views time exactly and precisely. A person with this orientation views an appointment at 5:00 P.M. to mean exactly that: 5:00 P.M. A **diffused time** orientation, however, views time in more approximate terms. An appointment at 5:00 P.M. means that one should arrive sometime around 5:00 P.M., say between 4:50 and 5:10. In some cases, there would be much greater latitude.

In some cultures, Japan is often cited as an example—time is displaced, things are done exactly on time. Time must not be wasted. In other cultures—Indonesia is a good example as are many Mediterranean countries—time is diffused, things are done on an approximate, loose time schedule. In fact, when researchers compared the accuracy of clocks in Japan, Indonesia, the United States, Italy, England, and Taiwan, they found that the clocks were most accurate in Japan and least accurate in Indonesia. Interestingly enough, when the speed with which citizens of these countries walk was measured, it was found that the Japanese walked the fastest and the Indonesians the slowest (LeVine & Bartlett, 1984).

**TABLE 9.2    Monochronic and Polychronic Time**

As you read down this table, based on Hall (1983) and Hall and Hall (1987), note the potential for miscommunication that might develop when M-time and P-time people interact. Have any of these differences ever created interpersonal misunderstandings for you?

The Monochronic-Time Person	The Polychronic-Time Person
Does one thing at a time; full attention is given to a specific task.	Does several things at once; multitasks where attention is spread over several tasks.
Treats time schedules and plans very seriously; feels they may be broken only for the most serious of reasons; promptness/punctuality is extremely important.	Treats time schedules and plans as useful, not sacred); feels they may be broken for a variety of purposes; promptness/punctuality is viewed in more flexible terms.
Considers the job the most important part of a person’s life, ahead of even family.	Considers the family and interpersonal relationships more important than the job.
Considers privacy extremely important; seldom borrows or lends to others; works independently.	Is actively involved with others; works in the presence of and with lots of people at the same time.

# The Social Clock

An especially interesting aspect of cultural time is the **social clock** (Neugarten, 1979). Your culture, and your more specific society within that culture, maintains a schedule that dictates the right times to do a variety of important things; for example, the right times to start dating, to finish college, to buy your own home, to have a child. You also may feel that you should be making a certain salary and working at a particular level of management by a certain age. Most people learn about and internalize this clock as they grow up. On the basis of your social clock, you evaluate your own social and professional development. If you're on time relative to the rest of your peers—for example, if you all started dating at around the same age or you're

## MAKING SELF-DISCLOSURE DECISIONS

Examining your own feelings about disclosing personal information will enable you to think more objectively about impending self-disclosures away from any interpersonal pressure. In Column 1 are listed a variety of messages you might communicate over the course of a relationship. Columns 2 and 3 indicate when in the course of the relationships you would communicate these messages. After completing this table, formulate, in 140 characters or fewer, the rule you followed in deciding when (if ever) to self-disclose. This exercise can easily be expanded to include a wider variety of relationships; some useful ones to explore might be work colleagues, acquaintances in your class, neighbors, and siblings.

Message	Romantic Relationship	Virtual Friendship
Your annual salary and financial worth	<i>The relationship would have to be a potentially serious one for me to reveal this.</i>	<i>Probably no reason to ever reveal this; then again, if I never see the person, it wouldn't matter</i>
Your sexual fantasies		
Your attitudes toward other religions, nationalities, or races		
Your health status		
Your self-concept		

General Rule: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## EXERCISE



all finishing college at around the same age—then you will feel well adjusted, competent, and a part of the group. If you're late, you will probably experience feelings of dissatisfaction and inadequacy.

## BIOLOGICAL TIME

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Biological time orientation often refers to our body clocks, the ways in which our bodies respond at different times. Here we can discuss a popular approach to biological time known as biorhythms and then look at time preferences for morning or evening.

### Biorhythms

According to **biorhythm** research, you function in three different cycles (physical, emotional, and intellectual). Each cycle begins at birth and continues throughout life, repeating itself periodically. Each of these three cycles has (1) an up-side, during which you are particularly sharp—approximately the first half of the cycle; (2) a down-side, during which you are particularly dull—approximately the second half of the cycle; and (3) a crucial period during which you are at your absolute worst—when the cycle changes from up to down.

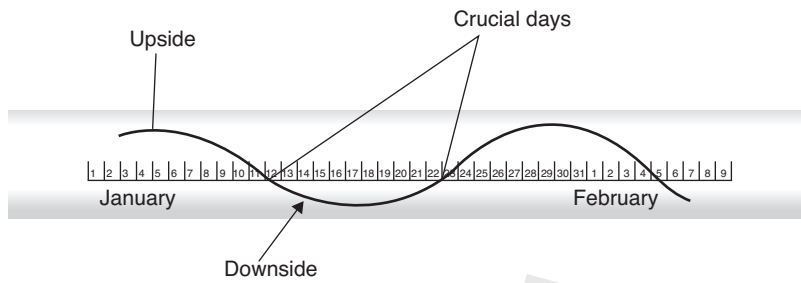
- **Physical cycle.** The physical cycle is concerned with strength, energy, coordination, and resistance to disease. It lasts 23 days. During the up-side you are in good health, have coordinated balance, are hyperactive, and are especially good athletically. During the down-side, you are tired and lazy, you lack coordination, you have low endurance, and you are especially prone to accidents and ailments. See Figure 9.1A.
- **Emotional cycle.** The emotional cycle is concerned with mood, your optimism and pessimism, and your ability to work effectively with others. It lasts 28 days. During the up-side you are calm, cheerful, cooperative, understanding, and creative. During the down-side, you are moody, negative, irritable, and hypersensitive. See Figure 9.1B.
- **Intellectual cycle.** The intellectual cycle is concerned with your intellectual abilities and activities. It lasts 33 days. During the up-side you are intellectually driven and efficient; you have good memory power and can make rapid and accurate decisions. During the down-side your thinking capacity is diminished, your mental abilities are low, your memory is poor, and your reactions are slower. See Figure 9.1C.

There is little valid and reliable research to substantiate the claims made by proponents of biorhythmic analysis. Nevertheless, it does raise the important issue of body clock cycles and how these may influence behaviors, moods, and abilities.

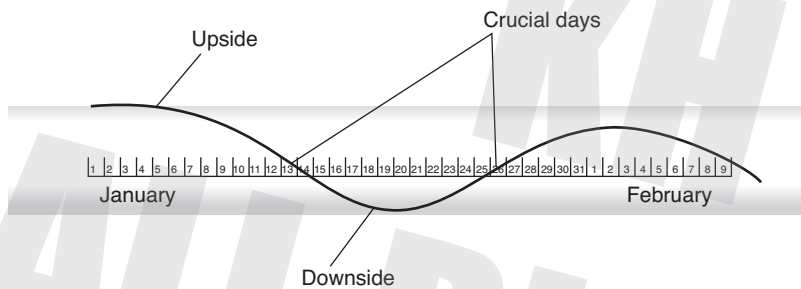
### Daytime Preferences

Another aspect of biological time is your orientation to day or evening, frequently referred to as the lark and the owl. For example, respond to the following statements by indicating morning (let's say, between getting up and noon) or evening (let's say,

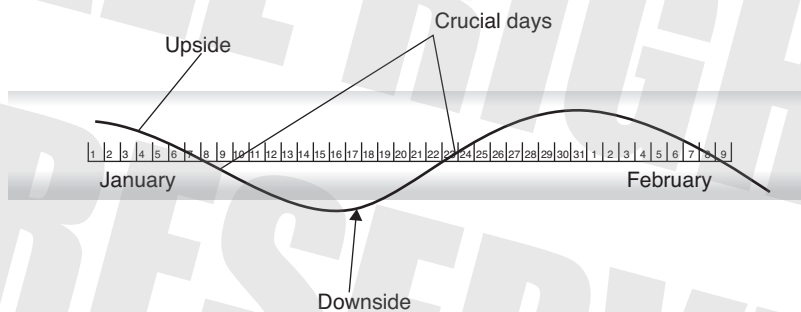
A The Physical Cycle 23 days



B The Emotional Cycle 28 days



C The Intellectual Cycle 33 days

**Figure 9.1** Biorhythm Charts

from 4:00 to 8:00): (The idea for this type of test comes from the Owl and Sparrow from Rosenfeld [1990] and the Measure of Time Orientation from Richmond, McCroskey, and Hickson [2010].)

- I prefer (morning, evening) classes.
- I'm at my best in the (morning, evening).
- I like doing things in the (morning, evening).
- I'm less easily annoyed in the (morning, evening).
- I exercise in the (morning, evening).
- I enjoy social networking in the (morning, evening).
- I feel healthiest/most robust in the (morning, evening).
- I seem happiest in the (morning, evening).
- I enjoy interacting with people more in the (morning, evening).
- I'm most creative in the (morning, evening).

EXERCISE



CHARTING YOUR BIORHYTHMS

The easiest way to construct your own biorhythm chart, since you have to count the number of days since you were born, is to use a computer program. Simply search for *biorhythm calculator*—you’ll find several—put in your date of birth and the program will chart your biorhythms. You can then look back on significant events in your life—good and bad—and see if these match the predictions made by the biorhythm calculator. The following table may help you structure your responses. In Column 1 are listed the three major cycles. In Column 2 record one or two predictions that biorhythm analysis makes for each of the three cycles. In Column 3 indicate what really happened and whether or not the biorhythm prediction was accurate.

Cycles	Biorhythm Prediction (e.g., up-side, down-side, or crucial days)	What Really Happened/ Accuracy
Physical	<i>October 4 = crucial day</i>	<i>Tripped and broke my toe/too accurate</i>
Emotional		
Intellectual		



Given your time preferences, what would be the ideal job for you? Why? © 2013, Ana Blazic Pavlovic, Shutterstock, Inc.

These statements are simply meant to highlight some of the differences in our preferences for doing different things during different times of the day. In fact, you no doubt have spoken of *morning people* or *evening people* in recognition of this difference. As you can appreciate, these differences can cause a variety of problems. For example, consider the communication problems who are in totally different time preferences;



one wants to be quiet and contemplative in the morning while the other wants to talk and debate national issues. Or consider the irritability of people during different parts of the day; some people are extremely touchy in the morning but quite easy to get along with later in the day. These differences can also cause problems for the college student—having to take chemistry at 8:00 in the morning may be ideal for some and absolutely horrible for others. And, of course, professors are in the same situation; teaching chemistry at 8:00 in the morning may be great for some but not for others.

## TIME MANAGEMENT

Time is one of the things you never have enough of—there's always more to see, more to read, more to write, more to do. Oddly enough, and despite its importance, there are no courses in time management in the curricula of most colleges. Consequently, the student, especially the beginning student, is often left adrift—having more to do than time will allow. Here then are a dozen suggestions especially for the college student, though the principles are relevant and useful to anyone concerned with making more effective use of one's time.

1. **Understand your use of time.** This has got to be the first step—if you don't do this then you won't have a firm grasp on how you now use your time or how you can possibly change it. Take a look at what takes up most of your time. In a 24-hour day, what takes up the largest block of time (aside from sleeping)? Ideally, you'd chart your use of time for at least a week and categorize the major uses, for example, talking on the phone, eating, studying, taking classes, commuting to classes, working, and so on. Once you know how you spend your time, you'll be able to see what can be and should be cut back. Analyze what needs to be done. Look over your time chart and examine the major categories and see which can be eliminated or at least cut back.
2. **Attack your time-wasters.** Very likely you'll find lots of time-wasters—things that take up your time but you can easily do without—whether it's watching Jerry Springer or always arriving early for appointments and waiting for others to arrive or playing Spider Solitaire. Identify these and add up or estimate the time these wasters take up in one work week. Begin by getting rid of the one time-waster that you can most easily do without.



What are your three greatest time-wasters? How do you feel about this?

3. **Attack your self-defeating beliefs.** Most people, it seems, have beliefs that are unproductive and in fact often self-defeating. These are beliefs that you need to do things that are actually impossible to do. For example, you may have the belief that you have to be loved by everyone and so you attend every function of just about every family member or friend, keep in touch with people you hardly know through your social media communication—fearful that they will not like you if you don't and, in the process, neglect to do things that would benefit you in more important ways. Well, the truth is you can't be loved by everyone; it's a totally unrealistic belief. Perhaps even more important is that even if you could be loved by everyone, it isn't vital that you are so loved. It's nice to be loved but it isn't essential. Another belief is that you must do everything in the shortest possible time. These beliefs prevent the wise use of time.
4. **Avoid self-handicapping strategies.** These strategies are designed to give you an excuse for failing. One self-handicapping strategy that college students have been known to use is to party the night before a test so that if they don't do well on the test, they have a ready excuse. Of course, this strategy simply makes your task all the more difficult and wastes the time you could have used more productively.
5. **Avoid procrastination.** Avoid the tendency to delay things to the last minute, another strategy that college students often use in the mistaken belief that they work better under pressure. It's highly unlikely that you will do a better job when you're rushed than when you have the available and necessary time to complete a task.
6. **Use tools.** You wouldn't think of cooking without using the appropriate utensils and yet many go about "organizing" their lives without the multitude of organizing tools. Whether you use the low-tech schedule book or the Google Calendar or Rescue Time's app on your smartphone, use a tool. Everyone needs help and you can't keep everything in short-term memory. In selecting an organizing tool, do consider the great search advantages of electronic schedules over the traditional schedule book.
7. **Prioritize.** Make lists. Generally, time management experts recommend some ABC type system. So, for example, you'd list all the tasks you want to accomplish for a day or a week and then prioritize them: A = tasks that should definitely be done today or this week; B = tasks that it would be nice to complete but could be delayed; and C = tasks that aren't essential; only do these if you have the time. Or you might prioritize the tasks in the order in which you want to accomplish them. The objective here is to put some order into your list. And, depending on the system you use, it may enable you to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary tasks.
8. **Break up large tasks.** Often a large task seems so daunting that it's put at the end of the priority list—not because it's not important but just because it's so large an undertaking. This is a mistake that many people make. In actual practice,

most large tasks can be divided into small steps and broken up to accomplish during our work day. So, for example, if you have a speech to prepare there's no reason to prepare it from beginning to end at one sitting. In fact, that would probably be a mistake for lots of reasons—for example, you need time to simply let some of the ideas gel. You can break up the speech preparation process very easily in steps, for example, selecting the topic, purpose, and thesis might be the first step. Do this and then move on to another task, say completing the first two exercises in the chemistry manual.

9. **Set realistic time limits.** Whether the task is large or small, it often helps to set time limits, especially when the task is unpleasant, like doing your income tax or reading a boring but important textbook. If you set time limits, it will be easier to get into the task. So, if you set yourself 30 minutes to read the text, it won't seem like such an onerous task but, rather, it will seem (and be) something you can do with ease. Of course, the time limit you'd set would depend on a variety of factors—how much there is to accomplish, how comfortable you are with sticking with one task, how onerous you feel the task is, and so on. If the time periods are too short, you'll waste lots of time—after all, getting into a task takes time; if the time periods are too long, you'll resist the task and perhaps view it as overly difficult.
10. **Reward yourself.** It often helps, especially with unpleasant tasks, to plan to reward yourself after completing a unit of work. It doesn't have to be only for completing a task in totality but could also be for completing 1 hour's textbook reading or completing the research portion of your speech. Do be careful to keep the reward in proportion. You don't want to reward yourself with unhealthy food or “breaks” that last longer than the work task itself.
11. **Do things once rather than twice.** For example, one of the popular rules for time management is to look only once at a piece of paper, act on it, and then file or get rid of it. Today, this would concern such things as reading your e-mail when you aren't ready to answer it or opening bills when you aren't ready to pay them or record them. Instead, read your e-mail when you have the time to answer it; open your bills when you're ready to pay or record them.
12. **Avoid distractions.** Distractions are often not controllable and so you're not going to be able to work without any distractions. However, you can attempt to minimize them. You don't have to answer every phone call exactly when it comes in; you don't have to leave your office or dorm door open, which invites others to come in to chat. If you do find yourself easily distracted, ask yourself if you're actually looking for and encouraging distractions. One clue to this is to analyze the distractions you do encounter; if they come more frequently with the more unpleasant tasks—rather than at random—then you're likely encouraging them as a way to get out of the unpleasant task you now face.

EXERCISE



ANALYZING YOUR OWN TIME MANAGEMENT

Analyze and improve your own time management by reexamining the time management rules just discussed and listed here in Column 1. In Column 2 indicate whether or not you follow this rule generally with a simple yes or no. In Column 2—for those you answered no, indicate what you can do to improve your efficient use of time.

Time Management Rule Questions	Yes/No	If no, what can you do about it?
Do you understand your own use of time?	No	Need to keep a time log for 2 or 3 days to understand better where my time goes
Do you attack your time-wasters?		
Do you attack your self-defeating beliefs?		
Do you avoid self-handicapping strategies?		
Do you avoid procrastination?		
Do you use the available time management tools?		
Do you prioritize tasks?		
Do you break up large tasks into more manageable units?		
Do you set time limits?		
Do you reward yourself periodically?		
Do you do things once rather than twice?		
Do you avoid distractions?		

## Summary

1. Chronemics is the study of time or temporal communication.
2. Psychological time refers to the emphasis one puts on the past, present, and future.
3. Interpersonal time refers to such factors as punctuality, wait time (the time you wait for someone), lead time (the time interval for making decisions), the time devoted to an event (duration), and simultaneity (the number of activities done at the same time).
4. Cultural time refers to the ways in which a culture treats time, for example, how important time is considered to be.
5. Monochronism refers to doing one thing at a time, whereas polychronism refers to doing more than one thing at the same time. Cultures vary in their tendencies toward one or the other orientation.
6. Biological time refers to the physical, emotional, and intellectual cycles that some theorists claim exert influence on your behaving, feeling, and thinking.
7. Time management refers to the efficient and effective use of time and can be aided with time management tools, by avoiding common pitfalls, and by apply some well-proven strategies.

## Key Terms

Supply a definition for each of the following terms. Once you've formulated these "standard" definitions, consider the following ideas for further defining and understanding. Not all will work for all key terms, but some will work for some terms and some will work for others.

- Find a quotation that illustrates the term.
- Provide an example from personal interaction, television, film, novels, or plays.
- Create a short dialogue to illustrate the operation of the key term.
- Locate a research study investigating the key term and report its findings.
- Illustrate the concept nonverbally.
- Find a video that illustrates the key term.
- Find images—photos or graphics, abstract or specific, literal or metaphorical.
- Diagram the concept.
- Explain the negative, what the concept is not.
- State a skill that centers on the concept.



Key Concept	Definition
Chronemics	
Psychological time	
Interpersonal time	
Cultural time	
Formal time	
Informal time	
Monochronism	
Polychronism	
Social clock	
Biological time	
Biorhythms	
Time management	



### AND IN ADDITION

Using your favorite search engine (in addition, use Google Scholar or the databases in your college library for the more scientific research articles), search for time, social clock, **time and culture**, **biological time**, **time management**, **daytime preferences**, **monochronism and polychronism**, or any of the other terms and topics considered in this chapter and add to the chapter contents. Depending on the structure of the course and the facilities available, you may want to post these additions to a course website; to a social media site such as Twitter, Facebook, or Google+; or to a listserv or through e-mail, for example. Here are a few ways in which you might make your addition:

- Write a paragraph that adds to the discussion of a particular concept.
- Provide a new, contradictory, or intercultural example of a concept.
- Create a figure or table to illustrate or organize a particular topic.
- Illustrate with an image or two or a 10- to 15-second video a particular concept of nonverbal behavior.
- Summarize and evaluate the results of a scientific study on a topic relevant to this chapter.
- Summarize and evaluate an online article that focuses on one of the topics considered here.