

Busy Disease

Have you ever felt like you were too busy? Do you often complain that there aren't enough hours in the day? In this lesson, you will learn 10 signs that you are too busy. You will also come up with your own cure for busyness.



Pre-Reading

A. Discuss

Discuss the following quote with your class:

"When did we forget that we are human beings, not human doings?"

—Omid Safi, Professor

B. Warm-Up Questions

1. Who sets the pace for your life? Is it you, your boss, your family members, or your friends?
2. Do you regularly make time for exercise?
3. Do you make time to eat nutritional meals on a daily basis?
4. How much free time do you have for yourself each day?
5. How much sleep do you get on an average night?

C. "I'm Too Busy!"

Place a ✓ in the box beside any statement that you would respond to in this way: "Not me! I'm too busy!" Compare your answers to a partner's answers.

- I sleep 7–8 hours every night.
- I leave time for work and play.
- I see close friends face-to-face on a weekly basis.
- I ignore my mobile device when I'm in a social setting.
- I have breakfast before checking email or texts.
- I am physically active for at least 30 minutes per day.

Reading

10 SIGNS THAT YOU ARE TOO BUSY

1. *You have too many projects on the go.*

People who say they are too busy often have poor time management. If you want to start a new project, finish the old one first.

2. *You work too many hours.*

In addition to working too long, workaholics often commute too far. If you work fewer hours and work closer to home, you'll have more time to do what you love.

3. *You don't sleep enough.*

Sleep is the first thing to go when a person feels overwhelmed with commitments. If you sleep too little, your life will likely be shorter.

4. *You are too afraid to say no.*

Believe it or not, saying "no" is not a sign of weakness. If you say "no" once in a while, new opportunities will open up for you.

5. *You don't exercise enough.*

Physical activity gives your busy mind the break it needs! If you feel too busy, refresh your mind by going for a run or a walk.

6. *You forget too often.*

People who feel overwhelmed often complain of memory lapses. If you need to focus, slow down.

7. *You are too competitive with your peers.*

If you are trying to "keep up with the Joneses," you may have busy disease. Set the pace for your own life so that you feel in control.

8. *You don't unplug often enough.*

Thanks to mobile devices, we are connected to work 24/7. If you're glued to your phone after hours, leave it in a basket at your front door.

9. *You eat too much junk food.*

Busy people run from place to place without making time for healthy meals. If your last three meals were takeout, you are too busy!

10. *You cancel plans too often.*

Many people who are too busy cancel plans at the last minute. If you know you'll likely cancel, just say no.

Is busyness really a disease?

The word "disease" comes from the meaning *not at ease*. People who are too busy usually work too hard. When you say, "I'm too busy," you usually mean "I don't have enough time to do the things that I enjoy."

Grammar Review

A. Intensifiers: Too, Enough, So

1. TOO

The intensifier “too” has a negative meaning. It means “in excess.”

- **too + adjective**

I am too busy.

- **too + adverb**

She drove too slowly.

- **too much + uncountable noun**

I have too much work.

- **too many + countable noun**

I have too many meetings.

2. ENOUGH

The intensifier “enough” has a positive meaning. It means “a sufficient amount.”

- **adjective + enough**

He's old enough to know better.

- **adverb + enough**

We ran fast enough.

- **enough + noun**

I have enough time.

The negative form “not enough” means “an insufficient amount.” *Too much/too many* and *not enough* are often used when talking about busyness.

- *I have too much to do.*
- *I don't have enough time.*

3. SO / TOO

When used before adjectives and adverbs, with a negative meaning, “so” and “too” are sometimes interchangeable.

- **too/so + adjective**

I'm too busy.

I'm so busy.

- **too/so + adverb**

She drives too slowly.

She drives so slowly.

While “too” means “in excess” (always with a negative meaning), “so” means “very.” In the above examples, you can see how both make sense. The important thing to remember is that “too” can't be used when there is a positive meaning.

- ✓ *I am too happy.*
- ✓ *I am so happy.*
- ✓ *I am so/too tired.*

B. Practice

Correct the following sentences.

1. I'm busy enough to bake cookies for the party.
2. She's too tire to finish this project.
3. We don't have too much time to meet the deadline.
4. I have too much projects on the go.
5. She commutes for too much hours every day.
6. Workaholics don't get so many sleep.
7. You don't have time enough.
8. I'm overwhelmed so.
9. He's afraid too say no.
10. My son's not competitive to play hockey.

Vocabulary Review

Look for and circle the following words in the reading on page 2. Can you understand what each word means from the context? In other words, by looking at the words and examples around this word, can you figure out the definition? Write an example to demonstrate your understanding of each word. Include some **context** to make sure your reader understands the word.

#	Word	Example Sentence
1	on the go	<i>We are always on the go. Most days we go straight from school to hockey practice.</i>
2	time management	
3	workaholic	
4	commute	
5	overwhelmed	
6	commitment	
7	memory lapse	
8	competitive	
9	unplug	
10	at the last minute	

Role-Play

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

In pairs, create a dialogue between a doctor and a patient whose life is too busy. The patient doesn't have enough time to sleep or eat properly. The doctor offers suggestions for slowing down and making better choices. Use *so, too, and enough/not enough* in your dialogue.

Writing

A. Brainstorm

Can you think of any ideas for curing busy disease?

1. Work less.
2. Sit down to eat.
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

B. Make a List

Write two statements for 5 of the cures listed to the left. The first statement should be the advice (cure), and the second should be the result "if" someone takes the advice.

5 CURES FOR BUSY DISEASE

Ex. Drink herbal tea. If you drink tea, you will sleep better.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Small Talk

A. How Are You?

Dialogue 1

Read the first dialogue, and practice it with a partner.

- A: Hey! Long time no see. How's life?
B: We're so busy.
A: I hear ya.* We're really busy too.

Dialogue 2

That conversation ended quickly! Now see what happens when people avoid the word "busy." Discuss the differences between the dialogues.

- A: Hey! Long time no see. How's life?
B: Hello! Oh, not bad. We spend a lot of time at the ice rink these days. Max plays hockey three times a week. He loves it, though. How are you?
A: Pretty good, thanks. I spend a lot of time taking Ella to dance rehearsals. She has a show on Saturday.
B: Oh, really? Maybe I'll buy a ticket.
A: We have an extra ticket. Do you want to come with us?

B. How's Work?

Dialogue 1

Read the first dialogue, and practice it with a partner.

- A: Hey! Long time no see. How's work?
B: Work? Crazy busy.
A: Tell me about it.* I'm so busy this month.

Dialogue 2

Try again! Write a new conversation. Avoid the word "busy," and extend the dialogue.

- A: Hey! Long time no see. How's work?

B: _____

A: _____

B: _____

*I hear ya / Tell me about it:

I'm having / have had the same experience.

When said in a certain tone, it does not actually mean the person wants to hear more. Listen to your teacher say it out loud, and practice.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson students learn 10 signs of being too busy. Students practice related vocabulary, discuss health-related issues, and create their own list of cures for busyness.

LEVEL: Intermediate–Advanced

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, stress, health, intensifiers, busy, busyness, too, enough, so, if clause, conditionals

Pre-Reading

A. DISCUSS

Discuss as a class. Answers will vary.

B. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Discuss as a class. Answers will vary.

C. "I'M TOO BUSY!"

Place students into pairs to discuss their checked boxes.

Grammar Review

A. INTENSIFIERS: TOO, ENOUGH, SO

Review the rules about too, enough, not enough, and so vs. too.

For teaching tips on intensifiers, see our editor's blog posts:

<http://blog.esllibrary.com/2014/02/27/so-such-too/> AND

<http://blog.esllibrary.com/2014/03/20/too-enough/>

B. PRACTICE

Have students practice making corrections.

This activity can be completed on paper or as an oral activity.

1. I'm **too busy** to bake cookies for the party.
2. She's too **tired** to finish this project.
3. We don't have **enough** time to meet the deadline.
4. I have **too many** projects on the go.
5. She commutes for **too many** hours every day.
6. Workaholics don't get **enough** sleep.
7. You don't have **enough** time.
8. I'm **so/too** overwhelmed.
9. He's **too afraid** to say no.
10. My son's not competitive **enough** to play hockey.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Vocabulary Review

Help your students understand the meaning of “in context.” Make sure that they write at least two sentences per example. Answers will vary.

Role-Play

Place students into pairs for this activity. Invite your students to perform their skits. You can decide whether or not you want to see a written dialogue. Encourage your students to use some of the vocabulary from the reading.

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Practice*. Other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Practise* (when used as a verb, *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.

Writing

Brainstorm as a class or in small groups. You may choose to assign Part B for homework, or have students complete it in class individually or in pairs.

Small Talk

Put students into pairs to read and discuss the dialogues. Discuss what happens when people avoid using the “busy” response. Demonstrate the different meanings of “tell me about it” by changing your intonation for your students.

- Tell me about it. *I'm interested in hearing more. Please tell me.*
- Tell me about it. *I've had or am having that same experience.*