41 Best Quotes on Time

With Simple Meanings for Students

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Time is the one thing nobody can buy back. These 41 quotes on time – from Steve Jobs, Benjamin Franklin, Seneca, Picasso and more – each come with an easy explanation, so you can learn from them and use them in your essays, speeches and daily life.

1 *"Time is more valuable than money. You can get more money, but you cannot get more time."*

— Jim Rohn

Meaning: You can lose 100 rupees today and earn it again tomorrow by doing some work. However, if you waste 1 hour today scrolling, that 1 hour will never come back. Not tomorrow, not ever. Your time is your wealth. Every hour you invest in study, skills, or health gives you a return for years. Every hour wasted in toxic comparison, overthinking, or just time-pass is gone forever. So, do not say, "I don't have time." You have the same 24 hours as a topper. The difference is how you spend it.

2 *"Time is the longest distance between two places."*

— Tennessee Williams

Meaning: This is a very deep line, but simple to understand. Two friends can live in the same city, even on the same street, but if they have not talked for 5 years, they feel very far from each other. The distance is in time. **Lesson:** If you care about someone – your friends, parents, teachers – do not let too much time pass. A small "hello" today can save a long distance tomorrow.

3 *"The two most powerful warriors are patience and time."*

— Leo Tolstoy, Great Russian writer, from his famous novel War and Peace (1869)

Meaning: You do not need to fight with everyone. If you have patience and you give yourself time, you will win automatically. These two warriors are stronger than any other power. It means you will not become a topper in one night; you have to work hard every day, even when results are slow. Time solves most problems. If you give enough time to your hard work, it will give you success.

4 ***"Time expands then naturally contracts according to the intensity of our feelings."***

— Haruki Murakami, famous Japanese author, from his novel Kafka on the Shore

Meaning: You have felt this yourself. When you are waiting for something, 1 hour feels like 1 day. Time becomes very long – that is time expanding. But when you are playing or watching your favorite movie, 2 hours feels like 20 minutes. That is time contracting. Why? Because time does not run by the clock only. It runs by your feelings. If your feelings are intense – you are very bored, very excited, very nervous – time will change its speed.

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5 ***"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."***

— Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple Inc., from his famous Stanford University Commencement Speech on June 12, 2005

Meaning: This is very important for everyone. Your life and your time are limited. You have only a few years to make your career. If you always do what others tell you to do – your friends, society, relatives – you will live their dream, not yours. For example, you want to be a designer, but your friends say "take medical." If you listen to them, you are wasting your limited time living someone else's life. Steve Jobs is saying: (i) Find what you love. (ii) Do not copy others blindly. (iii) Your time is too precious to waste on other people's opinions. **Lesson:** Everyone will tell you what to do. Listen to good advice, but finally, choose your own path. Because time lost will never come back.

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6 ***"Time is a created thing. To say 'I don't have time,' is as saying, 'I don't want to.'"***

— Lao Tzu, Ancient Chinese Philosopher

Meaning: This quote is a slap to all excuses. We all say, "I do not have time for study, I do not have time for exercise, I do not have time for my parents." But the truth is, we have 24 hours like everyone else. A topper also has 24 hours. A failure also has 24 hours. Time is not found. It is created. You have to MAKE time. Stop saying you do not have time. Next time say "I do not want to" and you will see your real priorities.

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7 ***"The common man is not concerned about the passage of time; the man of talent is driven by it."***

— Arthur Schopenhauer, German philosopher, from his book Studies in Pessimism (1851)

Meaning: This quote divides people into two types. **The common man (average person):** He wastes time. He scrolls on mobile for hours, gossips, sleeps extra. He never thinks, "My time is going." For him, a day is just a day. He does not care if time is passing. **The man of talent (smart / successful person):** He feels time running. He knows time is short. So he is driven – meaning time pushes him to work hard. He thinks: "I have to finish the task today." So if you want to be talented and successful, you must start caring about time. Talent is not just intelligence – it is respect for time.

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8 ***"Time drops in daily like a clean white piece of chalk, ready for us to write on."***

— Anonymous / Inspirational

Meaning: Imagine your teacher gives you a new white chalk every morning and says, "Write whatever you want on the blackboard of today." Time is exactly like that. Every morning, God gives you a fresh, clean 24 hours. It is pure white. No mistakes written on it yet. Now it is your choice what you write. So do not say, "Yesterday was bad, so today will also be bad." Every day is a fresh chance to write a better story.

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9 ***"Time is the school in which we learn, time is the fire in which we burn."***

— Delmore Schwartz, famous American poet, from his poem Calmly We Walk Through This April's Day (1937)

Meaning: This is one of the deepest quotes on time. Time has two faces. First, it is a school – it teaches us lessons through experience. Failure, success, friendship – we learn all from time. Second, it is fire – while we are learning, time is also burning our life. Every day we get older, every day our time gets shorter. So the message is: learn quickly from time, because your time is burning fast.

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10 ***"An inch of time is an inch of gold, but you can't buy that inch of time with an inch of gold."***

— Chinese Proverb

Meaning: Gold and time are both valuable. But time is more valuable than gold. If you lose one inch of gold, you can work hard and buy it back. But if you lose one inch of time – one minute, one hour – you can never buy it back, even if you have all the gold in the world. So this proverb tells students: do not waste your time like you waste money. Money can come back, time will never come back.

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11 ***"The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities."***

— Stephen Covey, author of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Meaning: Do not adjust your important work to fit your schedule. Adjust your schedule to fit your important work. Most people do it wrong. They first make a busy timetable and then try to put their important work somewhere in the gaps. That fails. Successful people do the opposite. They first decide what is truly important – and then they build their timetable around those priorities.

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12 *"Failing to plan is planning to fail."*

— *Alan Lakein*

Meaning: Having no plan is not neutral. No plan is itself a plan to fail. There are only two choices – you either have a plan or you have a failure. If you have a plan for any work, you may face problems, but you have a direction. If you have no plan and you say "let's see what happens," then you have already made a plan for your failure. Because without a plan, you will waste time, make mistakes and fail.

13 *"If you have to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning."*

— *Mark Twain, famous American writer*

Meaning: Here the frog means your most difficult and boring task. Do not postpone the difficult work. Finish it first. Most people keep avoiding that difficult task the whole day. They feel stressed all day because of it. Mark Twain says: do your hardest work first in the morning. Once the worst is done, the rest of your day will be easy and relaxed.

14 *"He who every morning plans the transactions of that day carries a thread that will guide him through the labyrinth of a busy life."*

— *Victor Hugo*

Meaning: Daily planning is your thread. It keeps you safe from getting lost in a busy life. Life is like a labyrinth – a place with many confusing paths where it is very easy to get lost. Classes, homework, friends, mobile, problems – everything pulls you in different directions. If you go into this maze without a plan, you will get lost. But if you make a small plan every morning – just 5 minutes, writing what you have to do today – then that plan becomes a thread in your hand. Like in the old story, holding a thread helps you come out of the maze.

15 *"Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus."*

— *Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone*

Meaning: Sunlight is everywhere, but it never burns anything normally. But when you use a magnifying glass and focus all the rays on one single point, it can burn paper. Your mind is like sunlight. If you think about 10 things at once, you have no power. But if you bring all your thoughts and focus them on ONE work in front of you, you will get incredible power. Then you can burn through any difficult task.

16 ***"It is not enough to be busy. So are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?"***

— Henry David Thoreau

Meaning: Being busy means nothing. The real question is – are you busy doing something useful that will help your future? Or are you just busy like ants, with no real result? Ants are busy all day, running here and there. But does their running always have a big purpose? Many people say, "I am so busy the whole day" – but busy doing what? Scrolling reels is also being busy. Chatting is also being busy.

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17 ***"There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all."***

— Peter Drucker, father of modern management

Meaning: Doing the wrong work very perfectly is still a waste. First, decide: is this work even worth doing? If not, do not do it efficiently – do not do it at all. Imagine you are very fast at typing messages on your phone – 100 words per minute. Very efficient. But if you should be studying for your exam right now, then that fast typing is completely useless.

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18 ***"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe."***

— Abraham Lincoln

Meaning: Planning, preparing, understanding and making the mind clear – this is sharpening the axe. If your preparation is sharp, the actual work becomes very easy. If you have 6 hours to cut a tree, a foolish person will start hitting the tree immediately with a blunt axe. He will get tired and fail. A wise person will spend 4 hours making his axe super sharp. Then he will cut the tree easily in the last 2 hours.

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19 ***"The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do."***

— Michael Porter

Meaning: Real smartness is not in saying, "Yes, I will do everything." Real smartness is in saying, "No, I will not do this, so I can focus on what matters most." Strategy is not about doing 100 things. It is about saying NO to 99 things.

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20 ***"Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do."***

— Steve Jobs

Meaning: Everyone makes a To-Do list. But winners also make a Not-To-Do list. Your life becomes successful not just by what you choose to do, but by what distractions you choose to reject.

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21 ***"You may delay, but time will not."***

— Benjamin Franklin

Meaning: You can say, "I will do it tomorrow," or "I will do it later." But the clock never stops. Time keeps moving – whether you work or you waste it. If you delay your work, you are not stopping time, you are only losing it.

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22 ***"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."***

— Walt Disney

Meaning: Most people just talk: "I will start the gym from Monday," "I will start studying tomorrow," "I have a great idea..." Talking feels good, but nothing changes. Stop the long speeches. Just take the first small step and START. Talking will not build Disneyland – doing will.

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23 ***"Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration, the rest of us just get up and go to work."***

— Stephen King, famous writer

Meaning: Do not wait for the "right mood" to manage your time. Just get up and go to work. An amateur (a beginner) thinks: "When I feel motivated, when I feel inspired, then I will work." A professional knows: motivation does not come first. Work comes first.

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24 ***"Tomorrow is the only day in the year that appeals to a lazy man."***

— Proverb

Meaning: A person who lives on "tomorrow" never gets any benefit. Tomorrow has never helped anyone, because the work is always done TODAY. A lazy person always says, "I will do it tomorrow." But have you ever met "Tomorrow"? It never actually comes. When tomorrow comes, it becomes today, and the lazy man again says tomorrow.

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25 *"Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday."*

— Don Marquis

Meaning: If you keep delaying today's work to tomorrow, tomorrow you will be busy doing yesterday's work. And tomorrow's work? That will go to the day after tomorrow. So you are always one day behind. You are never living in today, you are just trying to catch up with yesterday.

26 *"Never leave that till tomorrow which you can do today."*

— Benjamin Franklin

Meaning: Very simple and powerful. If you can do it today, do it TODAY. Why? Because: (i) tomorrow you will have new work; (ii) tomorrow is not guaranteed; (iii) if you leave it, it will only become heavier in your mind. So do not carry today's burden into tomorrow. Finish it now and be free.

27 *"One of these days is none of these days."*

— H. G. Bohn, A Handbook of Proverbs (1855)

Meaning: When people say, "One of these days I will start the gym," "One of these days I will learn English," "One of these days I will visit you" – it almost always means NEVER. "One of these days" has no date. No date = no plan = no action.

28 *"Only put off until tomorrow what you are willing to die having left undone."*

— Pablo Picasso

Meaning: Picasso is saying – do not take tomorrow for granted. If you delay something, ask yourself: "If I die tonight, am I okay that this was left undone?" If yes, then leave it. If no, then do it TODAY.

29 *"Procrastination is the thief of time."*

— Edward Young, from his poem Night Thoughts (1742–1745)

Meaning: A thief comes silently and takes your valuable things without you noticing. Procrastination (delaying something you should do now) does the same. It does not feel like you are losing anything – you are just watching one more video, taking one more rest – but slowly, your hours, your days, your years are gone. And unlike a normal thief, you cannot get that time back from the police. Once stolen, it is gone forever.

30 *"Action is the foundational key to all success."*

— Pablo Picasso, the famous Spanish painter, sculptor and co-founder of the Cubism art movement

Meaning: Thinking, planning and wishing are useless without practical work. Success comes only when we convert our thoughts into continuous action. You can have great dreams, plans, and knowledge, but they will remain dreams until you DO something. When you are confused and do not know where to start, just DO ANYTHING. By acting, you gain experience, learn from mistakes and make contacts. Picasso is known for his huge output – he created over 2,000 artworks in his life. He said this because he believed in daily work, not just waiting for inspiration.

31 *"Time management is life management."*

— Robin Sharma, Canadian author of The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari

Meaning: The meaning is very deep and simple. If you want to manage your life, learn to manage your time first. Because time lost never comes back. Life is made of time. Your life is not made of years, it is made of hours and minutes. If you waste your hours, you waste your life.

32 *"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot."*

— Michael Altshuler, American motivational speaker

Meaning: If you want to be successful, you must take control of your time and fly your life in the right direction. No one else will do it for you. Manage your watch and you will manage your world. There are two blessings which many people waste: health and free time.

33 *"Until you value yourself, you won't value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it."*

— M. Scott Peck, famous American psychiatrist and author of the best-selling book The Road Less Traveled (1978)

Meaning: If you think you are worthless, you will waste your time. If you know you are valuable, you will save your time. And if you do not save your time, you can never do anything successful in life. Self-worth is inextricably linked to time management. Respecting your time means respecting your potential.

34 *"Time is the wisest counselor of all."*

— Pericles, famous Greek statesman and general of Athens (495–429 BC), recorded by Plutarch in Parallel Lives

Meaning: This quote means time gives the best advice. When you have a problem, do not decide quickly in anger. Wait. Time will teach you, time will show you the truth, time will heal you. For example, you fight with a friend today and you feel very angry. If you decide today, you will break the friendship. But if you wait 2–3 days, time will counsel you, your anger will go, and you will understand who was right. So time is the wisest teacher.

35 ***"Gain time, gain life."***

— Old English Proverb / common time-management saying

Meaning: This is very simple. Life = time. Your life is made of hours, days, years. If you gain time – meaning you save time from wasting on mobile and useless talk – you actually gain more life to study, to play, to worship, to help family. And if you lose time, you lose life. Wasted time never comes back. So: save 1 hour daily = gain 365 hours in a year = gain 15 extra days of life for your goals.

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36 ***"The shorter time you have, the more you can get done."***

— Parkinson's Law / Joyce Rachelle

Meaning: This is strange but true. If the teacher says, "Submit the essay in 10 days," you will waste 9 days and do it on the last day. But if the teacher says, "Submit in 1 hour," you will become fast, focused and finish it in 1 hour. Why? Because when time is short, your brain becomes serious, you do not check mobile, do not gossip and you work fast. When time is too much, you become lazy, you yawn, you say, "I will do it tomorrow." So short deadline = more work. Long deadline = less work.

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37 ***"Determine never to be idle... No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time who never loses any."***

— Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President of the USA, from his letters

Meaning: Make a firm decision – "I will never sit idle, doing nothing." If you are always doing something small – reading 1 page, learning 1 word, cleaning 1 thing – you will never say, "I have no time." Because you never wasted time. And it is amazing: if you always keep busy with good work, you will do much more than you think you can. Little + little = wonderful big result.

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38 ***"My favorite things in life don't cost any money. It's really clear that the most precious resource we all have is time."***

— Steve Jobs

Meaning: True wealth is not measured in financial metrics, but in the luxury of choosing exactly how you spend your waking moments.

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39 *"We must use time as a tool, not as a couch."*

— John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the USA, in a speech to the National Association of Manufacturers, 5 Dec 1961

Meaning: Tool = hammer, pen, laptop – you work with it. Couch = sofa – you lie on it and sleep. So this means: do not sleep on time, do not rest the whole day on the sofa and waste time. Use time like a tool to build your life – to make notes, to solve math, to help parents, to learn a skill. If you use time as a couch, you become lazy. If you use time as a tool, you become successful.

40 *"Time discovers truth."*

— Lucius Annaeus Seneca, famous Roman Stoic philosopher (4 BC–65 AD), from his book On Anger

Meaning: *Original line: "We should always allow some time to elapse, for time reveals the truth."*

Truth is like gold in mud. You cannot see it quickly. You must wait – time will wash away lies, rumors, fake news. For example: someone says your friend stole your book. If you believe it quickly, you will fight. But if you wait, time will discover the truth – maybe you left the book in class. So never judge fast. Let time show who is true and who is a liar.

41 *"Time is like a sword."*

— Imam Al-Shafi'i, great Islamic scholar

Meaning: A sword cuts fast. If you know how to use a sword, you win. If you do not know, the sword will cut you. Time is the same. If you use time wisely – you will be successful and time will help you. But if you waste time doing nothing, time will punish you. You have two choices: cut time (use it), or time will cut you (destroy you). So do not let time cut you. Cut your time into useful pieces.