

Project vs. Task

PROJECTS

- Multiple sections or large tasks
- Cannot be finished in one sitting
- Described with nouns
- Might be vague when written in to-do list
- Can be very large and complex or relatively straightforward
- Might need more than one person to complete
- Often involves different types of “work” or multiple skills
- May need the same step completed repeatedly, but the scope of task is large or a large number of repetitions.

Examples

- Setting up Holiday Decorations
May have multiple rooms or areas to set up, take multiple days, need multiple people
- Writing a legal brief
Research points of law, determine strategy, draft sections, proofread, file
- Hosting a webinar
Planning content, writing slides, writing free guide, presenting, marketing, etc.

TASKS

- Mini steps that must be completed (aka “Microtasks”)
- Likely can be finished in one sitting
- Described with action verbs
- Likely can be completed by one person.
- Might be large, but usually small.
- Clear scope when thought through.
- Generally only involves one kind of “work” or skill.
- May need the same step completed repeatedly, but is a simple or small step.

Examples

- Emptying the dishwasher
Multiple repeated micro-tasks, can be done in a short time, clearly finished when dishwasher is empty, can be done by one person
- Writing a simple email
Clearly defined, small scope, can be done by one person, few steps

Project vs. Task

- Is this obviously a project or obviously a task?
- Can I complete this in one sitting? (If yes, probably a task.)
- Does this need the same kind of task repeated until done? (i.e. repetitive task) Is that a complex task or a very simple one? (If yes, probably a project.)
- Can I break this into smaller chunks or sections? (If yes, probably a project.)
- Are there steps to this that must be completed in a certain order? Do these steps have steps? (If yes, probably a project. If no, probably a task.)
- When I think through how to do this or write it in my planner, am I automatically using action words? (If yes, probably a task.)
- What is the deliverable? Does that sound like the result of a project or a task?
- Can I delegate part, but not all of this? (If yes, probably a project.)

