WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Timebox the Work

A small timebox with a definition of enough, protected essentials, and a review.

10 minutes to plan | Timebox experiment

Use it in three moves

1. Choose a bounded first pass and define enough.
2. Protect essential checks and agree what happens at the time boundary.
3. Use the result to revise the timebox; do not turn one success into a rule for everyone.

What task are you testing?

Pick a reversible task where a shorter first pass is reasonable.

What is enough for this pass?

A first pass can leave questions open.

What must not be skipped?

Keep required checks and people's access needs visible.

Timebox the Work

YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

How much time will you set aside?

Treat this as an experiment, not a universal productivity rule.

What will you do when the time ends?

Choose a deliberate stop or an explicit extension.

What will you compare afterward?

Include quality, pressure, and work pushed onto someone else.

A question for me

What cost could be hidden by my finishing faster?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

What task are you testing?

Draft the agenda for the monthly volunteer meeting.

What is enough for this pass?

A purpose, three items, a proposed order, and who needs to contribute.

What must not be skipped?

Check that a remote contributor can take part and that the agenda leaves time for their item.

How much time will you set aside?

Twenty minutes for a first draft, followed by a separate review with the co-facilitator.

What will you do when the time ends?

Mark open questions and send the draft for review. Extend only if a required access check is unresolved.

What will you compare afterward?

Did the draft help the review, or did it create extra repair work for the co-facilitator?

The thinking behind it

Efficiency is not useful when it hides rework or transfers pressure to someone else. Ask what the timebox changes for everyone involved.

Parkinson's Law is a familiar observation about work expanding to available time. This original experiment uses a boundary as a question to test, not a scientific guarantee that less time always produces better work.

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne