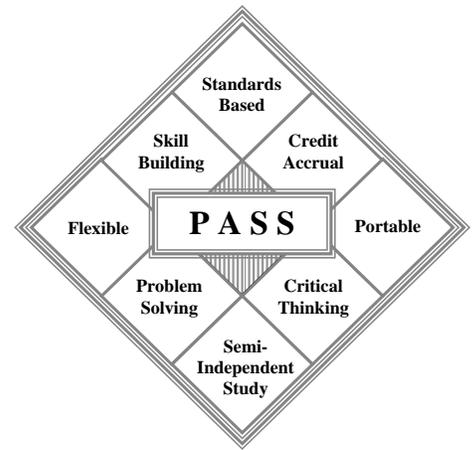


Lesson 2

Goal Setting



Materials Needed



Pen or pencil



Access to the Internet or library

Lesson Goals

In this lesson you will learn about the importance of setting short- and long term goals using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) method.



Goal Setting

Researchers have found that successful college students have something in common. Students who set *goals* are more likely to perform well. On the whole, students who are goal-oriented are more likely to remain in college because they are able to break assignments down into achievable steps, score well on those assignments to pass certain courses, and complete the courses needed to earn degrees.

Goal-oriented students tend to pass courses and get degrees because they understand how goal setting works. They can see the relationship between the big picture (graduation) and the details (college courses). They can relate what they do day by day to what they want to happen in the end. This ability to connect activities in the present with success in the future is very important for college students. It helps them have the right attitude toward the work they have to do and motivates them to do whatever needs to be done.

Goal

A statement about what you intend to achieve by following a plan

Course

Another word for a “class”; also a series of classes as in a “course of study”

JOURNAL ENTRY

Can you think of an experience in your life when you really wanted something that was attainable but not easy to get?

In your journal, write a paragraph about this experience.

- What was your goal?
- What obstacles did you have to overcome to reach that goal?
- What steps did you take to reach it?
- How did it feel after you accomplished this goal?

Setting Effective Goals

Effective goal statements are powerful tools. They can focus your time, direct your energies, and motivate you to get the job done. The following strategies will help you set effective goals.

Strategy 1: Make Goals Personal

Your goals are about you, by you, and for you. Consider the advice and guidance others give you and then set your own goals.

Strategy 2: Keep Goals Positive

Goals are about positive changes you want to make in your life, so you should avoid using negative words in your goals. Negative statements make you think more about failure than success. For example, “I do not want to fail economics or I will not go to the game if I do not get my homework done” is a negative statement. It focuses on what you *do not* want to happen. Be positive by stating what you *do* want to happen. “I will pass economics and I will get my homework done before I go to the game” is a positive goal statement because it anticipates success.

Strategy 3: Intend to Achieve Goals

First of all, remember that goals are intentions you are determined to act upon. When you are determined to do something, you say, “I will,” not “I wish” or “I hope.” “I wish I could go to college” says what you would like, not what you will do. “I will go to college” is a more effective goal because it tells what you intend to do.

Also, if you really intend to achieve goals, avoid words that give you *wiggle room*. Wiggle room sets you up for failure. It is an excuse you can use for not getting something done. *Try* is the most famous wiggle-room word. For example, look what happens when your goal is “I will *try* to finish going over my notes tonight.” What you are actually saying is that your goal is *to try*. If you don’t finish, it’s OK as long as you tried. In contrast, “I *will* finish going over my notes tonight” is a goal that clearly states your intention to finish. When you say you *will* do something, trying is not enough.

Strategy 4: Put Goals in Writing

Writing out a goal gives you the opportunity to say what you mean. It helps you clarify your points. In addition, writing makes your goal real; you can touch it and see it. Finally, a written goal statement can be displayed where you will see it every day as a reminder.

Strategy

A plan that helps you to focus and organize your goals so that you can manage all of the steps you have to take to reach your goal

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Intention

A deeply felt desire to work toward achieving a goal. It is stronger than a “wish” or “trying” to achieve something

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Positive Goals

Specific statements about what you will be doing to reach a goal

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Intentional Goals

Specific statements that show complete commitment to a result

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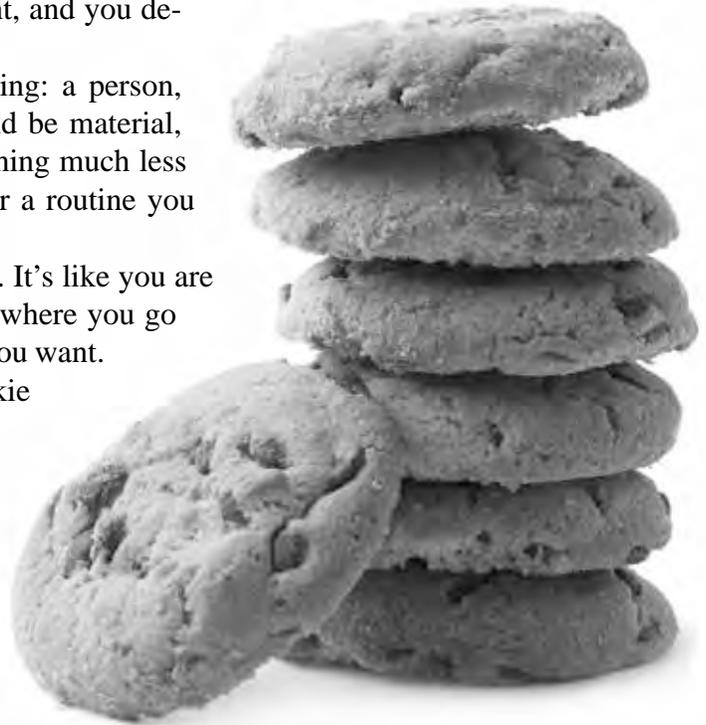
The Nature of Goals

Did you ever want something so badly that you couldn't let go until you got it? When you want something very much, you have a goal. *Setting a goal* means you tell yourself what you want, and you decide how and when you'll achieve it.

The thing you want, your goal, could be anything: a person, place, thing, or idea. The object of your desire could be material, like a cookie or a car. Then again, it could be something much less concrete, like someone's approval, an experience, or a routine you want to change.

Whatever it may be, you are aiming for that goal. It's like you are an arrow targeted on a bull's-eye. What you do and where you go depends on whether or not it will help you get what you want. Maybe you even dream about it. You want that cookie so desperately, you can taste it. You want that car so much, you dream about driving it.

A goal may not be easy to accomplish, but it is possible to attain with effort and time. You plan out how and when you're going to do it, who can help you, and when you'll get it done. Then you work that plan until it's done. When you have a goal, you don't stop until you know for sure you've achieved the thing you wanted, whatever it may be. You have your cookie. You have the keys to the car.



ANALYSIS

1. Positive Goals

Place a check mark in front of the **positive** goal statements.

- A. I will read chapters 1-3 before I take the exam.
- B. I won't forget to do my chores, so I won't get in trouble.
- C. If I don't do my English paper today, I won't watch TV tonight.
- D. I will finish my part of the history project by Thursday at 3:30 p.m.

2. Intentional Goals

Place a check mark in front of the **intentional** goal statements

- A. I wish I could be better at spelling.
- B. I will check and correct written assignments for subject-verb agreement and sentence fragments.
- C. I will try to proofread everything I write.
- D. I will get an A in math.
- E. I hope to get an A in math.
- F. I will try to get an A in Math.

Make sure your goals are ‘SMART’

You can remember how to write effective goals by the acronym “SMART.” The chart that follows will help you understand more about these SMART goal qualities.

Specific What will happen? When will it occur? Who is involved?
What are my reasons for doing this? What do I want?

Measurable How will I measure progress? What aspects of my original goal can I count? How will I know if I have achieved my goal?

Attainable Will my strengths and skills be enough? Do I need to acquire new skills or resources? Do I need information?

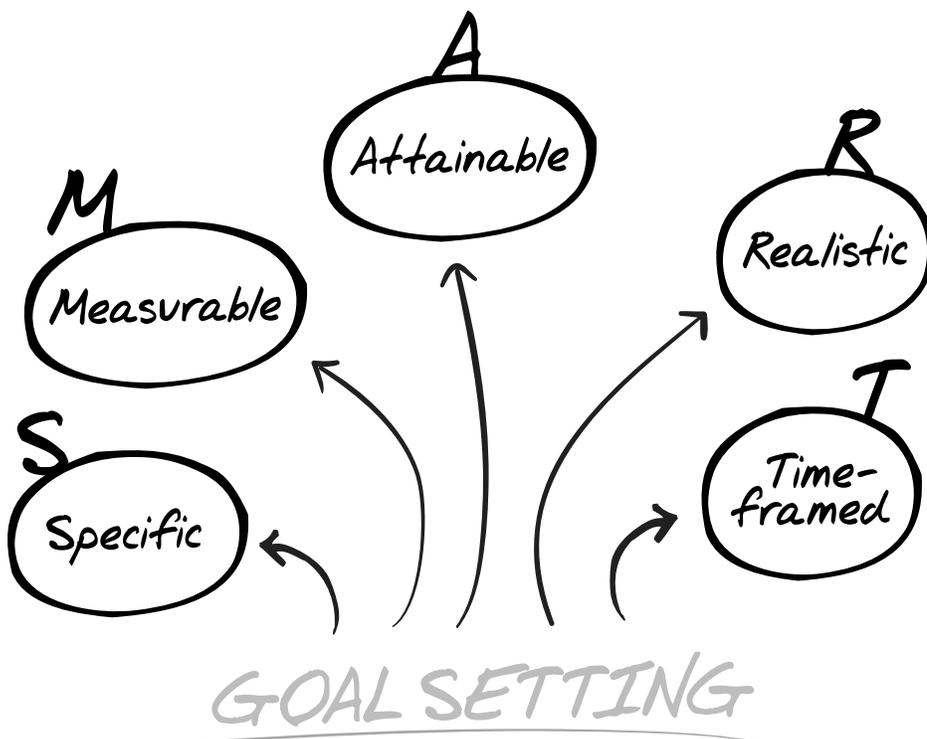
Realistic Do I believe I can stretch enough to achieve this?
What obstacles will there be?

Timely When do I need to achieve this?

Acronym

A word created from the first letters of other words, such as “NASA” or “laser”

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ANALYSIS

3. SMART Goals

Place a checkmark in front of the **SMART** goal statements.

- A. Learn as much as I can about goal setting.
- B. Do odd problems on page 23 in my geometry book by Tuesday morning.
- C. Write three goal statements using SMART guidelines tonight before 7 p.m.

ANALYSIS

4. Writing Prompt

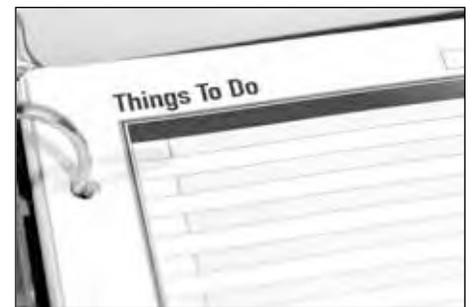
Write a goal statement for something you want to accomplish within the next few months. Check to make sure it is personal, positive, and intentional. Also check your goal statement for SMART qualities: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. When you are satisfied that your goal is effective, write your final goal statement here.

ORGANIZATION TOOLS

You can use a calendar on the web, in your phone, or in a notebook, to help you remember important events and deadlines.



You can record important tasks in a paper or online planner to help you remember your “to do” list.



Carrying Out Your Goals

Once you know what you want and have written out an effective goal statement, make plans to achieve it. To do this, you must take into account the amount of time required to achieve the goal. Short-term goals, like the one you wrote for this lesson, are achieved by completing tasks.

Task Planning

Tasks can take either a few moments or several days to accomplish.

- Decide what tasks are needed to achieve your goal.
- Give each task a name and a due date.
- Put the due date on your calendar.

Step Planning

Steps can also take any amount of time to complete.

- Next, break tasks down into steps.
- Decide when you will do each step.
- Plan to spend some time working on your steps almost every day.
- Put them in your agenda. Think of them as appointments or dates and don't break them!

You may find it useful to use a chart like the one below to help with your goal-achievement planning. When you have it all planned out, transfer the information to the agenda on the next page.

Example

Goal 1: I will turn in an eight-page research paper by March 30

Tasks to Accomplish Goal	Steps to Accomplish Task	Start	Finish
1. Research	1. Find references	3/10	3/15
	2. Take notes	3/16	3/19
	3. Organize notes	3/20	3/22
2. Write	1. Rough draft	3/23	3/23
	2. Revise	3/24	3/26
	3. Proofread	3/27	3/27
	4. Final copy	3/28	3/29
	5. Turn in	3/30	3/30

Tasks

Short activities that help maintain your progress toward reaching certain goals

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Steps

A series of tasks done in order to lead toward accomplishing a larger goal

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ANALYSIS

5. Goal-Achievement Planning

Use the table below to make a plan for achieving the goal you set for Analysis Activity 4.

Rewrite your goal here:

Tasks to accomplish goal	Steps to accomplish goal	Start Date	Finish Date
1. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
2. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Short-term vs. Long-term Goals

When planning goals, you approach them differently if they are short-term or long term. A short-term goal is something you can accomplish relatively quickly—within a day or even a month. If your goal is to buy a computer, you can save a little money every paycheck and look for extra work opportunities. Within a few months, you will have the money. A long-term goal can take years, and you won't always see immediate results. Whether it is more organized work habits or better fitness, the positive life changes you make to reach those goals will be noticeable along the way.

Whether it is a short-term or a long-term goal, it is best to write down the tasks in the goal achievement plan. Long-term goals may include more than one set of tasks that you can chart onto a month-by-month timeline.

For long-term goals, pick the date you expect to reach your goal and work backward. What is the last thing you need to do before you are successful? What is the second-to-last thing? As you make your list, you will see how something that seems distant and unachievable can connect with the good habits in your present life.

Parting Advice

As you carry out the tasks in the goals you set, you may need to make adjustments. That is natural, especially when you are learning how to set and use goals. Keep at it, even though it may not always work perfectly. Don't get discouraged. Goal setting, like anything else, must be practiced before you get good at it.

Every time you accomplish a goal that you set for yourself, give yourself a pat on the back. Then take a bit of time to review what you did. Ask yourself if you would keep everything the same or change something the next time you have a goal like this. It always helps when you are learning something to evaluate your own performance.

Always keep the big picture in mind. Find ways to keep your goals and think about them once or twice a day. Remember why you want them. Remind yourself often why you are going to all the trouble of achieving them.

Celebrate whenever you accomplish a goal. Reward yourself for completing steps and tasks.

The most important fact is that you are learning how to be an effective goal setter. The only way to become truly effective is to keep practicing. The more you practice, the better you will be at setting and carrying out goals when you get to college. Not only that, but as you practice setting and achieving goals now, you will increase your chances for more success in high school too.



End of Lesson 2