

IDENTIFYING GOALS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Why Goals?
- Can I Do It?
- Stepping-Stone Goals
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize the importance of having goals.

Students will recognize that there are realistic and unrealistic goals.

Students will identify goals as short term, medium range, and long term.

Materials Needed

- A physical or online dictionary (Part I)
- One copy of the “My Goals” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- One copy of the “On Your Way” activity sheet for each student (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Divide the class into four groups. Tell students that each group will make a certain noise. The members of the first group will rub their hands together. People in the second group will snap their fingers continuously. Students in the third group will hit their thighs with their hands. Members of the fourth group will stomp their feet. On the count of three, have students begin making the noises until you say stop.

After about 30 seconds, stop the game and ask what the purpose of that exercise was. Ask, “Did we accomplish anything during this activity? Did we have a goal?”

Students should respond negatively to these questions. Point out that they made an effort but didn’t accomplish anything. Explain to students that having a goal can help ensure that they accomplish what is important to them.

Tell students that in the next few lessons, they will be discussing goals and the ways in which goals can help them succeed in life.

Part I Why Goals? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify the importance of having goals.

1. Students define “goal.”

Ask students to suggest meanings for the word “goal.” Have a volunteer look up “goal” in the dictionary and read the definition to the class. Have the volunteer write the definition on the board. Have students offer their own definitions and elicit from them that a goal is something a person wants to accomplish.

2. Students identify the purpose and importance of goals.

Tell students that they are now going to repeat the activity in the starter, but this time with the goal of making the sound of a rainstorm. Remind each group of its assigned sound. Tell students that you will point to one group at a time. When you point to a group, that group is to begin making its noise and continue until you point to the next group. Explain that when you point to a group, students should join that group in making their sound. Tell students that when you point to their group a second time, they should return to making their original sound.

Point to each group in succession, so that the noise builds and sounds like a rainstorm. Then reverse the order, so it sounds as if the rain is slowing down.

Ask students what they accomplished this time. Lead students to recognize that having a goal helped them focus and make sense out of some seemingly disconnected activities. Explain to students that having goals for what they want to accomplish in life can help them stay on track and make sense of the many activities they undertake.

3. Students identify their own goals.

Distribute the “My Goals” activity sheet to students. Ask students to brainstorm their goals on the activity sheet. Remind students that a goal is something a person wants to accomplish. Use prompts to stimulate students’ thinking.

4. Students share their goals.

Ask every student to share at least one of their goals. Write the goals on the board.

Tell students that goals are indispensable for their success in life. Goals are a guide and a target to work toward. Goals help people to do their best and accomplish what they want.

Part II Can I Do It? (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that there are realistic and unrealistic goals.

1. Students recognize realistic and unrealistic goals.

Tell students that it is important for their goals to be realistic. Explain to students that if a goal is not realistic, they could become discouraged, but that if it is too easy, they could become bored. Lead students to recognize that a goal should be both achievable and challenging.

2. Students classify their personal goals as realistic or unrealistic.

Suggest goals such as the following to students, and ask them to categorize the goals as realistic or unrealistic:

- A 14-year-old girl, interested in science, sets a goal to become a veterinarian.
- A high school senior who hasn’t worked or saved any money wants to travel to Europe during the summer after graduating from high school.
- The school principal wants all graduating seniors to go to college.

Ask students why they classified the goals as they did. Direct students to the recognition that the time frame attached to a goal is important. Tell students that each of their long-term goals should always specify a time frame in which the goal will be achieved.

Have students share their personal goals and classify them as realistic or unrealistic. They should also ensure that their goals are achievable and challenging. Remind students to think carefully about the time frames they establish.

Part III Stepping-Stone Goals (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify goals as short term, medium range, and long term.

1. Students recognize that long-term goals can be broken down into short-term and medium-range goals.

On the board, write the following: “Eat a good meal. Concentrate on math homework. Pass tests. Graduate. Study for math tests. Pass classes.” Explain to students that the goal here is to graduate from high school. Challenge students to order the events so that this goal can be achieved. Ask students to suggest an order.

Summarize the process:

- You had to eat a good meal in order to concentrate on your homework and study for your tests effectively. These are examples of short-term goals.
- By studying effectively, you were able to pass your tests and therefore pass your classes. These are examples of medium-range goals.
- Achieving those short-term goals and medium-range goals allowed you to graduate. That is a long-term goal.

2. Students examine stepping-stone goals.

Tell students that the things you have to do now or soon in order to accomplish your goals are stepping-stone goals.

Explain stepping-stone goals as the following:

- **Short-term goals** are objectives that you want to achieve in a short time frame—an hour from now, today, or as far as a month away. Short-term goals can also be things you have to do along the way to reach your medium-range or long-term goals.
- **Medium-range goals** are objectives that you want to achieve that will take more time, between a month or so and a year. Medium-range goals can be achieved on the way to reaching long-term goals.
- **Long-term goals** are objectives that you want to achieve in the future, whether you hope to accomplish them a few years from now or when you are much older.

Explain to students that stepping-stone goals help us to achieve realistic goals in realistic periods of time.

3. Students set stepping-stone goals for themselves.

Distribute the “On Your Way” activity sheet. Tell students to choose one of the long-term goals that they identified on the “My Goals” activity sheet and write it in the top box on the “On Your Way” activity sheet.

Allow students to choose a realistic goal for themselves. Circulate the room and ensure that students have chosen appropriate long-term goals. Say to students, “Backtrack, and decide what goal you need to accomplish just before you achieve your long-term goal. Put that in the second box from the top. Continue backtracking until you identify all of the short-term goals necessary to reach the long-term goal.”

Have students complete the activity sheet. Work with students to fill in the entire staircase so that it begins with a simple, easily attainable task.

4. Students add deadlines to their action plan.

Point out to students that what they have developed is only the start of an action plan. Most complete action plans include some kind of time line. Tell students that they are now going to revisit their stepping-stone goals and set deadlines. Remind students to be realistic and to work backward, using their time frames for their long-term goals.

Have students add deadlines to their stepping-stone goals. Then, review with students the following steps of an action plan:

- Determine your long-term goal.
- Establish stepping-stone goals (which include short-term and medium-range goals).
- Set deadlines for completing each goal.
- Complete each step on time.
- Continue until you attain your goal.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to define short-term goals, medium-range goals, and long-term goals. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Set positive and realistic goals.
- Realistic goals are ones that you can achieve. They should not be too easy or too hard.
- Stepping-stone goals help you to achieve long-term goals.

Student Assessment

1. Why is it important to set goals?
2. Explain the difference between a realistic and an unrealistic goal.
3. List a long-term goal different from the one you chose in class.
4. List four short-term and four medium-range goals that you need to achieve in order to meet your long-term goal.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” —Lao Tzu

Explain that Thomas Edison worked on 3,000 different theories before finally inventing an efficient light bulb. Have students consider the role that failure plays in accomplishing goals. Discuss how failure can lead to discovery.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Show students that making daily lists can help to remind them of tasks that they have to do that day. Have students make and keep daily lists. Have them demonstrate how they keep and use these lists. Be sure to explain that a system that works for one student may not work for another.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write letters to themselves about where they want to be five years from now and what they would like to be doing then. Tell them to put their letters somewhere safe and to open them in five years.

Have students write down their goals and their plans to reach them. Discuss students' plans as a class.

Using Technology

Have students use the internet to research how politicians reach decisions in government.

Have students brainstorm the goals political figures must first identify before making such decisions.

Homework

Have students make a list of 10 things they like to do.

Explain that accomplishing goals sometimes requires doing things we don't enjoy. Discuss how connecting our goals to things we enjoy doing can make accomplishing them easier.

Additional Resources

Have students read excerpts from *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller. Remind students that Helen Keller, having never heard how people speak, wrote this book by dictation.

Have students discuss what they think of the book's language. Ask students if they find her message inspirational.

MY GOALS

Career?

Education?

Leisure Time?

Family?

Home?

Possessions?

