

STEPPING-STONE GOALS

A G E N D A

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Objectives

Students will recognize that long-term goals can be broken into a series of steps, or smaller goals.

Students will identify short-term and medium-range goals and become aware of their importance to achieving long-term goals.

Students will set stepping-stone goals for themselves.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Step This Way” activity sheet (#2) for each group of three to four students (Before class, cut each activity sheet into one set of six squares. You will need one set for each group of students.) (Part I)
- Two copies of the “On Your Way” activity sheet (#3) for each student (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to raise their hands if they have ever taken a bus somewhere. Then, say, “Imagine that you are on a bus and the bus driver announces, ‘Ladies and gentlemen, I don’t know exactly where I’m going, but I’ll drive around for a while. If I come close to where you want to get off, just let me know.’” After students have reacted, ask:

- Would you want to be on this bus?
- What do you think of this bus driver?

Say, “Today, we’re going to talk about how important it is to make a plan that will help you get to where you want to go.”

Part I Step This Way (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that long-term goals can be broken down into a series of steps, or smaller goals.

1. STUDENTS PREPARE FOR THE ACTIVITY.

Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Give each group one set of squares from the “Step This Way” activity sheet (#2). Jumble the order of the squares before giving each group its set. Explain that each group has a set of puzzle pieces and that students are to do the following:

- Arrange the squares in an order that will enable them to achieve a final goal.
- Experiment with different arrangements before making their decision.
- Number the squares in order from one to six, with six being the long-term goal.

2. STUDENTS DETERMINE STEPS IN A SEQUENCE.

Circulate among students as they work. If students are having difficulty sequencing their squares, suggest that they start at the end by numbering and identifying the long-term goal first (i.e., “be chosen for the basketball team”).

After students have finished working, invite members of each group to share their results with the class. Through discussion, guide students to settle on this sequence of events:

1. Decide that you want to be on the basketball team.
2. Start practicing, and find out when tryouts are.
3. Find someone who can help you improve the skills you’re having trouble with.
4. Eat well and make sure to get a lot of rest the week before tryouts.

5. Try out for the basketball team.
6. Be chosen for the basketball team.

3. STUDENTS REFLECT ON THE ACTIVITY.

Model an evaluation of this long-term goal by verbally reinforcing the criteria that students have previously used. Ask them to identify each criterion you use. You might say the following:

- If I really liked playing basketball, I would want to be on the team (*personal*).
- This goal is something I could work for and achieve in the future (*realistic*).
- I would enjoy being on the basketball team and being involved in school activities (*consequences*).
- I could prepare for it over the next year (*time frame/deadlines*).

Point out that all long-term goals can be broken into smaller steps, and that each of these smaller steps is really another goal in itself. Explain that long-term goals can sometimes seem impossible to achieve because they are far in the future, but making a plan to achieve a dream can help it come true.

Part II Break It Down (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify short-term and medium-range goals and become aware of their importance to achieving long-term goals.

1. STUDENTS EVALUATE ANOTHER LONG-TERM GOAL.

Invite students to consider another example of a long-term goal. On the board, draw five large boxes in a row, connected with arrows from left to right. In the last box on the right, write, “Buy a pair of roller blades.”

Ask students to evaluate this goal and decide whether it is a valid one. If necessary, prompt students to add a deadline or time frame (e.g., by summer vacation). Then, above the box, label it as a long-term goal.

2. STUDENTS MAKE A PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL.

Invite the class to brainstorm a plan of action for achieving this goal. Guide students to formulate a series of steps and write them in the boxes you have drawn on the board. Encourage them to erase and rearrange the order of steps as their plan evolves. If needed, add another box or two. However, through questions and comments, help students to keep their plan brief and practical. The final plan may resemble the following:

- Discuss with parents.
- Shop for styles and prices.
- Choose the pair I want.
- Earn and save the money.

3. STUDENTS IDENTIFY SHORT-TERM AND MEDIUM-RANGE GOALS.

Point out that students have just created an action plan by setting stepping-stone goals. Explain that there are three different kinds of stepping-stone goals:

- Short-term goals, which are steps that you want to take in a short time frame (e.g., today, tomorrow, or within the next week)
- Medium-range goals, which are steps that will take a little more time (e.g., a week, a month, or more)
- Long-term goals, which are what you hope to accomplish in the future (e.g., buying the roller blades or making the basketball team next year)

Ask students to identify which steps in their plan on the board are short-term goals, and label those boxes. Then, do the same for medium-range goals.

Tell students that whenever they feel like giving up on a long-term goal, they should make a plan with stepping-stone goals. The plan will give them direction. It will help them find a way to do whatever they wish to do. Remind students that if they need information in order to build a plan, all they need to do is ask questions.

Part III On Your Way (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students set stepping-stone goals for themselves in order to begin working on a long-term goal.

1. STUDENTS PREPARE FOR THE ACTIVITY.

Distribute one copy of the “On Your Way” activity sheet (#3) to each student. Give students time to read over the directions. Then, answer any questions they might have. Tell students that they may not need to use all six boxes in the chart; they should use as many as their goal requires.

To prompt students to think about their goals, suggest that they look in their folders and find the “Cloud 9” activity sheet from lesson 4 of *Getting Started*, which illustrates one of their dreams. They should also review the “Valid Goals” activity sheet, which they completed in the last class period. You might also suggest that they think about things they would like to accomplish in the future at home, at school, in sports, over the summer, in high school, or when they are adults.

2. STUDENTS WORK INDEPENDENTLY TO ESTABLISH AND EVALUATE THEIR GOALS.

Before students begin working, remind them to evaluate their goals and make sure they are valid. As students work, circulate the classroom and ensure that students have set appropriate goals. Watch for goals that are unrealistic or impossible for students to achieve. By asking questions or offering comments, help students modify or change such goals.

If time permits, invite students to share their goals and the steps they set for achieving them. Then, distribute the remaining copies of the “On Your Way” activity sheet, and suggest that students keep these copies in their folders to fill out the next time they want to establish a new goal.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to explain the concept of stepping-stone goals. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Every long-term goal, even one that seems impossible at first, is made up of smaller goals that can be achieved one at a time.
- Create stepping-stone plans to achieve long-term goals and dreams.

Questions for Assessment

1. Define “short-term goal.” Give an example.
2. Define “medium-range goal.” Give an example.
3. Define “long-term goal.” Give an example.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Extension: Using Quotations

Quote: “A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”
–Lao Tzu

Activity: Have students investigate items of interest in *Guinness World Records* and suggest what the “first step” toward beating these records might be. As a class, discuss how such large goals may seem frightening, but are manageable when broken down into smaller steps.

Extension: Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Activity: Have small groups of students work to create poems or songs that illustrate the importance of one or more stepping-stone goals appropriate to middle schoolers (e.g., staying in school, participating in sports or clubs) and the long-term goals to which the stepping-stone goals might ultimately lead.

Have students perform their poems/songs for the class.

Extension: Writing in Your Journal

Activity: Have students keep a diary of achievements and setbacks as they work toward a desired goal.

Have each student compare notes with a partner.

Extension: Using Technology

Activity: Search the internet to find stories about other students’ projects. (Visit blog.prepscholar.com/129-examples-of-community-service-projects for examples of community service projects.)

Have students select one project and identify its short-term, medium-range, and long-term goals.

Extension: Homework

Activity: Have each student use magazine or newspaper photographs of a well-known person to create a collage that illustrates the stepping-stone goals that got this person to where he or she is today. Students should research the chosen person’s career in order to include supporting details.

Have students display their collages in the classroom.

Extension: Additional Resources

Activity: Show the film *The Miracle Worker*, which portrays the life story of Helen Keller and her teacher, Anne Sullivan.

Have small groups of students create graphic organizers showing the stepping-stone goals that took Helen Keller from single-word recognition to college graduation and beyond.

STEP THIS WAY

Decide that you
want to be on
the basketball team.

Eat well and make
sure to get plenty
of rest the week
before tryouts.

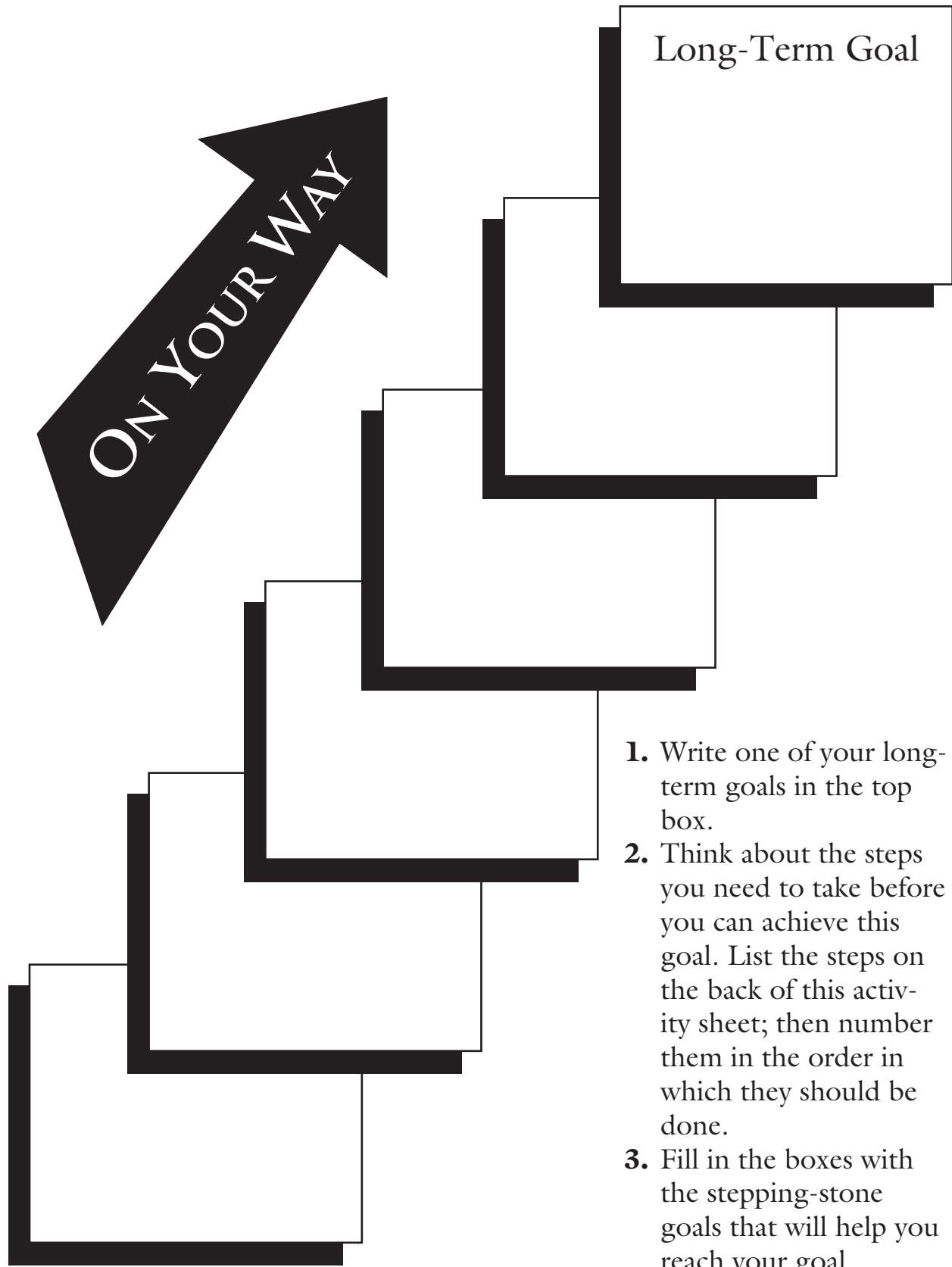
Find someone who
can help you
improve the skills in
which you're having
trouble.

Be chosen for the
basketball team.

Start practicing,
and find out when
tryouts are.

Try out for the
basketball team.





ON YOUR WAY

Long-Term Goal

1. Write one of your long-term goals in the top box.
2. Think about the steps you need to take before you can achieve this goal. List the steps on the back of this activity sheet; then number them in the order in which they should be done.
3. Fill in the boxes with the stepping-stone goals that will help you reach your goal.