

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Describe SMART goals

Goals should also be SMART. In this case, the word *smart* is not only a clever description of the type of goal, but it is also an acronym that stands for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound. These are all desirable traits for your goals because they not only help you plan how to meet the goal, but these traits can also contribute to your decision-making processes during the planning stage.

What does it mean to create SMART goals?

- **Specific**—For a goal to be specific, it must be defined enough to actually determine the goal. A goal of “get a good job when I graduate” is too general. It doesn’t define what a good job is. In fact, it doesn’t even necessarily include a job in your chosen profession. A more specific goal would be something like “be hired as a nurse in a place of employment where it is enjoyable to work and that has room for promotion.”
- **Measurable**—The concept of measurable is one that is often overlooked when setting goals. What this means is that the goal should have clearly defined outcomes that are detailed enough to measure and can be used for planning of how you will achieve the goal. For example, setting a goal of doing well in school is a bit undefined, but making a goal of graduating with a GPA above 3.0 is measurable and specific. If your goal is measurable, you can know ahead of time how many points you will have to earn on a specific assignment to stay in that range or how many points you will need to make up in the next assignment if you do not do as well as you planned.

- **Attainable**—Attainable or achievable goals means they are reasonable and within your ability to accomplish. While a goal of “make an extra one million dollars by the end of the week” is something that would be nice to achieve, the odds that you could make that happen in a single week are not very realistic.
- **Relevant**—For goal setting, *relevant* means it applies to the situation. In relation to college, a goal of getting a horse to ride is not very relevant, but getting dependable transportation is something that would contribute to your success in school.
- **Time bound**—*Time bound* means you set a specific time frame to achieve the goal. “I will get my paper written by Wednesday” is time bound. You know when you have to meet the goal. “I will get my paper written sometime soon” does not help you plan how and when you will accomplish the goal.

TRY IT

In the following table, you can see some examples of goals that do and do not follow the SMART system. As you read each one, think about

what elements make them SMART or how you might change those that are not.

| SMART Goals | | |
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| Goal | Is it SMART? | Explanation |
| I am going to be rich someday. | No. | There is nothing really specific, measurable, or time bound in this goal. |
| I will graduate with my degree on time. | Yes. | The statement calls out specific, measurable, and time-bound details. The other attributes of attainable and relevant are implied. |
| I am going to save enough money to buy a new car by June. | Yes. | All SMART attributes are covered in this goal. |
| I would like to do well in all my courses next semester. | No. | While this goal is clearly time bound and meets most of the SMART goal attributes, it is not specific or measurable without defining what "do well" means. |
| I am going to start being a nicer person. | No. | While more of the SMART attributes are implied, there is nothing really measurable about this goal. |
| I will earn at least a 3.0 GPA in all my courses this next semester. | Yes. | All the SMART attributes are present in this goal. |
| I am going to start being more organized. | No. | While most of the SMART attributes are implied, there is nothing really measurable in this goal. |

WRITE SMART GOALS

Try writing two SMART goals—something with a one-week time frame and something that you will accomplish over the next year. Make certain that you include all the appropriate elements—specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound.

Aids to Successful Goal Setting

The following video examines five aids to help ensure that your goal setting will be effective, “take hold,” and serve you in the short and long term.

Five Rules of Goal Setting: How to set SMART Goals



[MUSIC PLAYING]

You can view the [transcript for “Five Rules of Goal Setting: How to set](#)