

## Setting Effective Goals

**Point of the Assignment:** To learn how to set effective goals so you can actually achieve them.

Many people do not know how to set goals so they can achieve their long-term dreams. This assignment is designed to help you set effective goals so you can achieve what you set out to do.

### **CONCEPT #1: BRAINSTORMING GOALS**

Brainstorming is a process where you allow your mind to freely explore all your available options. The secret is to just write down anything that comes to mind – whether or not it is realistic and/or relevant. This is not a time to edit your thoughts – just get your ideas down.

To brainstorm your “life goals”, take a few minutes to think about what you want for your life in the future. (*i.e. Education, job, personal life, financial, spiritual, emotional, health and travel, etc.*) Write down anything and everything you want to accomplish between now and before you die.

### **CONCEPT #2: ALIGNING GOALS**

The next important concept to understand in order to set effective goals is the difference between long-term, mid-range, and short-term goals, and then to align them to make sure they take you in the same direction rather than different directions.

**Long-term Goals:** Will require at least 10 years to achieve (*Become a doctor*)  
**Mid-range Goals:** Will take about 3 -5 years to achieve (*Get a bachelor’s degree*)  
**Short-term Goals:** Will take less than a year to achieve (*Finish this semester*)  
**Immediate Goals:** What you should be doing right now that can be completed with an hour, day, week, or month. (*Finish this week’s homework assignment*)

In order to reach your long term goals, your immediate, short-term and mid-range goals should line up so they are all taking you in the same direction rather than different directions. (*i.e. Working 80 hours per week to make a lot of money right away, vs. working less hours and sacrificing income for a few years so you can focus on being a full-time student now so you can be a doctor later. (See last page, “Aligning Goals” for a visual illustration.)*)

### **CONCEPT #3: S.M.A.R.T. GOALS**

To achieve your goals, they need to have the following characteristics, which can be identified through the following acronym: S.M.A.R.T.:

- **Specific:** A goal needs to be very specific rather than vague.  
*Example:* Lose 10 pounds vs. Lose weight
- **Measurable:** Effective goals must be something you can identify as having been achieved vs. something you cannot identify.  
*Example:* Have a savings account worth at least \$5,000 vs. save money

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- **Attainable:** Make sure your goal is something you can actually achieve vs. out of your control.  
**Example:** Give my spouse expectations and consequences if expectations are not achieved (“If you come home drunk again, I will leave you.”) vs. Stop my spouse from drinking (“Make my spouse stop drinking.”)  
*(Remember you can’t control another persons’ behavior. You can only control how you respond to them.)*
- **Realistic:** Make sure your goals are something you can reasonably achieve vs. something unlikely to happen. Realistic goals also take into account your available resources. *(For example, if you are unemployed and lack income, buying a new car is not a realistic goal for now.)*  
**Example:** Saving money vs. winning the lottery
- **Time-based:** A goal needs have a specific deadline rather than just “someday”  
**Example:** Save for a down payment on a house in 2 years vs. someday

### **Assignment Application:**

Now you are going to take the time to apply these concepts to what you want for your future.

1. **Brainstorm:** Take 3 minutes to brainstorm some dreams and goals you have for your life: *(i.e. Education, job, personal life, financial, spiritual, emotional, health, and travel, etc.)* Or use, dreams/goals listed on “Timeline” assignment. Write on additional sheet of paper if necessary.
2. **Aligning Goals:** Now you are going to learn how to apply the “Aligning Goals” concept to only **ONE GOAL** you have listed in #1. Identify:
  - a. **One** of the **Long-term** goals you listed in Step #1 above (10 years to achieve).
  - b. One **Mid-range** goal needed to achieve the Long-term goal (2-5 years to achieve)  
*(What do you need to do to achieve this long-term goal?)*
  - c. One **Short-term** goal needed to achieve that Mid-range goal (Less than one year)  
*(What do you need to do to achieve this mid-range goal?)*
  - d. One **Immediate** goal needed to achieve that Short-term goal (Less than one week)  
*(What do you need to do to achieve this short-term goal?)*

**Long-term Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(List only one Long-term goal)*



**Mid-range Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Leads toward Long-term goal)*



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**Short-term Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Leads toward Mid-range goal)*



**Immediate Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Leads toward short-term goal)*

3. **S.M.A.R.T. Goal:** Take your Immediate goal listed above and make it a S.M.A.R.T. goal: (i.e. “Submit first draft of Essay #1 by Monday to partner” vs. “Do my homework”)

**Specific:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Describe your immediate goal in specific detail: i.e. “Essay #1” vs. “homework”)*

**Measurable:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(How will you be able to identify that it is achieved?: “First draft finished” vs. “homework done”)*

**Attainable:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(How is this in your control?: “Turned in to partner” vs. “received from partner”)*

**Realistic:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(How is this something you can achieve?: “Finish first draft within one week” vs. “Start writing paper 30 minutes before it is due”)*

**Time Based:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(When does this need to be completed by?: “By Monday” vs. “Whenever I get around to it.”)*

4. **My S.M.A.R.T., short-term goal which will take me towards my long-term goal is:**  
(One immediate goal which includes everything in Item #3 above, listed in one sentence.  
“Submit first draft of Essay #1 by Monday to partner”)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Test your understanding:**

**What is the main point of this assignment?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Why were you expected to do this exercise?**

\_\_\_\_\_

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**What type of person would need to do this exercise?**

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**How well do you fit the profile of the person for whom this assignment was created?**

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**Reflection:** *(Write down your response after completing this assignment.)*

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