

# SETTING GOALS

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## Lesson Descriptions

### **Setting Goals 1: Setting Goals**

*How can I set goals that work?*

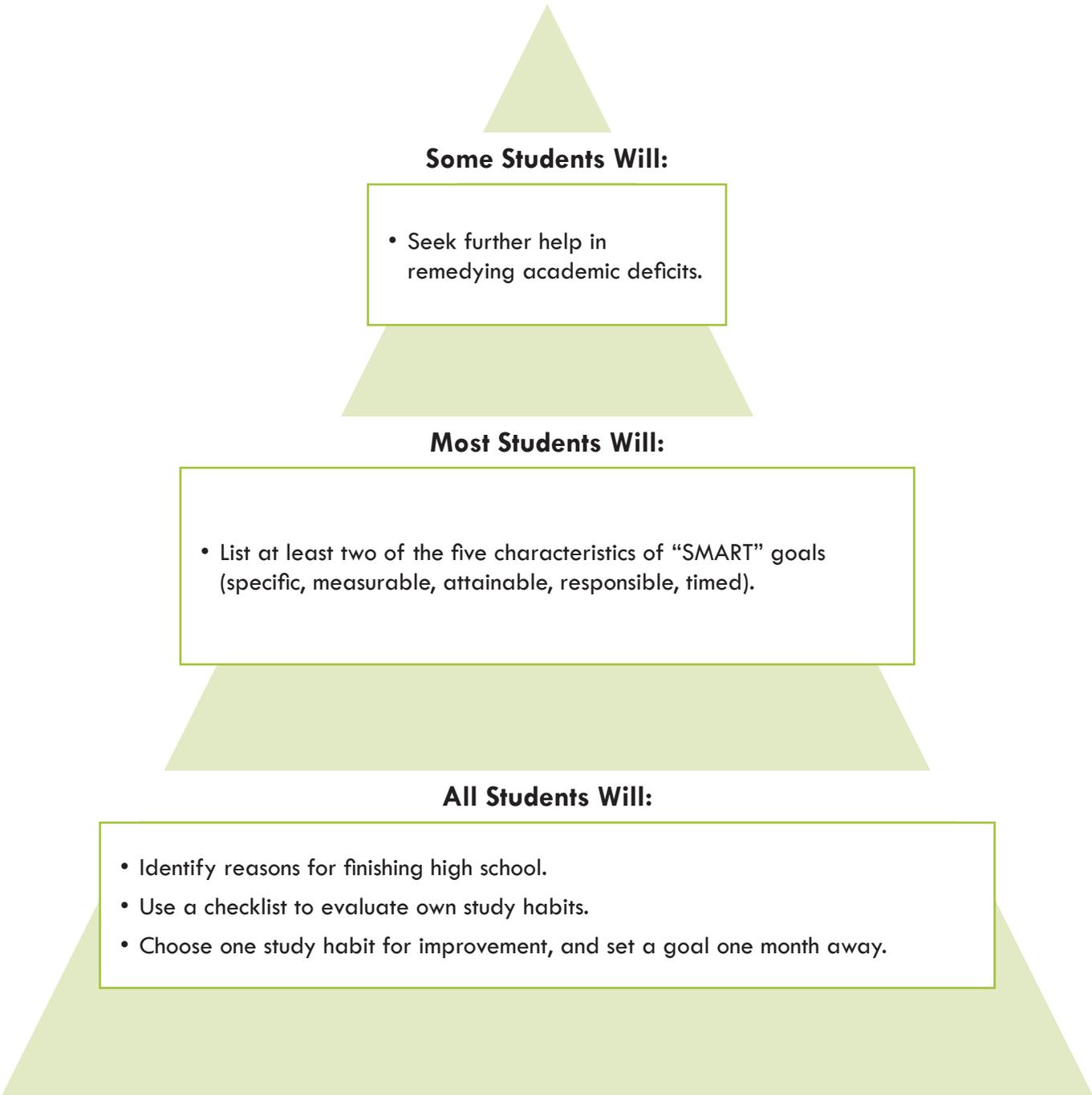
### **Setting Goals 2: High School Matters**

*How will a high school degree affect my future?*

**Note:** *This lesson requires coordination with your school counselor.*

# PLANNING PYRAMID

## GRADE 9, Unit 2, Goal Setting



**Some Students Will:**

- Seek further help in remedying academic deficits.

**Most Students Will:**

- List at least two of the five characteristics of “SMART” goals (specific, measurable, attainable, responsible, timed).

**All Students Will:**

- Identify reasons for finishing high school.
- Use a checklist to evaluate own study habits.
- Choose one study habit for improvement, and set a goal one month away.

#### Why Ninth Grade Matters

#### Roads to Success

is a new program designed to help middle and high school students prepare for their futures. This newsletter will keep you posted on what we're doing in school, and how families can follow through at home.

#### Did you know?

Passing ninth grade courses is key to success in high school. Other signs your teen is on the right track:

- Good attendance
- Feels connected to classmates and school
- Hangs out with kids who intend to graduate

To a freshman, the four years until high school graduation seem like forever. To a ninth-grader, graduation is one-quarter of a life-time away! But ninth grade is an important step in your son or daughter's education. Here's why:

**Grades count.** From now on, the courses he takes and the grades he gets are part of his official transcript. This information may be requested by future employers and colleges he wants to attend.

**Skills count.** Not every college or employer requires top grades, but your teen will need basic math and reading skills no matter what she does next.

#### Good beginnings count.

Students who do well in ninth grade are much more likely to finish high school. Here are some ways you can help make your student's first year a success.

#### • Getting organized

Does your student know how to keep track of homework, take notes, plan for long-term assignments, and organize school materials? If not, help him set up a study plan that works for him. (At the beginning of the year, check every day to make sure he's following through. It takes



weeks for a new routine to become a habit.)

#### • Getting basic skills

If your student is reading below grade level or struggling in math, she has to work extra hard to "get" ninth grade material. Talk to her teacher or guidance counselor about school programs that provide extra help.

#### • Getting the message that this is important

Your high expectations are a big factor in your student's success. Make sure your message is clear. "This is important, and I know you can do it. I'll do whatever it takes to help you succeed."

#### Grade by Grade: Setting Goals

In ninth grade, Roads to Success students take a look at the habit needed for success in school—like going to class each day, taking notes, writing down homework assignments, and finding a time and place to study.

Then, each student creates a "SMART" goal for improvement. Each

goal must be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imed. A goal like "I want to do better in science" isn't considered "SMART" because it's not clear what the goal-setter has to do, or when he has to do it.

"I will get a B on my next science test by reviewing my notes

every night after school and asking questions in class when something isn't clear" is specific and measurable. It's clear what is expected, and when. It's easier to reach a goal when you know exactly what has to be done to get there.

To find out more, check us out on the Web at [www.roadstosuccess.org](http://www.roadstosuccess.org).



## Setting Goals

### The **BIG** Idea

- How can I set goals that work?

### AGENDA

- Approx. 45 minutes
- I. Warm Up: Smarties (10 minutes)
- II. SMART goals (10 minutes)
- III. What's Your Goal? (10 minutes)
- IV. Your Own SMART Goal (10 minutes)
- V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- PORTFOLIO PAGES:**
  - Portfolio pages 1–2, Ninth Grade Goals
- STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**
  - Student Handbook page 6, SMART Goals Record Sheet
  - Student Handbook page 7, Setting SMART Goals
  - Student Handbook pages 8–9, Ninth Grade Goals Reflection
- FACILITATOR PAGES:**
  - Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW
  - Facilitator Resource 2, Smarties Scoring System
- Copies of Academic Resource List (See **Preparation**)
- Smarties candies (two rolls per person)
 

**NOTE:** Due to concerns about obesity, diabetes, and other issues surrounding candy in school, you may prefer to use an alternative like beads. Ensure items are stackable before trying this with your class.
- One-minute timer (a watch or timer with alarm is best)
- Chart paper

### OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Use the “SMART” criteria to evaluate a goal.
- Set a goal for improving study skills that can be accomplished in one month.

## OVERVIEW

This lesson begins with an exercise in goal-setting: how many Smarties candies can students stack vertically in a single minute? After several attempts with changing parameters, students learn how to set a “SMART” goal—one that’s specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timed. Students evaluate a goal set by a hypothetical student, then decide on goals of their own for improving their study habits.

## PREPARATION

- List the day’s **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
  - **Student Handbook page 6, SMART Goals Record Sheet**
  - **Student Handbook page 7, Setting SMART Goals**
  - **Portfolio pages 8–9, Ninth Grade Goals**
- For **Activity II, Item 4**, write the “Smart” goal criteria on chart paper.
- In advance of teaching this lesson, you should research what resources are available in your school and community for students who may need additional academic support. The school counselor might have suggestions. You should get school administration approval on any outside resources that you wish to include. Create a list of resources to distribute to students and review during the discussion of study skills and setting goals.

## IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS .....

### DO NOW

*(You may choose to present the Warm Up activity as a written Do Now. Present the questions on the board or overhead, and have students write only their answers on index cards. You could also choose to give the students a handout by copying **Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW.**)*

#### Question:

1. When you set a goal it should be specific, measurable, and timed. Explain what each of these three criteria mean and why they are important for setting goals.

[Give the students three to four minutes to answer this question. Then have a few students share their responses with the class at the beginning of **Activity II, SMART Goals.**]

In the **Warm Up**, if you are concerned about your students' behavior during the Smarties exercise, you can choose one of the following adaptations:

- The facilitator and one student will compete for both rounds of the Smarties challenge. Goal setting for round two should be conducted as a class.
- The facilitator and one student participate in the first round of the activity. If the students are well behaved, have the rest of the class participate in the second round. Students should use their observations from the first round to inform their goal-setting process.

If your students are not given planners from your school, you may want to purchase small notebooks for students to record their homework assignments.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

### I. Warm Up: Smarties (5 minutes)

1. [Distribute Smarties (two rolls per person) and direct students' attention to **Student Handbook page 6, SMART Goals Record Sheet**. Decide in advance if students will be permitted to eat the candy at the end of the activity and let them know your expectations.  
  
**Note:** Candies tend to chip around the edge with handling; if you intend to use the candy with subsequent classes, stacking may be more difficult.]
2. [Explain the task—to stack as many candies as possible in a vertical column, using only one hand, in one minute. Before they begin, students must estimate the number of candies they can stack (i.e., set a goal).]
3. [**Display Facilitator Resource 2, Smarties Scoring System** using an overhead projector. Explain the scoring system and walk the students through the three examples, using the information below.

#### SCORING:

- Candy stacks must be standing five seconds after the buzzer to count.
- If the goal is **NOT** reached, count five points for each candy stacked.
- If the goal **IS** reached, count 10 points for each candy stacked (up to the goal). Add five points for each additional candy stacked (over the goal).

#### Example:

You set a goal of 15 Smarties for your first round.

#### *If your actual performance was UNDER your goal:*

Actual performance      10  
 Score calculations = actual performance x 5  
**Score = 10 x 5 = 50**

#### *If your actual performance is the SAME as your goal:*

Actual performance      15  
 Score calculations = actual performance x 10  
**Score = 15 x 10 = 150**

***If your actual performance is HIGHER than your goal:***

Actual performance        18

Score calculations = (Goal x 10) + (# of Smarties over your goal x 5)

**Score = (15 x 10) + (3 x 5) = 150 + 15 = 165]**

[Once the scoring system is explained, let students know that their mission is to set the highest **achievable** goal possible. If they don't reach it, they only get five points per candy instead of 10.]

4. [Then ask participants to set their goal for the first round (no practicing allowed).]
5. [After everyone has set a goal, say, "go" and start the timer. Circulate to be sure the "use only one hand" rule is being followed.]
6. [After the buzzer sounds, count five additional seconds out loud. Stacks must remain standing for five seconds after time is called to count. Ask people to calculate their scores and record them on the record sheet. Determine who stacked the most and who had the highest score (not always the same person). Discuss any unusual approaches you or others used or observed.]

## **II. SMART Goals (10 minutes)**

1. [Ask participants to set and record a new goal for the second round, using what they learned in round 1 to make a better estimate.]
2. [After they have recorded their goals, but just before you start the time, announce that in round 2, they must stack with their non-dominant hand. (If there are moans and groans, explain that life is full of surprises!) Proceed with the second round, repeating the process explained above.]
3. [Debrief the activity using questions such as these:
  - In the first round, how accurate were your goals? Too low/high/right on target?
  - How did goal setting change in the second round? What strategy did you use?
  - What environmental influences came into play? How did you respond to those?
  - What lessons about goal setting can we draw from this exercise?]

4. [Using chart paper, an overhead projector, or the board, introduce and discuss the attributes of SMART goals.

**S** = Specific (detailed, not general or vague)

**M** = Measurable (includes some quantity or element that can be measured)

**A** = Attainable (ambitious but reasonable; often breaks large goals into smaller pieces)

**R** = Realistic (person is willing and able to do the work involved with this goal)

**T** = Timed (establishes a time frame for accomplishing the goal)]

5. [Explain that students can use the SMART criteria to create and evaluate their education and career goals.]

[Smarties/SMART Goal activities used with permission of CFED/Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning.]

### III. What's Your Goal? (10 minutes))

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** How many of you have a long-term goal that includes college? The big question is: what can you do at the beginning of your high school career to make sure that you realize this goal? (Student answers should include a need to study, get good grades, etc.)

Let's see what you can do to make that happen, starting today. Please turn to **Portfolio pages 1–2, Ninth Grade Goals** [first page]. This is a list of study habits of good students. The more of these habits you make part of your life, the better you'll do in school. Guaranteed. Right now, I'd like you to take an honest look at how you approach your schoolwork.

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Write today's date in the first box at the top left of the page, labeled "Today's Date." [Illustrate using a transparency of **Portfolio pages 1–2, Ninth Grade Goals** and the overhead projector.]

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Then read each study habit, and put a check in the box that best describes your behavior.

N for never

S for sometimes

A for always

[Model this on the overhead projector.]

Remember, you're rating your performance right now, not what you think you should do or what you hope to do in the future. [Give students a couple of minutes to complete this task.]

4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Next, I'd like you to choose one study habit that you'd like to improve. This will be your goal for next month. Circle that goal in the column under today's date. [Demonstrate.]
5. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** For this first month, we are going to check in every two weeks. After that, we'll check in once a month for the rest of the school year. Let's write the first check-in date in the second column. [Specify a class meeting date that's two weeks away. Then record the second check-in date on the overhead. This should be a month away. Instruct students to record these dates on their **Ninth Grade Goals** chart.]
6. Where else could we record these check-in dates to make sure we don't miss any of them? [Allow students to respond.] How many of you use a planner to record your homework and assignments? [Show of hands.] Many adults use planners or calendars to keep track of their appointments and tasks. [Instruct students to take out their planner/agenda. Then instruct the students to record the first two check-in dates into their planner or agenda. Record these dates in your own planner/agenda as well.]

#### IV. Your Own SMART Goal (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Each of you has now identified one study habit you want to improve. Now we have to figure out how to make these goals into SMART goals. Before you work on your own goal, let's practice one together. Who remembers the five criteria that SMART stands for? [Allow students to respond.]

[Display **Student Handbook page 7, Setting SMART Goals** using an overhead projector. Instruct students to turn to this page. Assign pairs. In their pairs, students will decide if the sample goal fits the five criteria for SMART goals. Give them three minutes to complete part 1, and then go over the answers as a class.

##### PART I

- Is this goal **Specific**? No, there is no mention of her goal grade. Instead, she could say: "I want to get a B+ on the next science test."
- Is this goal **Measurable**? No, without a numerical goal grade there is no way for Jill to measure if she reached her goal.
- Is this goal **Attainable**? Not enough information. Jill should be able to raise

her science grade, but the question is by how much. We don't know if the test is tomorrow or weeks from now. It's also not clear what Jill will do to improve her study habits.

- Is this goal **Realistic**? Not enough information. Jill did not include a goal grade for her science test, so we have no way of knowing whether this goal is realistic.
- Is this goal **Timed**? No, she needs to set a specific goal date to see if her science grade has improved.

Once you have reviewed all the criteria above, as a class, you are going to revise Jill's goal to make it into a SMART goal.

**Initial Goal** = I want to do well on my next science test.

**SMART Goal** = I will do my science homework every night for the next three weeks, so that I can get a B+ on the next science test.

Write this goal on the overhead and instruct students to record it on their student handbook page. Make sure the students understand how the revised goal is *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timed.*]

2. [Refer students to the follow-up questions on **Portfolio pages 2–3, Ninth Grade Goals Reflection (1st page)** and give them a few minutes to complete it. If time permits, have students share their SMART goal with a partner. Students should help their peers revise any goals that do not fit the SMART criteria.]
3. [Ask the students if any of them identified after-school tutoring (or whatever your school provides) as one of the things that might help them to meet their goal. Distribute the Academic Resource List (see **Preparation**) and encourage students to seek additional help if they need it.]

## V. WRAP UP (5 minutes)

1. [Congratulate the students on all their hard work. Tell them they have already come a long way in a very short time. Explain that thinking about how to make choices today will help them achieve their goals further down the road.]
2. [Tell them that next week they'll learn how to make a four-year plan for their high school courses.]

Smarties/ SMART Goal activities used with permission of CFED/Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning.

## DO NOW

### Setting Goals 1: Setting Goals

**Directions:** You will have three minutes to read the question below and write your response.

1. When you set a goal it should be specific, measureable, and timed. Explain what these three criteria mean and why they are important for setting goals.

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## SMARTIES SCORING SYSTEM

- Candy stacks must be standing five seconds after the buzzer to count.
- If the goal is **NOT** reached, count five points for each candy stacked.
- If the goal is reached, count 10 points for each candy stacked up to the goal. Add five bonus points for each additional candy stacked (over the goal.)

### **EXAMPLE:**

You set a goal of 15 Smarties for your first round.

*If your actual performance was UNDER your goal:*

Actual performance 10

Score calculations =

**Score =**

*If your actual performance is the SAME as your goal:*

Actual performance 15

Score calculations =

**Score =**

*If your actual performance is the HIGHER than your goal:*

Actual performance 18

Score calculations =

**Score =**

## SMART GOALS RECORD SHEET

### SCORING:

- Candy stacks must be standing five seconds after the buzzer to count.
- If the goal is **NOT** reached, count five points for each candy stacked.
- If the goal **IS** reached, count 10 points for each candy stacked up to the goal. Add five bonus points for each additional candy stacked (over the goal).

### ROUND 1

Goal \_\_\_\_\_

Actual performance \_\_\_\_\_

Score \_\_\_\_\_

### ROUND 2

Goal \_\_\_\_\_

Actual performance \_\_\_\_\_

Score \_\_\_\_\_

Used with permission of CFED/Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning.

## Setting SMART Goals

**SAMPLE GOAL:** Jill currently has a C in her science class. She has not done any science homework for the past three weeks and rarely participates in class. Her goal is to do well on her next science test.

### PART 1

**Directions:** You are going to decide if the goal above fits each of the criteria.

1. Is this goal Specific? (yes, no, not enough info) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is this goal Measurable? (yes, no, not enough info) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is this goal Attainable? (yes, no, not enough info) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is this goal Realistic? (yes, no, not enough info) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is this goal Timed? (yes, no, not enough info) \_\_\_\_\_

### PART 2

**Directions:** As a class, rewrite Jill's goal as a SMART goal.

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## Ninth Grade Goals Reflection:

1. What study habit did you pick to work on?

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**Using the SMART goals criteria, set one goal to work on the study habit you chose above.**

**S** = Specific (detailed, not general or vague)

**M** = Measurable (includes some quantity or element that can be measured)

**A** = Attainable (ambitious but reasonable; often breaks large goals into smaller pieces)

**R** = Realistic (person is willing and able to do the work for this goal)

**T** = Timed (establishes a time frame for accomplishing the goal)

**GOAL:**

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What steps will you need to take in order to meet your goal?

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What resources will you use to help you meet your goal?

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**Check-In Date 1**

1. Did you succeed in reaching your goal? If yes, explain how you accomplished your goal. If you have not reached your goal yet, explain what challenges you faced.

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2. If you reached your goal, select a new study habit to work on this upcoming week and record it in the space below.

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3. If you did not reach your goal, explain how you are going to overcome the challenges you faced this past week.

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**Check-In Date 2**

1. Did you succeed in reaching your goal? If yes, explain how you accomplished your goal. If you have not reached your goal yet, explain what challenges you faced.

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2. If you reached your goal, select a new study habit to work on this upcoming week and record it in the space below.

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3. If you did not reach your goal, explain how you are going to overcome the challenges you faced this past week.

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## NINTH GRADE GOALS

This is a checklist of good study habits. The more “always” answers you have, the better you’ll do in school.



Every month, you will pick **one** habit that you want to improve. For the first month we will be checking in once every two weeks. For the rest of the year we will be checking in once a month. If you have a “no,” your goal is to make it a “sometimes.” If you have a “sometimes,” your goal is to make it an “always.” Once you’ve reached one goal, you can move on to another. By the end of the year, you’ll be a super student (if you’re not already)!

**N = No    S = Sometimes    A = Always**

STUDY HABITS	Today’s Date		Check-in Date 1		Check-in Date 2		Check-in Date 3		Check-in Date 4		Check-in Date 5	
	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Do I attend school every day?												
2. Do I arrive at school on time?												
3. Do I come to class prepared?												
4. Do I write down homework assignments in the same place, every day?												
5. Do I stick with a class assignment or task until it is done?												
6. Do I ask a teacher or another student for help when I don’t understand something?												
7. Do I take part in class discussions or activities?												
8. Do I complete all class assignments and projects?												
9. Do I complete all homework assignments and projects?												
10. Do I always check to see if I have all of my materials before I leave school?												
11. Do I look at my notes every day in order to review what I have learned?												
12. Do I have a time and place when/where I study for each subject?												
13. Do I know where to go for extra help?												
14. Do I get the extra help I need?												

This is a checklist of good study habits. The more "always" answers you have, the better you'll do in school.



## NINTH GRADE GOALS

Every month, you will pick one habit that you want to improve by the next check-in date.

**N = No S = Sometimes A = Always**

STUDY HABITS	Check-in Date 6		Check-in Date 7		Check-in Date 8		Check-in Date 9		Check-in Date 10		Check-in Date 11	
	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Do I attend school every day?												
2. Do I arrive at school on time?												
3. Do I come to class prepared?												
4. Do I write down homework assignments in the same place, every day?												
5. Do I stick with a class assignment or task until it is done?												
6. Do I ask a teacher or another student for help when I don't understand something?												
7. Do I take part in class discussions or activities?												
8. Do I complete all class assignments and projects?												
9. Do I complete all homework assignments and projects?												
10. Do I always check to see if I have all of my materials before I leave school?												
11. Do I look at my notes every day in order to review what I have learned?												
12. Do I have a time and place when/where I study for each subject?												
13. Do I know where to go for extra help?												
14. Do I get the extra help I need?												

### The **BIG** Idea

- How will a high school degree affect my future?

### AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: Why Am I Here? (5 minutes)
- II. Advice from the Real World (10 minutes)
- III. My Four-Year Plan (25 minutes)
- IV. Wrap Up: Ninth Grade—It Matters! (5 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- PORTFOLIO PAGES:**
  - Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan
  - Portfolio pages 33–35, Grade 9 (9–12) Skills Checklist (Goal Setting skills only)
- STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**
  - Student Handbook page 10, Dear David
- FACILITATOR PAGES:**
  - Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW
- District/state graduation requirements
- Listing of your schools 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade courses with syllabus for each grade
- Chart paper

### OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Recognize the importance of high school to their future, even if they want to pursue a career that doesn't require college.
- Understand state and local high school graduation requirements.
- Develop a four-year course plan that will keep them on track for their high school graduation.

## OVERVIEW .....

In this lesson, students will explore the importance of high school and what a high school degree can mean to them. They'll begin by answering the question, "Why are you in high school?" Next, they'll read a letter from a community college program director to a student who thinks he doesn't need high school. Then they'll discuss some of the reasons the director gives for staying in school. Finally, students will create a four-year plan for their high school courses.

## PREPARATION .....

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
  - **Student Handbook page 10, Dear David**
  - **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan**
- For **Activity I**, write the multiple-choice questions on chart paper, covering up the quiz with a blank sheet.
- This lesson is designed to help students develop a tentative four-year plan for their high school courses. Be sure to coordinate with the counselor to become better acquainted with the courses offered. Obtain and copy the following handouts:
  - District/state graduation requirements (one class set)
  - List of 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade courses offered next year, obtained from your school counselor (one per student).

In addition, you may wish to ask the school counselor to serve as a co-facilitator of this lesson.

## IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS .....

### DO NOW

*(You may choose to present the Warm Up activity as a written Do Now. Present the questions on the board or overhead, and have students write only their answers on index cards. You could also choose to give the students a handout by copying **Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW.**)*

#### Question:

1. Last week you learned about the five criteria that make a goal SMART. List them below and explain what the criteria means. If you are having trouble remembering, look at **Student Handbook pages 8–9, Ninth Grade Goals Reflection.**

[Give the students three minutes to answer this question. Then have a few students share their responses with the class at the beginning of the Warm Up.]

In **Activity III, My Four-Year Plan**, you may choose to highlight high school courses that could prepare students for local postsecondary education programs. This could include two- and four-year colleges, along with tech/trade schools.

## ACTIVITY STEPS .....

### I. Warm Up: Why Am I Here? (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Welcome, everybody! Before we begin today, I have a very important question for all of you: What are you doing in high school?

[Flip up the blank paper on your chart to reveal the following:

What am I doing in high school?

- A. Ninth grade follows eighth grade.
  - B. I wasn't allowed to stay in bed this morning.
  - C. I'm too young to earn a living.
  - D. Other (Write your answer on a piece of paper.)
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** OK, so be honest: Raise your hand if you said A... B... C. And who chosed, another reason? [Ask a few volunteers to share their reasons for being in high school. Write these answers on the paper under "Other." Answers will vary, such as: to earn a degree to get a better job after high school; to get into college; to learn new things.]
  3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Of course, most of us don't jump out of bed every morning and rush to school driven by a single, motivating purpose. But overall, it helps to remember why you're in high school, whether you're studying for a test, choosing classes for next year, or just deciding whether or not you want to get out of bed in the morning.
  4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** In this class, you'll be hearing a lot about "beginning with the end in mind." The purpose of Roads to Success is to help you figure out what you want to do with your life, set your own goals, and leave high school with the tools and knowledge you need to meet those goals. That means in ninth grade, you're starting to figure out what those goals are.
  5. This year we'll be exploring lots of careers and hopefully finding a few that interest you. But today, we're going to focus on an essential step before any career—finishing high school.

## II. Advice from the Real World (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's go back to the question, "Why are you in high school?" If you sometimes (or a lot of times) feel like you're not really sure, then I hope you'll pay close attention to this next story:

A few years ago, there was a student who felt he didn't need to finish high school. The student, David, wanted to become a truck driver, and he felt the whole school thing was sort of a waste of time.

Fortunately, his teacher contacted the local community college, and made a connection with the director of the truck-driving program. In turn, the director wrote David a letter with some important advice. In a minute I'm going to assign pairs. Please turn to **Student Handbook page 10, Dear David**. You and your partner will have five minutes to read this letter. While you are reading, circle any word or phrase that you think relates to a high school course.

2. [Give students about five minutes to read the letter.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now, let's talk about what we learned from Don Hess, the director of the truck-driving program. [As a class, discuss the following questions:
  - What parts of the truck driver's job description surprised you?
  - What are some skills that truck drivers need that would be gained in high school?
  - How did a college degree improve Don's career opportunities?]

## III. My Four-Year Plan [25 minutes]

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** I have an important question: How many of you want to graduate from high school? Of course, you all do! But it's not going to happen magically. If you want to make the most of your time in high school, you need to have a plan. That's what we're going to work on for the rest of class.
2. [Instruct students to turn to **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan**. Give students a few minutes to complete the ninth grade column of this chart, reminding them to leave the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade columns blank.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Some of you may be wondering why you are thinking about courses three years from now. The plan you are going to make today is not set in stone. Some of your course selections may change based on your performance this

year and your changing career interests. The purpose of this plan is to help you stay on track for your high school graduation. The first thing we want to take a look at is what's required in our district/state.

4. [Hand out the list of district/state requirements for graduation, and show a copy on a projector. Review the credits for each subject required by your district/state.]
5. [Take a few minutes to let students ask questions about these requirements.]
6. [Hand out the listing of your schools 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade courses with syllabus.]
7. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now that we've reviewed the most important criteria for choosing courses, it's time to take a first pass at making your own choices. You will be making tentative course selections for 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade from this list of course offerings for next year. [Hand out copies of this list obtained from your own school or district.]

You should first fill in the courses that fulfill the district/state requirements. Once you have done this for all three grades, go back and select electives that fit your interests. Remember, your selections today are not set in stone. You'll share these choices with the guidance counselor in the spring when you make your 10<sup>th</sup> grade schedule.

8. [Give students about 15 minutes to complete their four-year plan. Walk around the classroom to answer questions they may have as they make their selections.]

#### IV. Wrap Up: Ninth Grade—It Matters! (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** I hope each of you comes away from today's lesson having a little clearer sense of purpose about high school. As you're going to see in the coming weeks, education plays a critical role in the careers you pursue. And what you do in high school will pave the way for your future, whether you're planning on pursuing a career after graduation, or moving on to college.

That's why ninth grade is such an important and exciting time in your life. Middle school is behind you. As you launch into your high school years, remember that this is the time that matters. This is the time that counts. It's what you learn now that you'll carry forward into your career and into college. No college is going to ask for your middle school grades, but they will see your grades and activities from this point

forward. If you want to make the most of your time in high school, you should set a clear goal in your mind—a goal that will motivate you and guide you over the next four years.

**2. SKILLS CHECKLIST**

Direct students' attention to **Portfolio pages 33–35, Grade 9 (9–12) Skills Checklist**.

Have students complete the skills checklist questions for goal setting.

**GOAL SETTING SKILLS**

**I can...**

Set a goal for myself and make a plan to reach it.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
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## DO NOW

### Setting Goals 2: High School Matters

**Directions:** You will have three minutes to read the question below and write your response.

1. Last week you learned about the five criteria that make a goal SMART. List them below and explain what the criteria means. If you are having trouble remembering, look at **Student Handbook page 8, Ninth Grade Goals Reflection.**

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## DEAR DAVID

Don Hess  
Director  
Transportation & Public Safety Programs  
John Wood Community College  
1301 South 48th Street, Quincy, Illinois 62305-8736

Dear David,

Hi. My name is Don, and I work at a college where we teach people how to drive trucks. Your teacher sent an e-mail saying that you thought you might not need high school. I hate to tell you this, but I really believe you need to consider a few things before you make a final decision.

Truck driving today is much different than it used to be.

1. Trucks have computers in them to run the engine, and other computers and satellite systems so that the driver and the company can communicate with each other any time. Drivers have to know how to use computers because they do so every day.
2. Also, truck drivers must have good math skills. They have to keep very detailed “log books,” which keeps track of all of the hours in the day, and how many hours the driver has been driving, loading, sleeping, eating, and resting. They have to know how to use fractions and decimals to calculate those hours.
3. Truck drivers also must calculate the weight of their load, figure out how the load should be distributed in the trailer, supervise the loading process, then calculate the weight that is being put on each axle of the truck and the trailer (usually there are five axles).

You know, when I was in high school, I thought a lot like you seem to be thinking now. I often thought about quitting and just getting a job. But I stuck it out anyway and got my diploma. Then I drove trucks for a long time (about 17 years), and drove over one million miles total. Then I decided that even a high school diploma wasn't enough anymore, so I went back to school—this time to college. I was a freshman in college when I was 36 years old, and spent 4 years there. Then I got a job teaching people how to drive trucks, and now I'm in charge of many different departments at the college, including truck driving, fire science, and law enforcement, and I have lots of teachers working for me.

So, there are just a few things to think about, David. I really hope that whatever you decide to do, you start out by finishing high school. You will really and truly be glad you did, I absolutely guarantee it.

**Don Hess**

Letter reprinted with the permission of Don Hess. Special thanks to Marlene Dakita at the Truckload Carriers Association ([www.truckload.org](http://www.truckload.org)).

## MY FOUR-YEAR PLAN

<b>Courses Taken/Planned</b>					
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Ninth</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>11th</b>	<b>12th</b>	
1. Language Arts					
2. Math					
3. Science					
4. Social Studies					
5. Foreign Language					
6. Other/Electives (Arts, Computer Science, etc.)					