
Specific - A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "W" questions: *Who is involved? *What do I want to accomplish? *Where will I accomplish it? *When will it happen? *Why do I need to reach this goal? For example, don’t say, “I want to do better in school.” That goal is too general.

Measurable - When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the joy of achievement that helps you reach the goal. Ask your, “How will I know when I reach the goal?” For example, don’t say, “I want to be more patient.” How do you measure your patience level?

Attainable - You can attain almost any goal you set when you plan your steps carefully and set a schedule to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer, not because your goals shrink, but because you grow. When you list your goals you build your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals, and develop the character that allows you to have them. For example, don’t set goals low, which don’t require any improvement in your life, and don’t set very complicated goals that would take years to accomplish.

Realistic - To be realistic, a goal must be something which you are both willing and able to do. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. Be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love. Examples of unrealistic goals would be to lose 40 pounds in the next four weeks or to sleep for only four hours a day to make more time for studying.

Your goal is probably realistic if you truly believe that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished similar things in the past.

Tangible - A goal is tangible when you can experience it with one of the senses: taste, touch, smell, sight or hearing. When your goal is tangible, you have a better chance of making it specific and measurable. Intangible goals are the personality characteristics and the behavior patterns you must develop to get to success in your career or for reaching some other long-term goal. Since intangible goals are vital for improving your effectiveness, give close attention to tangible ways for measuring them. For example, an intangible goal is to manage your anger better. The tangible goal could be to not yell at your kids. You can see or hear if you are reaching that goals, and it shows you if your temper is more under control.

Examples of good goals - Here are a couple of examples of goals to help demonstrate how S.M.A.R.T. goals are more detailed and address the “W” questions.

1. General Goal = I want to get good grades.
   S.M.A.R.T. Goal = In order to qualify for the Math Department scholarship next year, I want to improve my grades to a GPA of 2.5 by the end of this semester. To help me achieve this goal, I plan to visit the Writing Center for help when I have a writing assignment. I also plan to reduce the number of hours I work during mid-terms and finals to 5 or less, so I have more time to study. In addition, I will meet with each of my teachers near the middle of the semester to talk about my progress and grade.

2. General Goal = I want to take better care of myself.
   S.M.A.R.T. Goal = Over the next six months, I want to take better care of my physical self. I want to get more exercise in hopes of reducing my stress and improving my sleep quality. My goal is to increase my walks to 4 times a week and keep the distance the same. I will add a set of ten basic stretches to the end of each walk. I will keep track of my walks in my journal. Using a scale of 1-5, I will also record how I feel, how much stress I sense and how I am sleeping each week.
Now write your own goals. You should choose three that you will work on this semester. Look at all areas of your life for ideas: Education, Career, Finance, and Personal. Write the general goals here and then use the SMART goal system to explain who, what, when, where, and why you will accomplish these goals.

GENERAL GOAL #1: ____________________________________________________________

SMART Goal steps: __________________________________________________________


GENERAL GOAL #2: __________________________________________________________

SMART Goal steps: __________________________________________________________


GENERAL GOAL #3: __________________________________________________________

SMART Goal steps: __________________________________________________________