

Student Activity

Pursuing Opportunities

In the video, 10th-grade student, Jordan Jones, talks about the ESI programs that take place at his high school on the weekends and after school. Jordan says that participating in the programs has helped him feel more confident in his classes and motivated him to clearly define his goals for college.

Consider these Self-Reflection and Discussion Questions:

- Jordan says he enjoyed the weekend and after-school programs so much that he was “the first one to arrive and the last one to leave.” Have you ever felt this way about a class or after-school activity? If so, what was the class/activity? If not, is there a topic or activity about which you could imagine feeling this excited? What would it be?
- Jordan says that the first step in achieving his goals for college is getting good grades in high school. What is one of your future goals? What is the first step in achieving that goal? Is there a person or program at your school where you could go for support and advice?

Student Activity

In Pursuit of Your Goals

In the video, Jordan Jones says that the mentors in his school’s ESI programs help students define and discuss their life pursuits and goals. But defining a goal is not the same as achieving it. What are the steps involved in turning goals into realities?

Goal-setting involves defining and planning actions that will bring you closer to achieving your goal. There is an art to writing a well-defined goal, one that you can measure and achieve! Use the approach below to write a well-defined long-term goal (three to five years in the future) as well as three short-term goals (6 months to a year) that will help you get there.

A popular goal-setting model is **S.M.A.R.T.**, an approach attributed to Peter Drucker's *Management by Objectives* concept, which he proposed in the 1960s. Use the S.M.A.R.T approach described below when writing your goals:

S: Specific. For example, "I will get good grades" is too broad. Instead, break this long-term goal into smaller, short-term goals, such as, "I will study one hour each night," or "I will complete and turn in my homework for all classes on the day it is due."

M: Measurable. Make sure you have a way to determine if you have achieved your goal. For example, the short-term goal, "I will complete and turn in my homework on the day it is due" is a goal you will know immediately whether or not you achieved when you turn in or miss turning in your homework on time.

A: Action-oriented. Your goal should include an action you must take in order to achieve it. Again, using our example, "completing and turning in homework" are the actions.

R: Realistic. Write your goals in a way that supports actually achieving them. Consider all of your other commitments and any obstacles you may face. For example, the goal, "I will attend Harvard University next year" may not be attainable based on your grades or on your high school graduation date.

T: Timely. When you create a clear and measurable goal, ensure that you allow for a realistic amount of time to complete it. For example, the goal, "I will achieve a 1600 on the SAT test next Saturday" may not be realistic if you have not yet spent time preparing for the test. For a goal such as this one, you will want to define short-term goals to help you get there, such as, "I will sign up for the SAT exam that is offered one month from today" and "I will complete an online SAT practice exam twice a week for the next three weeks."

After reviewing the S.M.A.R.T model, use the concepts to write one of your long-term goals:

What are three short-term goals you can accomplish in pursuit of your long-term goal?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Check yourself: Are your goals specific? Are they measurable? (That is, how will you know if you have achieved them or not?) Do you know exactly what actions you must take to accomplish the goals? Have you given yourself enough time to complete your short-term and long-term goals?

Post or store this sheet in a place where you can easily refer to it throughout the weeks ahead.

- ✓ When you have accomplished your short-term goals, check them off the list.
- ✓ If you need to re-write any goals to make them more well-defined or realistic, do so!
- ✓ Whenever you accomplish one of your goals, make sure you take time to congratulate yourself and feel a moment of pride.
- ✓ Share your accomplishments with friends and family members who will be happy for your success!

"I don't focus on what I'm up against. I focus on my goals and I try to ignore the rest." --Venus Williams