

The Key to Success: Setting Good Goals

Effective goals have some common characteristics. Make sure your goals are **SMART** goals!

1. **Specific:** We are often more likely to accomplish a specific goal over a vague one. Instead of saying “I’m going to check on my finances this week,” say, “I’m going to balance my checkbook Tuesday right after work.” This will give you a set task to work on, making it more likely that you will do it!
2. **Measurable:** How will you know when you have accomplished your goal? Make your goal something you can test or measure. Instead of saying “I want to understand grammar,” say, “I will complete five sets of grammar exercises today in hopes of increasing my grammar knowledge.”
3. **Action-Oriented:** Write something you can DO! You can write what you want to know, but also explain how you will get there. Instead of saying, “I will know my Biology textbook,” say, “I will summarize each section of the Biology textbook in my own words, so that I know I understand each part.”
4. **Realistic:** Set goals that you can attain, but that do require some effort. Keep in mind the resources you currently have and how you can best manage them. Instead of saying, “I will understand everything about fractions today,” say, “I will learn how to divide fractions today by reading my textbook and doing practice problems.”
5. **Timely:** Create reasonable deadlines for yourself and hold yourself to them. By doing this, you can avoid procrastination. Instead of saying, “I want to finish my homework some time today,” say, “I want to finish my homework by 5:00 p.m.”

Follow this model:

I will achieve (what), by doing (what), by (when)



Adapted from the presentation of Angela Steadman and Gunnar Fox's How to Kick Ass in College.