

My English Learning Goals

An Adult ESL Reading and Writing Lesson

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain why setting goals is important.
 2. Identify the difference between short-term and long-term goals.
 3. Understand the five parts of a SMART goal.
 4. Write at least one short-term and one long-term English learning goal.
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Part 1: Reading — Why Are Goals Important?

What Is a Goal?

A goal is something you want to achieve. It is something you work toward.

People have many different goals. Some people want to find a better job. Others want to save money, buy a house, or improve their health.

When you are learning English, you should also have goals.

For example, you might want to speak English more confidently, understand your doctor, communicate with your children's teachers, or become a United States citizen.

Goals give us direction. They help us understand what we want to accomplish and what we need to do to succeed.

Without goals, we might study English without knowing exactly what we want to learn.

When we have clear goals, we can make a plan, practice regularly, and measure our progress.

What Is the Difference Between Short-Term and Long-Term Goals?

A short-term goal is something you want to accomplish in less than one year.

Some short-term goals can be completed in one day, one week, or one month.

For example, you might want to learn ten new English words this week or read a short English story by the end of the month.

A long-term goal is something you want to accomplish in more than one year.

For example, you might want to speak English fluently, earn a college degree, or qualify for a job that requires English.

Long-term goals often require many smaller, short-term goals.

If your long-term goal is to speak English fluently, your short-term goals might include learning new vocabulary, practicing conversations, and improving your pronunciation.

Every short-term goal you achieve can bring you closer to your long-term goal.

What Are SMART Goals?

A SMART goal is a goal that helps you make a clear and realistic plan for success.

SMART stands for five important words:

S — Specific: Your goal clearly explains what you want to accomplish.

M — Measurable: You can check your progress and know when you have achieved your goal.

A — Achievable: Your goal is realistic. You have the time, ability, and resources to accomplish it.

R — Relevant: Your goal is important to you and connects to something you want or need.

T — Time-bound: Your goal has a deadline. You know when you want to accomplish it.

For example, "I want to improve my English" is a good idea, but it is not a SMART goal.

A SMART goal would be:

"I will learn and use 20 new English words in conversations by October 31."

This goal is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

How Can Goals Help You Learn English?

Learning English takes time, patience, and practice.

You will make mistakes. Sometimes, learning will be difficult.

Your goals can help you remember why you are studying English and encourage you to continue.

Choose goals that are important to you. Make sure they are realistic and give yourself enough time to achieve them.

Remember that you are responsible for your own learning.

Your teacher can help you, but you must also practice, participate, ask questions, and work toward your goals.

Set your goals, make a plan, and take small steps toward success every day!

Part 2: Understanding SMART Goals

Instructions

Read each statement. Then discuss the questions with your teacher and classmates.

Example 1

"I want to learn English."

Is this a SMART goal?

No. It does not explain exactly what the student wants to learn or when the student wants to accomplish it.

Example 2

"I will learn 10 new English words every week for the next month."

Is this a SMART goal?

Yes. The student has a specific goal, can measure progress, and has a deadline.

Practice: Which Goal Is Better?

1. A. I want to speak better English.

B. I will practice speaking English with a classmate for 10 minutes every school day for the next month.

2. A. I want to improve my reading.

B. I will read one short English story every week for the next two months.

3. A. I want to understand English better.

B. I will listen to an English conversation for 10 minutes every day for the next four weeks.

Discussion: Which goal in each pair is a SMART goal? Explain your answer.

Part 3: Examples of English Learning Goals

Before writing their own goals, students should understand that their goals do not have to be the same as their classmates' goals.

Every student has different needs, interests, and reasons for learning English.

Short-Term Goals (Less Than One Year)

English Skill	Example of a SMART Goal
Speaking	I will practice speaking English with a classmate for 10 minutes every school day for the next month.
Vocabulary	I will learn and use 20 new English words by October 31.
Writing	I will write five complete English sentences every week for the next two months.
Reading	I will read one short English story every week for the next three months.
Listening	I will listen to an English conversation for 10 minutes every day for the next four weeks.
Pronunciation	I will practice pronouncing five difficult English words every day for the next month.

Long-Term Goals (More Than One Year)

Long-term goals should describe a meaningful result that students want to achieve in the future.

English Learning Goal	Example
Employment	Within two years, I will improve my English enough to complete a job interview in English and apply for a better job.
Education	Within three years, I will improve my English reading and writing skills enough to enroll in a college course taught in English.
Citizenship	Within two years, I will develop the English skills needed to complete the English portion of the U.S. citizenship test.
Communication	Within two years, I will be able to explain my symptoms and ask my doctor questions in English without using an interpreter for routine appointments.
Family	Within two years, I will be able to have a 15-minute conversation in English with my child's teacher about schoolwork and progress.

Remember: A long-term goal may take several years to achieve. You can make smaller short-term goals to help you reach it.

Part 4: My Personal English Learning Goals

Name: _____

Date: _____

A. My Short-Term Goals

Think about something you want to accomplish in your English class this year.

Your goal should be specific, realistic, and something you can measure.

Complete the following sentences.

Short-Term Goal 1

I will _____

by _____.

Short-Term Goal 2 (Optional)

I will _____

by _____.

B. My Long-Term Goals

Think about your future.

Why are you learning English? What would you like to accomplish in the next two, three, or five years?

Complete the following sentences.

Long-Term Goal 1

Within _____ years, I will _____

_____.

Long-Term Goal 2 (Optional)

Within _____ years, I will _____

_____.

C. My Plan for Success

What will you do to help yourself achieve your goals?

I will _____

What can your teacher do to help you achieve your goals?

My teacher can _____
