

Goal Setting Lesson Plan

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Level: B1 and above

Age: Adults and older teens

- 1) Ask students to discuss the questions. Make sure that they know that this topic is life goals in general, not just English learning.
- 2) Show students the picture of February goals. Ask them to read them, and briefly discuss what they think about them.
- 3) Ask students to make their own life goals using the same stems. Tell them they don't need to be too serious. At this stage we are just trying to get them into the right frame of mind to start creating more serious goals later.
- 4) Show students **SWOT** analysis and ask them to read the table. Ask the students if anyone has ever used one in their life or work, and if not, you can read them this definition from Wikipedia:

“SWOT analysis is a strategic planning technique used to help a person or organization identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to business competition or project planning. It is designed for use in the preliminary stages of decision-making processes and can be used as a tool for evaluation of the strategic position of a city or organization.”

Ask them to discuss the questions together.

- 5) Ask students to note down a SWOT analysis in their notebooks. Be ready to make suggestions if they are struggling. These could include:

Strengths/weaknesses

Studying / aspects of language (pronunciation, grammar etc) / dedication / motivation

Opportunities/threats

Access to TV shows and movies / listening to podcasts / work or family commitments

- 6) Ask students to read some possible English student goals and discuss what they think about them. Don't give any feedback at this stage.

- 7) Introduce **SMART** objectives and ask if any of the students are familiar with them.

Here's the definition from Wikipedia:

“SMART is a mnemonic/acronym, giving criteria to guide in the setting of objectives, for example in project management, employee-performance management and personal development. The first-known use of the term occurs in the November 1981 issue of Management Review by George T. Doran. The principal advantage of SMART objectives is that they are easier to understand and to know when they have been done.”

Elicit guesses for what the letters could stand for.

8) Show the students what **SMART** stands for and explain each one:

Specific - We need to know exactly what we are doing. If it's too general, it's hard to do.

Measurable - We need a standard to measure against. If it's too open, how will we know when it's done?

Attainable - Is this something that you can do?

Relevant - Is it useful? Will it help you reach your general aim?

Time-based - There has to be a deadline or you can keep going forever!

9) Show the letters E and R and tell them that they will be using **SMARTER** goals. Elicit any ideas what the extra letters mean.

10) Show and explain:

Enjoyable - As far as it is possible, the student should want to do this and enjoy doing it.

Recorded - It has to be written down somewhere (We'll come back to this later)

11) Ask students to go back to the goals from stage 6 and ask them to reassess them using **SMARTER** criteria (although the final R isn't included here, for obvious reasons)

As a class go through them and talk about each one.

- I want to improve my English.
 - *Not specific (very general)*
 - *Not Measurable (if you learn one new word, you improve your English)*
 - *Not time-based.*
- I will speak English like a native speaker.
 - *Not specific (what is a native speaker? British? American? South African? Jamaican? These are all very different forms of English)*
 - *Not measurable (How can you judge this?)*
 - *Not attainable (Realistically, how many people can achieve this?)*
 - *Not relevant (Why is a native speaker a good model? Are they always a good model? How useful is this as standard? Is it useful to judge yourself against other people?)*

- *Not time-based.*
- I will pass a proficiency test like IELTS or FCE.
 - *Specific ✓*
 - *Measurable ✓ (you either pass or don't)*
 - *Attainable (depends on the level of the student)*
 - *Relevant (depends on the profile of the student. It may not be the best way for them to improve their English)*
 - *Not time-based.*
 - *Enjoyable (depends on the student)*
- I want to learn English so that I can communicate with native speakers.
 - *Specific ✓ (in a strange way)*
 - *Not measurable (how do you measure 'communicate'? Waving is communicating!)*
 - *Attainable (easily, if you wave at them!)*
 - *Not relevant (English is an international language, so it seems strange to me to restrict yourself to native speakers)*
 - *Not time based.*
- I will be able to read an English book all the way through without using a dictionary in the next month.
 - *Specific ✓ (if they choose a specific book)*
 - *Measurable ✓ (by finishing the book)*
 - *Attainable ✓ (with right choice of book. Graded readers mean that almost all levels of English learners can achieve this.)*
 - *Relevant ✓ (it's very helpful)*
 - *Time based ✓*
 - *Enjoyable ✓ (hopefully!)*
- I will make sure that my teacher is happy with me.
 - *Not specific or measurable (how do you measure a teacher's happiness?!)*
 - *Attainable (depends on the teacher!)*
 - *Not relevant (this isn't about the teacher, it's about the learner)*
- I will read one English language newspaper article everyday.
 - *Specific ✓*
 - *Measurable ✓*
 - *Attainable ✓ (depends on level, but if they choose the right website, it can be done)*
 - *Relevant ✓ (it's very helpful)*
 - *Time based ✓*
 - *Enjoyable ✓ (hopefully!)*
- I will be as good at English as my colleagues.
 - *Not specific (how good are you colleagues?)*
 - *Not measurable (are they a good measure? Maybe their English isn't that great!)*
 - *Not attainable (could be very easy if they are low level speakers, or almost impossible if they are highly fluent)*

- *Not really relevant (goals should be about you, not others)*
- *Not time based*

12) Ask students to write their own English goals in their notebook. They should work individually, as this is a personal activity. Remind them they need to be **SMARTER**. As they write them you should go around and give on the spot feedback on the language and the goals.

When they are finished, ask them to share their goals with their partner and discuss why they chose them.

13) Remind students that goals need to be recorded to be successful. Give out the goals form and ask them to complete it with their goals.

14) Tell your students that often in life, things don't work out the way we planned and that's okay, life happens! But it can be very helpful to think about these problems in advance so that we can deal with these issues before they happen. Ask them to think about these questions, individually and write their answers in their notebook. Remind them of the weaknesses and threats that they identified in their **SWOT** analysis.

This activity is designed to encourage reflection, so you should aim to create a calm and peaceful environment in the classroom. And don't rush them, make sure they have time to do the task properly.

15) Put the groups into small groups and ask them to discuss their reflections.

16) Collect their forms and after the class, if possible, put them up on the wall of your classroom. In the next lesson, ask students to look at their goals just to remind them.

Make sure you go back to the goals at regular intervals throughout the course and when necessary, ask students to renew and adjust them. Make them a regular part of your syllabus.