Goal Setting and Achievement

We will be covering:

• characteristics of goals
• how to break down goals
• where goal setting can go wrong
Goals should be...

- Realistic
  - Winning a marathon after two weeks of training is an unrealistic goal. Use what you’ve accomplished in the past to set a reasonable goal for the future.
Goals should be...

• Self-chosen
  – You are much more likely to achieve a goal that you set for yourself than one that has been set for you
Goals should be...

• Moderately difficult
  – A goal that is too hard or too easy will decrease your motivation and won’t show you what you’re really capable of accomplishing. Use what you’ve accomplished in the past as a guide
Goals should be...

• Specific
  – Getting an “A” in Math and a “B” in Geography is much more specific than just saying that you would like to get good grades this semester
Goals should be...

• Measurable
  – You’re more likely to keep up if you can see progress toward your goal. For example, getting an “A” on your midterm is measurable progress toward getting an “A” in the class.
Goals should be...

• Positive
  - Say what you do want to accomplish instead of what you don’t want to do. “I will attend all classes,” is much better than “I won’t skip any classes.”
Goals should be...

• Flexible
  – If it looks like you can’t reach your original goal, be flexible and redraw your plan
Goals should be...

• Associated with a deadline
  – When do you plan on accomplishing this goal, in a month, day, or year?
Goals should be...

• Written down
  – It will serve as a better reminder to keep you motivated
Where goal setting can go wrong

• When goal setting is disorganized
  – For example, keep personal and academic goals separate
Where goal setting can go wrong

• When goals are unrealistic
  – For example, becoming a company CEO immediately after graduation is an unrealistic goal
Where goal setting can go wrong

• Goals that are ‘beyond’ your control
  – For example, winning the lottery is definitely beyond your control
Where goal setting can go wrong

• When goals are vague
  – For example, “becoming successful” or “becoming a better student” are not clear goals to work toward.
Where goal setting can go wrong

• When you set too many goals
  – At any one time you should focus on achieving only three or four goals
How to break down and achieve goals

• See example
Summary

• Goals with certain characteristics will enable you to be more successful in goal setting and achievement.
• Breaking down large goals into parts will help you to see what steps you will need to complete on the way to accomplishing your goal.
Homework assignment: Apply what you’ve learned

- set an academic or personal goal
- select one personal or academic long-term goal and break it down to the steps you will need to achieve in the next year, next 6 months, next month, next week, and tomorrow. Use this chart to help.