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# Introduction

This Guide is for students who want to be better students. While this may initially sound daunting, know that becoming a better student is really about empowerment: you will build the skills and habits that allow you to tackle academic challenges more efficiently and effectively, whatever your skill level and whatever your goals may be.

And that's where this guide begins: how to set and achieve your goals. Building on this, you'll address several elements of academic success that are both practical and personal. On a practical level, you'll learn how to effectively organize your time, materials, and work environment, as well as improve your note-taking, class participation, essay writing, and test preparation. On a personal level, you'll better understand the psychology of learning, including how to recognize and reshape those thought patterns that stifle a healthy, productive work routine.

Throughout this Guide, you'll have the opportunity to learn from the latest research in education and psychology, track your progress in developing a stronger mindset, and start putting into practice powerful new strategies for learning.

## Each Lesson Has Five Components

### ▶ Checking In

In the first minutes of each session, you and your tutor will log into your grade portal to take note of newly entered grades. It's important for accountability to have your eyes on each week's progress.

### ▶ Lesson Objectives

"I can" or "I understand" statements that you should be able to make at the end of each lesson. These correspond with practical skills you're working to develop.

### ▶ Mindset Maker

This tracks and directs you towards three broad, primary character traits that successful students have and which you can develop throughout the curriculum:

**self-awareness**, **discipline**, and **resilience**. We'll talk more about these in the first session, but you can use the Mindset Maker in the corner of each lesson as a way to skip around the curriculum to develop a particular trait or track your progress in these areas.

#### MINDSET MAKER



Self-Awareness



Discipline



Resilience

### ▶ In-Session Activities



These are the "doing" part of the lesson. Your sessions will run with a healthy balance of instruction and collaboration. You'll be learning and practicing skills and techniques to apply to your study, both in and out of class.

### ▶ On Your Own



After each session, you'll receive homework to complete before the next session. In many cases, your assignment will be focused on developing your own understanding of the way you study, including keeping a calendar and budgeting time for work and play. In some sessions, your homework will be focused on maintaining systems you have developed to stay organized and manage your academic life.

## Additional Resources



At the end of the guide you can find additional copies or templates of some of the most useful tables and charts in the lessons ahead. Many of these are designed so that you can tear them out, make copies, or reference them easily. An icon within your lesson will point you in that direction.

LESSON ONE

# Defining Goals

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

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- ▶ I can set my goals.
- ▶ I can achieve my goals.
- ▶ I have my grade portal login and all of my teachers' emails.

MINDSET MAKER



## Bring these to your first session

- ▶ Email addresses for your teachers
- ▶ For each class, any syllabi or handouts that tell you about grading and assignments
- ▶ Your grade portal login information
- ▶ A folder or binder to keep additional Study Skills materials

## Checking In

CLASS	CURRENT GRADE	I NEED TO TURN IN	RECENTLY SUBMITTED

## Setting Goals

You came to tutoring for a reason, but sometimes that reason can be a bit cloudy. You are dissatisfied with something in your grades or study habits, but maybe you don't know how to clearly say what it is. Or, maybe you aren't sure how to fix it. In order to make your tutoring sessions count, your tutor and you need to know what it is you want to do; in other words, what are your goals?

## Set Yourself Up for Success

Achievable goals have three parts:

WHAT: Clearly and specifically define what you want to achieve.

WHEN: The deadline for doing that thing.

HOW: How you'll do that thing.

The best goals are small, with short timelines, actionable steps, and measurable results. You will be a much more effective goal-setter if you take on just one, achievable thing at a time. And, you'll know you reached your goal if you have a way to measure it, such as grades or an award.

So, if you want to get an A in Spanish this year, your goal would not look like this: "Get an A in Spanish." Instead, it would look like this:

WHAT: Get at least a 90% on the next Spanish vocabulary test.

WHEN: the next test date, March 13th.

HOW: 1. Create and study flashcards every day at breakfast until the test

2. Write the vocabulary words 5 times each day until the test

3. Do at least three practice tests in the week leading up to the test and write the words I missed 5 times each.

4. Do practice tests once a week until I score at least a 95%.



## Defining My Goals

Let's define your goals and give them those three parts: WHAT, WHEN, and HOW. As we work through these sessions, we will develop your capacity to identify useful steps in achieving a goal, so don't worry about getting it broken down perfectly. Use additional paper if you need more than one goal, but follow the What, When, and How model.

When you're done filling out the chart below, keep a copy somewhere where you can reference it easily and monitor your progress. You can then use this as a template for future goals.

I WANT TO	BY	STEPS
Get an A in Spanish	May '19	<p><i>TODAY</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make my own study guide of current chapter</li> <li>2. Make a Quizlet account</li> <li>3. Make current chapter vocab quizlet</li> </ol> <p><i>TOMORROW</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask Señora Rocco when the next test is: calendar it!</li> <li>2. Ask Jenny if she wants to study Span at lunch/Wednesdays</li> </ol> <p><i>PUT THESE ON MY CALENDAR:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All the quiz and test dates</li> <li>2. Reminders to add/study vocab to Quizlet on weekends</li> <li>3. Repeating every month</li> </ol>

## What You'll Need to Change

You came to tutoring to change something, right? Whether it is your grade point average or your ability to keep track of your schedule, you are here to accomplish your goals. There are three important ingredients that you will need in order to make them happen.



### Self-Awareness

Turn your analytical brain toward your own life and patterns. In order to change, you'll want to look at what you're doing now. Part of what you may be feeling is stuck—unable to make the changes you want, trapped in familiar patterns no matter what you do. To make effective change, it is important to identify and name your current patterns. How can you find your way out of a rut whose walls you can't see? We will spend a lot of time examining what you're doing now and how it is or is not serving you and your ultimate goals.



### Discipline

Good study habits require extreme attention to detail and great care in doing your work. You take responsibility for doing an excellent job. And, even if the teacher hasn't asked, you go the extra mile to make sure you are doing every last check to make sure the assignment is up to par. "A" students do this on a regular basis.



### Resilience

Developing new habits is not easy. To make long term changes, you'll need the courage and resolve to push past obstacles in order to win. If something blocks your way to studying hard or doing what you should do in a school day, you find a way through or around the obstacle. You make it happen.

You are about to face the challenge of meeting your goals, and you will need self-awareness, discipline, and resilience to conquer them.

The great news is that all of these are skills you can cultivate, not simply inborn gifts. The more you work at them, the better you become at exemplifying and exercising all three of these qualities in your life.

Let's begin with a thorough accounting of what your week looks like, hour by hour, which will improve your self-awareness and discipline. And, as you'll see, understanding how you use your time is going to be crucial for most study skills.