

Creating a Math Commitment and Goal

1. Brainstorm and list ideas to answer the following questions: What is one thing you could do every week that would allow you to succeed in your math class?

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

2. Choose one of your ideas, and use it to create a math goal below:

Read “How to Set a Goal” on the back of this sheet. Apply the *DAPPS* rule: Your idea should be rewritten with your partner asking you the following questions:

- (i) Is the goal **DATED**? It could be everyday, or three times per week, or every week)
- (ii) Is it **ACHIEVABLE**? Could someone achieve this if they tried hard?
- (iii) Is it **PERSONAL**? Is it your goal or someone else’s? Choose your own!
- (iv) Is it **POSITIVE**? Avoid goals such as, I will *not* miss class, but I *will* attend every class.
- (v) Is it **SPECIFIC**? Make specific goals with details versus generalizing.

Rewrite your revised goal here: _____

3. Now create a math commitment, write it, and read your commitment out loud three times.

I will _____

Sign your Name: _____

4. Ask your tutor the following: will you support me in following this commitment?

Success Strategies

How to Set a Goal

To be effective, a goal needs five qualities. You can remember them by applying the DAPPS rule. "DAPPS" is an acronym, a memory device in which each letter of the word stands for one of five qualities:

Dated. Effective goals have specific deadlines. A short-term goal usually has a deadline within a few months. A long-term goal generally has a deadline of a year or more, maybe even five or ten years away. As this date approaches, your motivation typically increases. This energy helps you finish strong. If you don't meet your deadline, you have an opportunity to examine what went wrong and create a new plan. Without a deadline, you might stretch the pursuit of a goal over your whole life, never reaching it.

Achievable. Effective goals are realistic. It's unrealistic to say you'll complete a marathon next week if your idea of a monster workout has been jogging around the block a few times a week. Still, if you're going to err, err on the side of optimism. When you set goals at the outer reaches of your present ability, stretching to reach them causes you to grow. Listen to other people's advice, but trust yourself to know what is achievable for you. Apply this guideline: "Is achieving the goal at least 50 percent believable to me?" If so, go for it.

Personal. Effective goals are your goals, not someone else's. Ask yourself if your current goals contribute to your personal dreams. If not, trade them in for goals of your own. You don't want to be lying on your deathbed some day and realize you have lived someone else's life. Trust that you know better than anyone else which goals and dreams are right for you.

Positive. Effective goals focus on what you do want rather than on what you don't want. So translate negative goals into positive goals. For example, a negative goal to stop being later to classes becomes a positive goal to arrive on time to every class. I recall a racecar driver who explained how he miraculously kept his spinning car from smashing into the retaining wall: "I kept my eye on the track, not the wall." Focus your thoughts and actions on where you do want to go rather than on where you don't want to go, and you, too, will stay on course.

Specific. Effective goals state outcomes in specific, measurable terms. It's not enough to say, "My goal is to do better this semester" or "My goal is to work harder at my job." How will you know if you've achieved these goals? What concrete evidence will you have? Revise your goals: "I will achieve a 3.5 or better grade average this semester. On my job, I will volunteer for all offerings of overtime." Being specific keeps you from fooling yourself into believing you've achieved a goal when, in fact, you haven't.

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