SMART OBJECTIVES

A goal is a statement about something you want to accomplish. A common goal is “I want to pass my class.” Objectives are short-term steps created to meet that goal. Research shows that you are much more likely to accomplish your goal if you set SMART objectives. Objectives should be SMART. That is, they should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.

Specific
A specific objective should focus on who, what, when, where, why:

- Who: Who is involved?
- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Where: Where will I physically be located when I work on this objective?
- When: When will I accomplish this objective?
- Why: What is the reason, purpose, or benefit of accomplishing this objective?

Bad example: I will pass my class.
Good example: I will spend 5 hours a week working on my readings so I can be informed on what quizzes and classwork will be about.

Measurable
How will you measure your goal? When you are able to measure your progress with objectives, you stay on track. Plus, it feels great to meet the objectives you set for yourself! To determine if your objectives are measurable, ask yourself:

1. How much effort will this take?
2. How many hours will I have to devote to this?
3. How will I know when I accomplish my objective?

The answers to these questions will help you determine your needs for success.

Attainable
When something is of vital importance to you, you prioritize it. How will you attain the objectives you set? Do you feel that your goals are attainable? If you don’t, you are establishing a pattern of self-defeat. Take a look at your mindset. You may not be where you want to YET, but if you decide your goals and objectives are important, you will figure out how to attain them. You may need to develop the attitudes, abilities, and skills to reach them.

Realistic
Both goals and objectives should be realistic. You must be willing to work toward achieving the objectives. You should set challenging goals for yourself. Challenging goals provide a high motivational force and are often easier to achieve than an easy goal, which exerts low motivational force. If you believe your goal can be accomplished, it probably can.

Timely
Goals and objectives require an end point. If you don’t set a time commitment, you will procrastinate.