

# Skills for Secondary School Success

*Directing My Learning and Working Well With Others*

December 10, 2025



# WELCOME

**In the chat, please add:**

- Your name
- Role
- Organization

**And think about for a moment:**

How did school help you prepare for your life?



**Introduction**  
**Voices From the Field**  
**Resource Exploration**

# What is Skills for Secondary School Success?

- A **free, evidence-based, classroom-ready program** designed to help young people strengthen the skills they need to meet academic and social challenges in school and beyond.
- Developed by Johns Hopkins University education researchers with federal support and years of input from classroom teachers, Skills for Secondary School Success helps students build the skills to thrive both academically and personally in middle and high school.
- Fosters **independence, goal setting, resilience, communication, collaboration, purpose, and future readiness**—key skills for long-term success and confident, self-managed learning.

# Why Skills for Secondary School Success?

## The Challenge:

- Educators across the country report: Too many students struggle to take ownership of their learning (Prothero, 2025)
- Growing need for self-regulation among students to better manage their learning, interactions with others, and decisions
- Employers and educators emphasize life-ready skills:
  - Communication
  - Collaboration
  - Perseverance
  - Critical thinking

*“This notion of self-directed learning, and upskilling and reskilling as the economy shifts... will separate folks who are going to be successful from folks who are going to struggle in a knowledge-based economy.”*

-David Adams, quoted in Education Week

# How Was Skills for Secondary School Success Developed?

- Grounded in the latest research on adolescent learning, motivation, and development
- Evidence-based and engaging classroom activities to build critical skills for school and life success
- Practice validated: Teachers who used and helped develop the program report the following:
  - Increased student engagement
  - Improved peer relationships
  - Stronger academic focus

# What Skills are Developed?

The learning materials are organized into five units:

**Unit 1: Learning with a Sense of Purpose**

**Unit 2: Confronting Challenges and Having a Growth Mindset**

**Unit 3: Managing My Learning**

**Unit 4: Interacting with Others as We Learn Together**

**Unit 5: Making a Difference in My Community and World**

# Skills for Secondary School Success has **Free Tools and Resources** Available for all Educators

- **Teacher Resources**
  - **Teacher's Manual:** Full curriculum and by-unit guides
    - 5 units, 40 lessons
- **Teacher Materials:** PowerPoints for every lesson
- **Student Materials:** Printable & online resources
  - Available in **English & Spanish**
- **Professional Development**
  - Asynchronous series with narrated PowerPoints for each unit



# How to Engage with Skills for Secondary School Success?

## Customize to Your Needs and Opportunities:

- Use as a semester long course or as part of one
- Use in advisory
- Use individual units or lessons to meet specific needs
- Teachers have successfully used the learning materials in grades 5 to 10 across all types of schools

## Student Learning Experience:

- Work both collaboratively and independently
- Culminating project: design a real-world proposal to make a difference in their community and world
- Lessons can be customized to reflect the backgrounds and experiences of students

# Voices From the Field: Panel Discussion With Educators

- Betsy Warner-Grand River Academy, Grand Junction, CO
- Aliyah Cohen-Grand River Academy, Grand Junction, CO



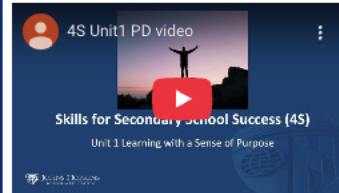
# Resource Exploration

Visiting the website:

<https://www.redesign.every1graduates.org/4smaterials/>



## Unit 1: Learning with a Purpose



### Watch the Unit Introduction Video

This video provides an overview of Unit 1, including an explanation of the standard structure for all lessons in the curriculum and a review of each of the seven lessons in Unit 1.

[Download Unit 1 Teacher's Manual](#)

[Download Complete Teacher's Manual](#)

Unit 1 Contains Seven Lessons

Teacher Files

Unit PowerPoints

Student Printable Files

Student Fillable Files

Classroom Materials

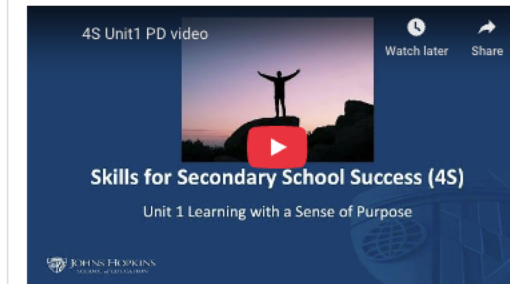
Unit Spanish PowerPoints

Unit Spanish Files

### Professional Development

In this module, you will learn about Unit 1 and the key activities included in each lesson within the unit. **To complete the module, please do the following:**

1. Watch the curriculum overview video below titled "4S Unit1 PD video."
2. Throughout the video, you will be asked to reflect on your answers to several questions. It will be helpful to **have a pencil/pen and paper** handy for this purpose.



Alternately or in addition, you can view and read the script for each slide individually by **downloading the file titled 4S Unit1 PD PPT**

# Lesson Exploration

## Managing My Learning Day 8: Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals





# Do Now

- Have you ever set a goal for yourself and reached it? Or have you ever set a goal that was unrealistic? What happened?

*Write your answer, then share your response with a partner.*







# Agenda

By the end of  
today's lesson  
you will be  
able to

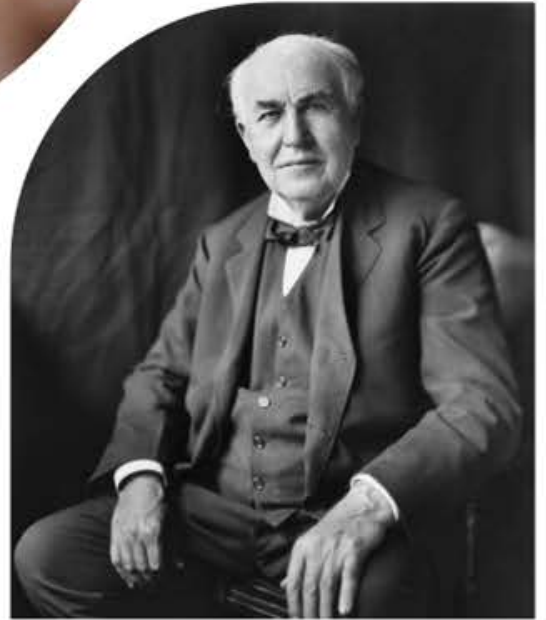
Name the steps to a  
S.M.A.R.T. goal

Identify appropriate goals  
to set

Set a S.M.A.R.T. goal



# The Value of Goals





**Team#1**



**Team#2**



**Team#3**



**Team#4**

# Breakout Rooms





Each team is prepared to:

Share a short summary of the biography

Read the quote to the class

State in your own words how your team  
thinks the quote applies to goals and  
goal-setting



**Team#1**



**Team#2**



**Team#3**



**Team#4**

**Share Out**



## Setting Goals: Why and How

### Introduction

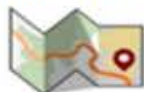
You have probably heard that setting goals is an important part of achieving your dreams. There are many reasons that goal setting is important to learn, especially while you're young.

### Why is this important for me?

Isn't this something for older people to do? It's never too early to start setting goals. In fact, you've probably already set and reached a few goals in your life. Have you ever saved up to buy something? Decided to study hard for a test and improved your grade? Decided to join a club or group even though you felt nervous? Then you have been setting—and achieving—goals. Goal setting is an important skill for your personal development. It will motivate you, help you think and plan for your future, and increase your chance of success in any area. As you experience the satisfaction of seeing progress and reaching your goals, you will feel more confident and be encouraged to set new goals. Setting goals and keeping a record of your progress helps make sure you are directing your energy toward the priorities you have set. Are you actually spending time on what you think is important? Or are you getting distracted by other things?



### What is the secret to success in setting and reaching goals?



Set your own goals rather than reacting to what is around you or following the crowd. Base your goals on your interests, talents, and values. Life is a journey—if you map out your goals, you'll know what direction to go!

### Why do I have to write down my goals?

You increase your chances of reaching your goals if you write them down. In one study, 46% of the people who had written down the previous year's goals achieved them. Only 4% of those who hadn't written down their goals achieved them. Writing down goals helps you decide what you want and create a plan to achieve it.

### How do I do it?

Ask yourself these questions:

- What is important to me?
- What do I find interesting?
- What makes me feel happy and fulfilled?
- What am I good at?
- What do I want to improve?

Answers to these questions will help you decide on areas where you want to set new goals.





# Partner Reading

## “Goal Setting: Why and How”

With your partner, answer the following questions.

- What is the value of goal setting?
- Why do we write down our goals?



**S.M.A.R.T.**  
**goals**  
**are...**





# S.M.A.R.T. goals are...

Unit 3 Lesson 8

Managing My Learning: Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Chart

What It Stands For	Notes and Examples
S _____	
M _____	
A _____	
R _____	
T _____	

# Planning Time

Take this time  
to fill out your  
S.M.A.R.T Goals  
Planning Sheet.





# Planning Time

Unit 3 Lesson 8

Managing My Learning: Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals

## S.M.A.R.T. Goals Planning Sheet

School Goal #1	
Specific	My goal is...
Measurable	I will measure it by...
Attainable	I know this is attainable because...
Relevant	This matters to me because...
Timely	I will finish this goal by...

School Goal #2	
Specific	My goal is...
Measurable	I will measure it by...
Attainable	I know this is attainable because...
Relevant	This matters to me because...
Timely	I will finish this goal by...

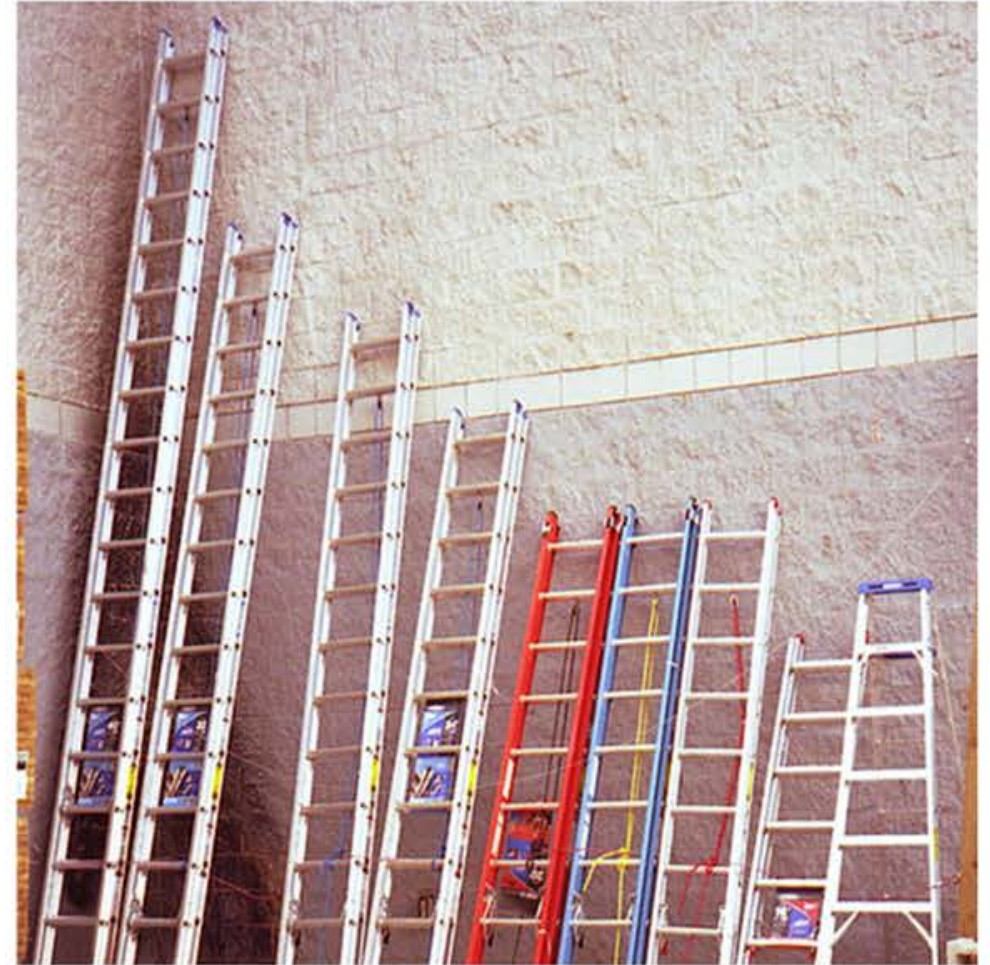






# Exit Ticket

- My first step to completing my S.M.A.R.T. goal is
- 



# Share Your Learning and Thoughts

- Reflections
- Questions
- Thoughts
- Considerations
- Wonderings



# Access and Availability of Skills for Secondary School Success

- All of the materials are available for FREE  
<https://www.redesign.every1graduates.org/4smaterials/>
- Visit the Skills for Secondary School Success website:  
<https://www.redesign.every1graduates.org/4s/>
- Contact us with questions: [info@every1graduates.org](mailto:info@every1graduates.org)  
Website contact: Gregg Howell [ghowell@jhu.edu](mailto:ghowell@jhu.edu)



# Onward and Be Well



**Thank you from the EGC Team**