

Lesson Plan: Goal Setting

Grade band: 4th

Subject: Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Duration: 60 minutes

Montana Whole Child Competencies:

- **MTSEL.9-12.2.g** Implement strategies that promote progress toward short- and long-term goals on both a personal and academic basis

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Choose one word to set either a short-term or a long-term goal
- Identify possible ways to achieve the goal

Materials:

- Notebook paper (1 sheet per student)
- Post-It paper
- Crayons
- "One Word for Kids" by Jon Gordon

Lesson Outline:

1. Initial Engagement: (5 minutes)

- Ask students to think of one thing they're currently working on getting better at (a skill, a habit, a subject, a relationship, anything).
- Then ask: "What are you doing to try to get better at it?"
- Optional follow-up: "Who or what has helped you along the way?" – This question helps students recognize that achieving a goal doesn't have to be a lonely journey.

2. Explicit Instruction: (10 minutes)

- Based on students' answers, explain that a **goal** is a target or result they want to achieve.
- Explain that setting a goal helps motivate us to take actions that move us closer to it. One way we do this is by **making it easier to do helpful things** and **making it harder to do things that get in our way**:

- *Example (making it easier/ reduce barriers):* If your goal is to exercise more, you could use an app on your phone to track your exercise hours, which helps remind and motivate you.
- *Example (making it harder to do/ increase friction):* If your goal is to reduce social media exposure, you could put your phone in another room and turn it off before bed time.

3. Guided Practice: (15 minutes)

- Briefly explain to students: “We are going to read the book called, *One Word for Kids* where a teacher gives her students an assignment to find one word that will help them have the best year ever. As you are listening to the story, I want you to think about how the characters chose their words to help them navigate different challenges.
- Read the story, *One Word for Kids* or play the [digital book](#) video on YouTube for the kids to listen along to
- After the story is finished, ask, “Why do you think picking just one word is so powerful?”
- Guide students to the conclusion that while the main character was searching for his one word, he learned a lot about himself, what he loves, and what is most important to him

4. Collaborative Activity: (15 minutes)

- **Form groups.** Divide students into small groups and give each group a large piece of poster paper (or several sticky notes/chart paper combined).
- **Set a shared goal.** As a group, students discuss collective goals they'd like to see happen at school (e.g., "make the playground more welcoming for new students" or "help our class read 100 books together").
- **Draw the roadmap.** Using crayons or markers, groups draw a roadmap from their starting point to their goal, using color and symbols to represent key ideas, such as:
 - **Mountain** = the success point (reaching the goal)
 - **Bridge** = people or resources who can help along the way
 - **Rocks** = barriers or challenges they might face
(*Encourage groups to invent their own symbols too*)
- **Display the roadmaps.** Each group picks a spot in the classroom to post their roadmap, creating a "gallery" of goal maps around the room.

5. Independent Activity: (12 minutes)

- Briefly explain the instructions for the independent activity: “Today we are going to choose our own powerful word that we want to use as a compass each day to guide us to being our best selves. On your notebook paper, answer the following questions to help you choose which word is best for you.” Teachers can write the following questions on the board:
 - What is a personal challenge you want to overcome?
 - What character trait do you want to practice more or become better at?
 - Identify at least two ways you can work to achieve this goal

6. Closing: (3 minutes)

Invite students to share the word they chose and how they will accomplish this goal. Conclude the class by emphasizing that setting a goal gives people clear directions to work toward and can motivate us to take action to achieve it.