

About This Unit

Children who use a growth mindset—the belief that they can improve with practice and effort—do better in school, handle school transitions better, and are less likely to show aggression than children who believe that their abilities and personalities are fixed.^{1,2} Setting goals and making plans to improve based on a growth mindset are associated with increases in self-efficacy,^{3,4} positive personal relationships,^{5,6} increased empathy,⁵ and prosocial behavior.^{4,7,8} This unit teaches the importance of making mistakes while learning, the brain science behind learning, growth mindset strategies, and a goal-setting process that can be applied to group or personal goals. Refer to the Second Step Elementary digital program Review of Research for additional information.

Progression of Skills and Knowledge Across the Grades

From Kindergarten through Grade 2, Unit 1 lessons are designed to help students develop the skills needed to pay attention and avoid distractions. Students are also introduced to growth mindset language as a useful tool for encouraging themselves and others. Lessons highlight the importance of practice and effort—and the value of making mistakes—when it comes to learning something new.

Grade 3 introduces the brain science behind learning, practice, and planning. With this foundation, Grades 4 and 5 shift to focus on the goal-setting process. Students first work to develop a class goal and plan in Grade 4. In Grade 5, they set personal goals and create plans to achieve them. Growth mindset language and strategies for getting better at something are reinforced throughout Grades 3, 4, and 5 as students follow through on reaching their goals.

Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming or showing behaviors that help them pay attention (e.g., turning toward the speaker, listening, watching, staying quiet) • Suggesting kind words to encourage themselves when they make a mistake • Suggesting kind words to encourage others when they make a mistake • Naming “practice” and “keep trying” as ways to get better at something
Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to pay attention while learning something new (e.g., turning toward the speaker, watching and listening carefully, not talking) • Behaving in ways help them manage distractions (e.g., changing places, taking deep breaths, reminding themselves to pay attention) • Practicing and trying again in order to improve a new skill • Using helpful thoughts to encourage themselves when they make a mistake
Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the benefit of making mistakes • Identifying strategies to use after making a mistake • Identifying helpful and unhelpful thoughts in a given context • Replacing unhelpful thoughts with helpful thoughts

Progression of Skills and Knowledge Across the Grades

Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming a repeated action they can do to practice a skill • Identifying who they can learn from or other ways they can try to learn a skill • Explaining what happens in their brain when they practice a skill
Grade 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting a group goal that is specific, challenging, and doable • Making a plan to reach a group goal • Evaluating progress toward reaching a group goal • Identifying roadblocks that may be getting in the way of achieving a group goal • Making changes to overcome roadblocks • Responding to reflection questions
Grade 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting a personal goal that meets the given criteria • Making a plan to reach a goal • Evaluating progress towards reaching a goal and identifying roadblocks that may be getting in the way • Making changes to overcome roadblocks • Responding to reflection questions

Grade 4 Lessons at a Glance

The Unit 1 lessons in Grade 4 are designed to teach students a goal-setting process that they will apply as they work toward a 2-week class goal.

As students collaborate to identify and work toward a group goal, you can support their developing sense of identity and appreciation of diversity. There will be multiple opportunities to encourage students to express their ideas respectfully, listen carefully to one another, and work together even when they disagree. The Prep & Extend documents give specific examples of when and how to do this.

The unit ends with Lesson 5, a performance task, where students demonstrate the skills and knowledge they learned throughout this unit. They will apply the full goal-setting process to set and work toward a 10-minute group goal. A performance task rubric is included as part of the lesson to help you determine if the class is meeting the goals of the unit. To learn more about the benefits of performance tasks and how to use them in Second Step programs, refer to **What Are Performance Tasks?** on [SecondStep.org](https://www.SecondStep.org).

By teaching students all components of each weekly lesson, in this order, they will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to meet the goals of this unit.

Grade 4 Lessons at a Glance, continued

	Title	Objective	Key Concepts & Skills	Vocabulary	Resources
Lesson 1	Setting a Good Goal	With adult support, students will be able to use criteria to identify a good class goal.	<p>Students will practice setting a goal that is specific, challenging, and doable.</p> <p>A goal is specific if you'll know when you've reached it.</p> <p>A goal is challenging but doable if it's not too easy or too hard, and you have what you need to do it.</p>	Goal (n.) something you want to achieve in a certain amount of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Handout
Lesson 2	Making a Plan	With adult support, students will be able to make a plan to reach a class goal.	<p>We're more likely to achieve the things we want if we set a goal and make a plan to reach it.</p> <p>Students will practice creating a plan that includes actions, materials, and what to do if help is needed.</p>	Plan (n.) a set of actions that help you reach a goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Handout
Lesson 3	Checking Our Progress	With adult support, students will be able to evaluate progress toward a class goal so they can make adjustments if needed.	<p>Roadblocks can get in the way of reaching a goal, but there are ways to overcome them.</p> <p>Students will practice identifying roadblocks that are getting in the way of reaching their goal.</p> <p>Students will practice checking progress toward reaching their goal and making changes to the plan or goal, if needed.</p>	Roadblock (n.) something that gets in the way of achieving your goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Handout
Lesson 4	Reflecting On Our Journey	With adult support, students will be able to reflect on the goal-setting process and say what they would do next time.	<p>Students will practice responding to reflection questions to identify what worked, what didn't work, and what they could do next time.</p> <p>Reflecting on a goal-setting process can improve how you set and work toward goals in the future.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Handout
Lesson 5	Performance Task: Read, Set, Goal!	Students will be able to apply the goal-setting process to a group goal and reflect on how it went.	<p>The goal-setting process can apply to big and small goals.</p> <p>Students will practice working with a group to apply the goal-setting process to a 10-minute goal.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Handout

References

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