

B-1: Set big goals

Prioritize your learning goals

It is tremendously helpful to identify what is most central and important for your grade level and course as you begin to set a big goal. There are a lot of learning goals for your grade level or course, so it's critical that you know which of them deserve particular focus.

1) **Obtain a list of your grade-level learning goals, and quickly review it.**

- Depending on your state and district, you may already have a list of learning goals, or may have to break down standards into learning goals.
- The best source for your list of grade level learning goals is your school district. They often provide the most useful and specific information in the form of a curriculum guide. If you don't already have a hard copy, you can check their website and print off a copy of your specific curriculum guide.
- You can also obtain a list of your learning goals on your state's Department of Education website. This isn't the best option since your state may not have grade-specific information you need. However, having the list from your state will at least get you started. You will want to get a more detailed copy from your district as soon as you can.

2) **Answer the following questions while reading through each learning goal again. If the answer to any question is "yes," you will want to prioritize the learning goal.**

To gauge...	Ask yourself...	Example
Endurance	Will this learning goal provide students with knowledge and skills that will be of value beyond a single test date?	Writing proficiency will endure throughout a school career and professional life.
Leverage	Will this learning goal provide knowledge and skills that will be of value in multiple fields of study?	The ability to create graphs and charts as well as draw accurate conclusions from them will help students in math, science, social studies, and language arts.
Readiness	Will this learning goal provide students with essential knowledge and skills that are necessary for success in the next grade or level of instruction? *To answer this, you may have to cross-reference the learning goals for the grade above your grade.	A third grader must be proficient in 3rd grade level reading comprehension to enter the fourth grade and pursue 4th grade-level studies with success.
Prioritized by State	Did the state prioritize this learning goal? Your list of state-mandated learning goals trumps any list that you create.	The learning goal did not fall under "endurance," "leverage" or "readiness," but the state prioritized it.

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3) Review your set of prioritized (and de-prioritized) learning goals again with a critical eye to finalize your list.

- Consult with veteran teachers, teachers at excellent schools, your department head, etc.
- Scrutinize student work from a school widely regarded as excellent. This will allow you to get a more holistic sense of what grade-level work looks like and whether your prioritized learning goals will set your students up to perform at that level.