



# Setting & Achieving Goals

Recommended  
for girls 10  
and up

# Setting & Achieving Goals

Because girls often struggle with confidence and fear making mistakes, they are less likely to take risks. Adapted from the national nonprofit, Girls Leadership, this activity is a great tool to help girls break their goals down into achievable steps, so they can see a path from where they are to where they want to go. It's designed to use with individual or groups of girls ten-years-old and up.

## GOALS FOR GIRLS:

- Learn the qualities of an effective goal
- Practice setting goals and identifying the steps to achieving those goals

## MATERIALS:

- Step-by-step instructions
- Sample talking points (but feel free to use your own words!)
- Activity handout

**ESTIMATED TIME:** 30-40 minutes



# Step 1:

## Introduce the topic of goals

ESTIMATED TIME: 5 minutes

Engage the girl in your life in a lively discussion about goals. You can use these questions as conversation starters:

- “ • *Why is it important to have goals in our lives?*
- *Agree or disagree: To be a good leader, you must have goals.*
  - *What is a goal you have for this year? Or what is an example of a goal someone your age might have for this year?* ”

Take a moment and explain why goals are important. Here's some language to use as a starting point:

“ *Being a leader is about having a vision for change—and encouraging ourselves, and the people around us, to work hard to bring that vision to life. By setting goals for ourselves, with a timeline and steps to get there, we get closer to creating the change we want.*

*Goal setting is an important life and leadership skill. When you know how to set goals, you get much closer to making them a reality.* ”

**Goal setting matters. When we set specific goals, we're more likely to achieve them.**

## Step 2:

### Explain how to translate dreams into goals

ESTIMATED TIME: 5-10 minutes

Start by asking her a question:

“How are goals different from dreams?”

Let her contribute several responses, then explain the difference between goals and dreams:

“Goals help us realize our dreams—they are the steps between us and what you imagine could be possible. Goals are different from dreams because they are more concrete and achievable. While I might dream of going to the moon someday, my goal would be to get an A in Physics.

A good goal is specific and objective, so it's easy to see the results, and I recommend we focus on short-term goals that can be accomplished in one year.”

Push girls to  
dream big but set  
realistic goals for  
themselves.

#### QUICK TIP:

Share a dream you had when you were a girl. Then ask the girl you're working with to share her dream and applaud her courage when she does.

#### EXAMPLES OF DREAMS VS. GOALS

---

##### Dream

I want to run in the Olympics

##### Goal

I want to run JV track this spring

---

---

##### Dream

I want to be a great teacher

##### Goal

I want to be a mentor to younger students

---

## Step 3:

### Explain how to set personal goals

ESTIMATED TIME: 5-10 minutes

Now that she understands the difference between dreams and goals, explain how to break goals down into smaller, attainable steps. **For example, you can say:**

“ Sometimes goals seem so big that it’s almost impossible to imagine how you’ll accomplish them. By breaking a goal down into smaller steps, we can take on new and sometimes scary things in smaller pieces. This allows us to feel a little braver, and makes it more likely that we won’t give up. ”

**Distribute the attached handout and introduce the activity to her. For example, you can say:**

“ We’re going to practice breaking down our goals into smaller steps. The steps to a goal can be any size—small and easy, or large and difficult. We’re going to organize the steps into three groups—which we’ll call risk zones—based on how nervous they make us. Then we’ll each pick the first step we’re going to take! ”

The concept of risk zones may be new to her, so spend time walking her through each zone. Start with the definitions below and then use the examples on the sidebar or others you create together.

- **Your Comfort Zone:** Feels easy to do—no problem!
- **Your Low Risk Zone:** Makes you feel a little nervous—but not terrified!
- **Your High Risk Zone:** Makes you so nervous now that it’s hard to imagine trying—but maybe you can!

#### EXAMPLE OF BREAKING A GOAL INTO RISK ZONES

##### Goal

Be in a school play

##### Comfort Zone

Talk to members of drama club and find out what it’s like

##### Low Risk Zone

Talk to drama teacher about what it takes to audition

##### High Risk Zone

Audition for play

**Make sure she understands that we all have different comfort zones. She—and only she—should decide what feels right to her.**



## Step 4:

### Complete the handout & debrief

ESTIMATED TIME: 15-20 minutes

Ask her to complete the handout, which prompts her to fill in four things:

- 1. Her dream:** What she imagines is possible—a big, bold vision
- 2. Her goal:** What she can do in the next year on her way to her dream
- 3. Her steps:** The steps she can take to reach her goal, organized by how risky each step feels
- 4. Her first step:** The first step she is comfortable taking toward her goal

Sit beside her while she works and push her to be as specific and realistic as possible with her goals—and her tolerance for risk.

When she's done, ask her to share her goal and the first step she's going to take toward reaching it. Thank her for sharing and celebrate her commitment to try something new. **Wrap up the activity with some additional words of encouragement:**

“*Having dreams is a thrilling part of growing up and imagining your future. Making them a reality takes hard work and practice. When you have the skills to break your dream down into goals, and break your goals down into smaller steps, you create your own road map for success!*”

**Every journey begins with a single step! By breaking goals into small steps, girls build confidence and get closer to reaching their goals...and their dreams.**

#### QUICK TIP:

Highlight a few famous women and men who realized their dreams to inspire her and emphasize all the hard work and smaller achievements it took to get them there.



## About “Together Women Can”

“Together Women Can” is a public awareness campaign from LeanIn.Org celebrating the power of women supporting each other—and the amazing things we accomplish when we do. Visit [leanin.org/together](https://leanin.org/together) for more information and celebrate the women who **#LeanInTogether** with you on social media.

## About Girls Leadership

Girls Leadership teaches girls the skills to know who they are, what they believe, and how to express it, empowering them to create change in their world. Girls Leadership works not only with girls, but also with their primary influencers—parents, teachers, and caregivers—to create sustainable impact.

[girlsleadership.org](https://girlsleadership.org)

# Ready, Set, Goal!

## 1. Fill in your dream

What you imagine is possible—a big, bold vision

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Dream big  
but set a  
realistic goal  
for yourself.**

## 2. Fill in your goal

What you can do in the next year  
on your way to the dream

---

---

---

---

---

---



### 3. Fill in your steps

Break your goal into steps and organize them into these three risk zones.

#### Steps in My Low Risk Zone

Makes you feel a little nervous—but not terrified!

---

---

---

---

---

#### Steps in My Comfort Zone

Feels easy to do—no problem!

---

---

---

---

---

#### Steps in My High Risk Zone

Makes you so nervous now that it's hard to imagine trying—but maybe you can!

---

---

---

---

---

### 4. Circle Your First Step

Read through the steps in all three risk zones and circle the one you feel comfortable doing first.