

# Lesson 1: Setting Goals

This morning you knew the things you had to do, the places you had to go, and the people you wanted to interact with. No doubt you made plans about what you would do, where you would go, and who you would see. Some of these plans were probably controlled by other people or institutions; others were definitely your choices. As well, something unexpected might have come up that led to a change of plans.

Although your life—like plans—will keep changing and happening no matter what, you want to have some control over how it turns out. The best way to control where your life goes is to have a life plan. It does not need to be a complex plan, but it should be realistic and flexible. Your plan might be short-term, such as making social plans for tonight or planning the steps needed to finish that essay assignment by Thursday. Other plans stretch into the near future, such as deciding on your courses for the next semester or sorting out how you will get ready for the music recital in a couple of months. Then there are the plans that stretch into the far future. What do you plan to do after high school? Do you plan to go on to post-secondary education? What plans do you have for your future lifestyle? What is your plan for a career? Planning for the future involves setting goals.



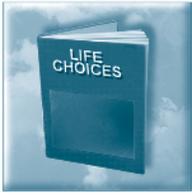
## Goals

Goals are the ends or aims toward which you direct effort. You choose to work toward a personal goal, whether it is something you want to own, something you want to do or experience, or some way in which you want to live.

You make choices about your life based on your goals. Goals reflect your needs and desires; they allow you to act upon your personal values and expectations. In a way, they are pictures of standards you set for yourself.

<sup>1</sup> Judith Campbell *Lifechoices: Careers Teacher Resource* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Ginn Canada, 1999), 54. Reprinted with permission by Pearson Canada.

There are things you can do today that can help you achieve your long-term career goals. The first step is to try to come up with clear goals to work toward.



You may find it helpful at this point to reread “Go for Your Goals” on pages 6 and 7 of *Careers*. This article provides some examples of school and career plans, personal growth goals, health goals, and financial goals. As well, the article explains how setting goals can help you maintain balance in your life.



As you define your personal goals, it is important to remember the following:

- A goal should feel natural and comfortable.
- A goal can change as you grow and learn more.
- A goal should have a potential action plan; it should not be obviously impossible.
- A short-term goal is usually completed within three months to a year. (It may, of course, be completed within a shorter time frame.)
- Long-term goals are usually those that extend into the future and represent ideas that are personally important and valuable. As situations change, these goals are continually revised and expanded. Action plans may not be quite as clear for long-term goals as for short-term goals. A long-term goal requires careful planning and effort if it is to be reached.

## Goal Setting



**Ashley:** I recognize the importance of setting goals, but I'm not sure how to go about actually doing it.

**Mr. Romanchuk:** The process for setting goals is very similar to the process for decision making, which you worked through in Module 1. Following are strategies you can use to help you with your goal setting.

- Identify the goal and state it as clearly as possible. In fact, write it out in enough detail so that it is understandable and can be reread when it is necessary to refocus.
- Accept responsibility for the goal—make it your own.
- Make a plan of action with definite target dates.
- Review actions along the way.
- Make changes to the goals when needed.

**Mr. Romanchuk:** Now take these general ideas about setting goals and make a concrete set of goals for achieving the career you have chosen. Be sure your goals are realistic, meaning that they are reachable. Be ready to make changes, and be flexible.

Before continuing with this lesson, it might be a good idea to review the Goal-setting skills in Module 1: Section 1, Lesson 4.

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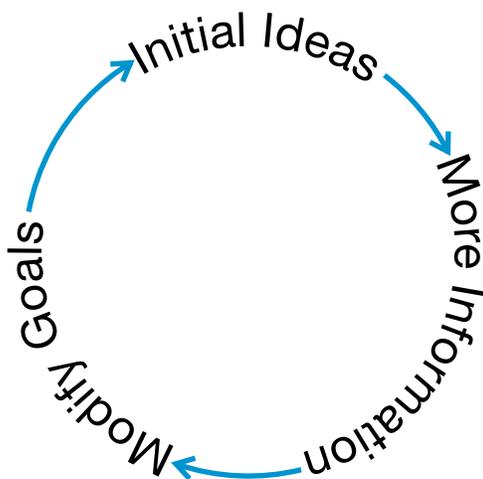
<sup>1</sup>Judith Campbell, *Lifechoices: Careers Teacher Resource* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Ginn Canada, 1999), 81. Reprinted with permission by Pearson Canada.

## Developing a Career Plan

A career plan involves setting out the short-term and long-term goals you need to achieve a chosen career. Developing a career plan includes the following elements:

- choose an educational program, an occupation, and a career path
- decide on the goals necessary to meet those choices
- set target dates and timelines
- decide what and how to make changes, if they are needed

A plan of action is needed to move with purpose toward your goal. Building an action plan requires that you divide the bigger steps into specific tasks with set deadlines. You will find that this is a circular process. You begin with initial ideas. As you find more detailed information, or learn more about yourself, you will modify your goals and action plans. Sometimes you may change goals and plans completely.



Ask yourself the following questions about each goal. Identify a timeline for each one.

- What major actions do I need to take to get to my goal?
- What are the detailed things I need to do to complete each major action?
- What do I need to learn to get to my goal?
- What resources do I need to have to get to my goal? (money? skills? education?)
- Where will I get each of these resources?
- How will I plan my time? (make a schedule)
- What do I need to do next?

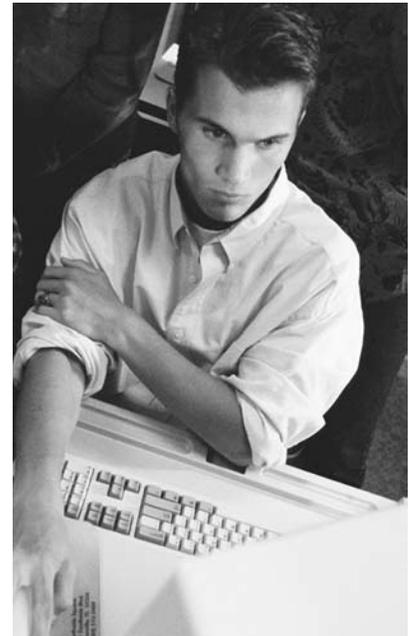
<sup>1</sup> Judith Campbell, *Lifechoices: Careers Teacher Resource* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Ginn Canada, 1999), 81. Reprinted with permission by Pearson Canada.

## What Education or Training Will I Need?

The educational requirements of a career will be one of the main elements to consider in any plan. The academic requirements for admission to post-secondary programs will vary; the lengths and costs of the programs will vary. Do some preliminary exploration of programs that you will need to pursue your career. Finding the requirements will determine the educational goals you need to meet. Start with the following website:

**<http://www.jobfutures.ca>**

You can do searches for colleges and universities in Alberta. A number of sites include up-to-date lists of institutions, both public and private. Here is a list of websites for key public post-secondary educational institutions in Alberta:



Alberta College of Art and Design: **<http://www.acad.ab.ca/>**  
Athabasca University: **<http://www.athabascau.ca/>**  
Bow Valley College: **<http://www.bowvalleycollege.ca/>**  
Concordia University College of Alberta: **<http://www.concordia.ab.ca/>**  
Grande Prairie Regional College: **<http://www.gprc.ab.ca/>**  
Keyano College: **<http://www.keyano.ca/>**  
King's University College: **<http://www.kingsu.net/Default.aspx>**  
Lakeland College: **<http://www.lakelandc.ab.ca/>**  
Lethbridge Community College: **<http://www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca/>**  
MacEwan College: **<http://www.macewan.ca/web/home/index.cfm>**  
Medicine Hat College: **<http://www.mhc.ab.ca/>**  
Mount Royal College: **<http://www.mtroyal.ab.ca/>**  
Norquest College: **<http://www.norquest.ab.ca/>**  
Northern Lakes College: **<http://www.northernlakescollege.ca/>**  
Olds College: **<http://www.oldscollege.ca/>**  
Portage College: **<http://www.portagec.ab.ca/>**  
Red Deer College: **<http://www.rdc.ab.ca/>**  
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology: **<http://www.nait.ca/>**  
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology: **<http://www.sait.ab.ca/>**  
University of Alberta: **<http://www.ualberta.ca/>**  
University of Calgary: **<http://www.ucalgary.ca/>**  
University of Lethbridge: **<http://www.uleth.ca/>**

For details on apprenticeship programs go to **<http://www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca/>**.  
NAIT and SAIT sites also have information about apprenticeships.

1. Research two career options that you are attracted to or research more than two options if you have not yet been able to narrow down your choices. Research the calendars or course offerings of one of the institutions, either online, in your school counselling office, your school library, or a local employment office. Find out about the programs offered at this institution for your chosen careers.

- What are the admission requirements?
- Where is the program offered?
- What is its time commitment?
- What are the costs involved?

Record your findings in a chart similar to the following. Be sure to leave plenty of space for your answers.

Career	Institution	Program	Requirements	Costs

Compare your answers with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.

You will return to this information later when you begin creating a plan to meet your career and educational goals.

## What Skills Will I Need?

You have already assessed and documented your skills and strengths. Look closely now at the skills required by your chosen careers. Assess how the skills you possess match the skills required. Are there skills that you need to develop or improve to succeed? If so, you will need to set goals to build those skills.

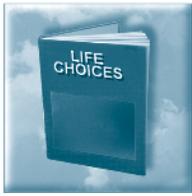


Look carefully at your bank of transferable skills. Do some of them apply to skills required in your chosen career?

The following chart shows examples of skills learned at home or school that could be applied at work.

<b>Skill Area</b>	<b>Examples of Skills Used at Home and in the Community</b>	<b>How Skills Transfer to the Workplace</b>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• math tutor</li> <li>• reading buddy</li> <li>• newsletter editor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain concepts to others</li> <li>• read with understanding</li> <li>• write persuasively</li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community club volunteer</li> <li>• peer mediator</li> <li>• new student</li> <li>• welcome wagon volunteer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• express feelings appropriately</li> <li>• withstand and resolve conflict</li> <li>• sensitive to cultural differences</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basketball team member</li> <li>• peer mediating co-chair</li> <li>• camp counsellor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appreciate/reward peers' efforts</li> <li>• bring reason to a problem</li> <li>• motivate others</li> </ul>
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alter recycled clothing</li> <li>• resolved a scheduling conflict at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• see all sides of a situation</li> <li>• open-minded</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changed schools twice</li> <li>• created new system of team playoffs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accept change as a challenge</li> <li>• tackle problems with optimism</li> </ul>
<b>Self-management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use a planner</li> <li>• earn own spending money</li> <li>• prepare meals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate the need to achieve</li> <li>• resourceful</li> <li>• creative</li> </ul>
<b>Initiative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• found own mentor</li> <li>• started babysitting co-op</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify untried possibilities</li> <li>• carry out ideas</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Judith Misener and Susan Butler, *Exploring Your Horizons* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1998) 156-157. Reproduced with permission of McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd.



To become more familiar with the skills that are expected by many employers, read “Employability Skills Profile: The Critical Skills Required of the Canadian Workforce” on page 46 of *Careers*. The list focuses on academic, personal management, and teamwork skills. This article will help you answer the next question.

2. Create a chart like the one that follows. Choose one of your career possibilities. In the first column, list four skills needed in that career. Think about the skills, including transferable skills, that you have developed through your home life, your school life, and in recreational activities. In the next three columns, check off whether you possess the career skill, whether you need to improve the skill, or whether it is a completely new skill that you need to develop.

Skills Required by Career	Possess Skill At Necessary Level	Need to Develop Further	Need to Develop New Skill

3. Take the educational requirements, financial needs, and necessary career skills from questions 1 and 2. Use them to write a list of goals that need to be accomplished in order to move into your chosen career.

**Compare your answers with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.**

Go to page 1 of Assignment Booklet 3B and respond to question 1 of Section 3.

## Looking Back; Looking Ahead

In this lesson, you discovered the importance of goal setting in developing a career plan. You researched the requirements of your chosen careers, in particular the educational programs needed, the financial costs of the education, and the skills that you need to develop. You then wrote each of these in terms of goals you need to achieve in order to move into your chosen career. In the next lesson, you will develop short-term plans to achieve those goals.

## Suggested Answers

1. The information you identify will depend on the program and institution you select. Check to ensure that you have included the following:
  - **Focus of the program:** What kinds of courses are mandatory for the program? What optional courses are available? What is the range of choices in course selections? How much flexibility is there in choosing optional courses?
  - **Requirements:** What high school courses are needed? What are the minimum grades required? What other skills would benefit you in this program? What activities and experiences would enhance an application to this program? Are there limitations on registration, i.e., is there a quota on the number of students allowed into the program?
  - **Cost:** How much is tuition? Do you have to buy your books? Will you have to live away from home? What will you use for transportation?
2. Creating this kind of chart is an effective way of summarizing and assessing your skills. The chart helps you to set goals for acquiring new skills.
3. Lists will depend on the career you've chosen and the programs you researched. Suppose, for example, you would like to become a teacher. You searched through the sites of various educational institutions to see their programs. You might be interested in the University of Lethbridge program. Your list might include the following elements:
  - **Educational requirements:** Find the admission requirements and list those. One of your goals will then be to achieve the entrance requirements. You can break that larger goal down to setting smaller goals to pass each high school course required.
  - **Financial needs:** Find the costs of the program. Note also the cost of tuition and books for the four-year program and list those costs. The cost of attending the university for four years requires that you set the goal of acquiring that money. You might state your goal to save a certain amount. Another goal might be to get a job to make needed money. Another goal might be to achieve a certain average to qualify for a scholarship.
  - **Career skills:** What are the skills you need to move into the career you have chosen? Have you listed goals to help you achieve the skill levels required for the career?

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