



## Student-Tutor Goal Setting Conferences

**Purpose:** Tutoring programs establish a process for planning, conducting, and following up on goal-setting conferences. Use this adaptable framework as a starting point based on student age, subject, and program needs. Conversations build on existing goals set with families, teachers, or schools to personalize and guide student progress.

### Why have goal setting conferences?

One-on-one goal-setting conferences help students take ownership of their learning. With coaching support, tutors guide students in clarifying goals, creating action plans, and reflecting on progress—making it easier to share updates with families and teachers. This agenda supports tutors in preparing for the conference, facilitating student reflection, and connecting strengths and challenges to actionable next steps.

### Lenses

There are five lenses for thinking about goal setting conferences that help increase tutor efficacy:

1. **Specific & Measurable:** The more specific and concrete the data on which a tutor focuses the conference, the easier it will be for students to identify their strengths and struggles and connect these to their actions during tutoring.
2. **Growth Mindset:** Making explicit connections between student effort and student academic progress/mastery helps students develop a growth mindset.
3. **Reducing Stigma:** If participation is required, students may feel a stigma attached to the idea of going to tutoring. Helping students see tutoring as support, not punishment, will boost student engagement.
4. **Stakeholder Support:** Sharing goals and progress with students' teachers/families helps provide holistic support.
5. **Student Agency:** The more the student can lead the conversation, the more authentic their reflection will be, the more invested they will be in their action plan, and the more likely they will be to follow through on action steps.



## Before the Conference

Tutors and students independently review recent assessments or assignments, reflecting on the actions that led to the outcomes. This helps tutors identify key focus areas and link effort to outcomes. For students, it builds awareness of how their actions impact results. Coming prepared ensures a more focused and meaningful conversation.

Data Share	Lenses
<p><b>Conference Date:</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b></p> <p><b>Assessment/Project/Assignment:</b></p> <p><b>Score (if applicable):</b></p> <p>Consider including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Effort Data<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Quantitative Examples: <i>homework completion, tutoring or class participation rates, tutoring or school attendance/punctuality rates, etc.</i></li><li>○ Qualitative Examples: <i>students' behavioral choices at home, school, and during tutoring sessions such as asking questions, teamwork, focus, study strategies, productive struggle strategies, etc.</i></li></ul></li><li>● Specific Academic Data<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Quantitative Examples: <i>quiz data, breakdown analysis by topic, standard, and question type (multiple choice vs open-ended), completed assignments on blended learning software, other school or tutoring assignments, projects etc.</i></li><li>○ Qualitative Examples: <i>level of care and detail in a student's work, progress by rubric strand, the kinds of errors a student makes, etc.</i></li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>Specific &amp; Measurable:</b> Specific Academic Data analysis will help students <b>zoom in</b> enough on their data to identify their <b>strengths and struggles.</b></p>
	<p><b>Growth Mindset:</b> Effort Data analysis will help tutors and students make growth mindset <b>connections between actions and outcomes.</b></p>
	<p><b>Stakeholder Support:</b> Reach out to <b>families and teachers</b> to get <b>qualitative data</b> about a student's effort in class and circumstances at home to get a <b>holistic picture</b> of the student's actions leading up to the assignment. If your setting is In-School, tutors can talk with teachers about a classroom assignment or test.</p>



Overall Reflections	Lenses
<b>For Students to Fill Out</b>	
<p>How prepared/confident did I feel during this assessment/assignment/project?</p> <p>What topics did I feel most prepared/confident in?</p> <p>What topics did I feel least prepared/confident in?</p> <p>What actions did I take to be successful?</p> <p>What could I have done to prepare myself better?</p>	<p><b>Student Agency:</b> Tutors may need to scaffold student reflections depending on their age and self-awareness. Consider adding scales (e.g. 1 - 5 for confidence), multiple choice options listing the topics covered on the assignment, or specific prompts to look at effort data in the final two questions (e.g. “Look back at your old homework and notes from sessions”).</p> <p><b>Growth Mindset:</b> Encourage students to reflect on their actions and experiences first, and only then reflect on the outcomes they saw on the assignment. Let students make predictions about how they did based on their preparations and confidence before seeing their results to build their academic self-awareness.</p>
<b>For Tutors to Fill Out</b>	
<p>How prepared/confident did this student seem during this assessment/assignment/project?</p> <p>What topics did this student seem most prepared/confident in?</p> <p>What topics did this student seem least prepared/confident in?</p> <p>What actions did this student take to be successful?</p> <p>What could this student have done to prepare better?</p>	<p><b>Student Agency:</b> Students will feel more invested in the whole goal setting process if they can contextualize their goals in terms of their own experiences on a given assignment and the actions they can take to make things (even) better next time.</p> <p>Shows students their results and guide them to reflect independently Use your answers to guide student thinking, not override it.</p>



Data Reflections	Lenses
<b>For Students to Fill Out</b>	
<p>What topics or parts of the assignment or project did I perform best on? Why is that?</p> <p>If applicable, where do I see improvements from previous assignments, projects or assessments?</p> <p>What topics or parts of the assignment or project did I struggle with? Why is that?</p>	<p><b>Student Agency:</b> Tutors may need to guide students through interpreting the data or feedback on their assignment or project before they complete their reflections, to ensure they understand the information. Instead of interpreting the feedback or data for them, present the data in an intuitive way and model the skills of analyzing the data and breaking down feedback for students.</p>
<b>For Tutors to Fill Out</b>	
<p>What topics or parts of the assignment or project did the student perform best on? Why is that?</p> <p>If applicable, where did the student show improvements from previous assignments, projects or assessments?</p> <p>What topics or parts of the assignment or project did the student struggle with? Why is that?</p>	<p style="background-color: #ffe0b2;"><b>Specific &amp; Measurable:</b> When reflecting on data, tutors back up their own ideas with “evidence from the text” of this student’s performance on this specific assignment, rather than falling back on general preconceived notions about the student or the subject matter.</p> <p style="background-color: #fff9c4;"><b>Growth Mindset:</b> Take the time to compare your student’s work on this assignment to their work on previous assignments or assessments, not to their peers’ work on this one. Aim to frame your feedback in ways that connect student actions during tutoring sessions to specific outcomes.</p>



### During the Conference: Agenda

Tutors can use this agenda (adapted to suit their program) to guide goal setting conversations with students. Record students' reflections, new goals, and action plans somewhere the tutor, student, student's family, and student's school can reference regularly. Students take their own notes in order to increase their ownership of the conversation.

Steps	Description	Lenses
<b>Check in and Explain the Purpose of the Conversation</b>	<p>1) Check in with the student and ask how they are doing.</p> <p>2) Frame the conversation and ground the goal in long-term aspirations.</p> <p>For example: <i>"The purpose of this conversation is to give you the space to talk about your most recent assessment (or assignment or project) and to get a clear picture of your progress in this subject. Can you tell me in your own words why goal setting is important for us to talk about?"</i></p>	<b>Reducing Stigma:</b> Ensure framing is asset-based by celebrating wins, building on strengths, and seeing what is or isn't working for the student.
<b>Reflection on Most Recent Assignment, Assessment, or Project</b>	<p>3) Ask the student to reflect on goals and effort on the last assignment.</p> <p><i>"Let's start by talking a little bit about [most recent assignment]."</i></p> <p><i>"What did you think of this assignment?"</i></p> <p><i>"What were your strengths? Where did you struggle?"</i></p> <p>4) Ask the student to consider what held them back from doing better.</p> <p><i>"What do you need more practice with? Why?"</i></p> <p><i>"Did you reach your goals? Why/Why not?"</i></p> <p>5) Comment on your student's reflection; add your own thoughts on their strengths and struggles. Praise their self-awareness if applicable!</p>	<b>Reducing Stigma:</b> For students that show low growth, low mastery, or have a low threshold for frustration, be prepared to share several examples of students' strengths. Ensure you thoroughly highlight these wins before moving on to their struggles.



<b>New Goal and Action Plan</b>	<p>6) Together, set a new goal for the next assignment and identify the next steps (i.e. the actions that the student will take) needed to reach that goal.</p> <p><i>“Based on your recent data and what we’ve discussed, what goal do you want to set for the next assignment? What actions will you take to reach it?”</i></p> <p>7) Guide the student to choose specific actions to help build on strengths and overcome struggles. Consider potential obstacles to these next steps!</p> <p><u>Good Examples</u></p> <p><i>“I will come to tutoring on Mondays and Wednesdays to practice my calculator key codes.” (Planned action has a specific purpose and measurable indicators of effort each week.)</i></p> <p><i>“I will create flashcards to help me review the concepts that I have not mastered yet and study for 15 min a day.”</i></p> <p><u>Bad Example</u></p> <p><i>“I’m going to come to tutoring more.” (Too vague!)</i></p>	<b>Specific &amp; Measurable:</b> Students can get even more specific by creating back-up plans that involve teacher support (e.g. “If I can’t do Monday for any reason, call my parents and sign me up for Tuesday instead that week”).
<b>Check for Understanding and Support</b>	<p>8) Recap next steps and why they matter.</p> <p><i>“What are your goals for the next assignment? What steps will you take to get there?”</i></p> <p>9) Thank the student and see if they have any final questions for you.</p> <p><i>“Thank you for talking with me about your exam! I’m excited to support you as you work to meet your goal. Do you have any questions for me?”</i></p>	<b>Student Agency:</b> Tutors can help scaffold student-generated goals by saying things like “That will show some growth, and if you want to be college-ready by June you’ll need a score of 70 in May,” or “That’s a great stretch goal, and a score of 75 will still show tremendous growth.”
		<b>Stakeholder Support:</b> Tutors let students know that they will communicate these new goals and action plan next steps to the student’s family/school. Review with the student if there are other ways to help their family/school support the action plan (e.g. “Go to lunchtime homework help at school at least twice a week”).