

WORKING BACKWARDS



BACKGROUND:

Sometimes we struggle to get started with goals because we're not sure about the right steps to take. We might know the end goal, but it's unclear what needs to happen in between. Backwards design is a popular strategy in education settings to help start with an end objective and work backwards to determine the steps of the process.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Print a copy of the Backwards Planning worksheet.
2. Start by writing the end SMART goal that you need to complete.
3. Navigate through the reflection questions step-by-step, beginning with determining how you will know the goal is met and the deadline.
4. Beginning with the step that must happen immediately before the task is finished, work backward through each step of the goal. For example, if the goal is to write a research paper, the immediate step before submitting it might be "I proofread my paper." The next step prior to that might be "I completed the references page."
5. Work step by step backward until you reach the step you are currently at in the project or until writing "Start the step-by-step plan." Steps can be as large or small as you like, however, it's helpful to have as many of the details written in the plan as possible.
6. For each step in the plan, next set a tentative deadline to help you stay on track with completing the goal on time.
7. It may be helpful to review the steps in the plan with a friend or family member. By asking about missing steps or unclear areas in your plan, you're ensuring the most success before you get started.
8. When you've completed the SMART goal, use the reflection box at the bottom to determine how you might complete the planning or project differently next time.

NOTES:

- Generating a step-by-step plan can take practice, even for experienced planners. Start with simpler SMART goals (5 or fewer steps) first until you are comfortable and fluent with the procedure. Then move on to more complex goals with more steps.
- Not all of the steps in the sequence need to be used as Milestones for your SMART goal. Even though you might chart out each step in the process, try to select 3-4 markers along the way that will signify you're making maximum progress towards achieving the end goal.

BACKWARD PLANNING

Project Title:

WHAT IS MY END GOAL?

WHEN IS IT DUE?

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE SUCCEEDED?

BACKWARDS PLAN

10 FINISHED!

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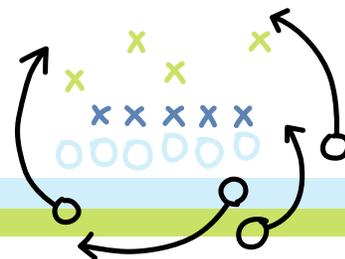
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1 START:



WHAT WOULD I DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME?