Learning goals are brief statements that describe in student-friendly language what students should know and be able to do by the end of a period of instruction (e.g., a lesson, period or subtask).

Specific expectations can sometimes be used as learning goals. More often, specific expectations need to be expressed in grade-appropriate language and/or broken down into smaller increments.
When developing learning goals:
• Start by identifying the overall and specific expectations to be addressed
• Use clear, concise language that is student-friendly and grade-appropriate
• Design the learning in incremental steps to build students’ knowledge and skills
• Describe what students will know and/or be able to do by the end of the period of instruction

When sharing the learning goals with students, state them from a student’s perspective (e.g., “I can..., I will be able to..., We are learning to...”).

**Illustration:**
Specific Expectation 1.5, Gr. 8 Language (Writing Strand):
• Identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units that could be used to develop a summary, a debate or a report of several paragraphs using a variety of strategies and organizational patterns

Sample Learning Goals:
• I can identify main ideas and supporting details
• I can group each main idea with the details that support it
• I can select an appropriate way of organizing the main ideas and supporting details
ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING STRATEGIES1
SHARING AND CLARIFYING THE LEARNING GOAL(S)2

LEARNING GOALS:

• Describe what students are expected to learn
• Provide students with a clear vision of where they are going
• Focus effective teacher feedback on learning
• Develop students’ self-assessment and self-regulation skills
For learning goals to be effective, teachers must share them with students and ensure students understand them.

Strategies for sharing learning goals:
- Tell students, at the outset of instruction, what the learning goals are
- Post the learning goals visibly in the classroom
- Have students write the learning goals in their notebooks or on their task
- Refer frequently to the learning goals during instruction

Strategies for checking student understanding of the learning goals:
- Ask students, “Why are we doing this activity? What are we learning?”
- Have students discuss, in pairs or small groups, what the learning goals mean to them, how they connect to their prior knowledge and experiences and what questions they have
- Ask students to define key words in the learning goals statement, and discuss their meanings
- As instruction proceeds, regularly connect learning tasks and activities to the learning goals
ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING STRATEGIES
IDENTIFYING SUCCESS CRITERIA

SUCCESS CRITERIA:

• Describe, from a student’s perspective, what successful attainment of a learning goal looks like
• Provide students with the tools to monitor their learning and to determine their level of proficiency with respect to a learning goal

When developing criteria:
• Describe observable behaviours
• Use student-friendly language
• Include a descriptor to allow for a range of performance
• Engage students in the development process
**Illustration:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
<th>Success Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (Gr. 8 Language): By the end of the lesson, students will identify and order main ideas and supporting details to convey information to an audience. | • Make accurate notes  
• Correctly identify main ideas and supporting details  
• Logically group a main idea with its supporting details  
• Give clear and logical reasons for the choice of organizational pattern (e.g., comparison, cause and effect, order of importance) |

For further information, see:  
SUCCESS CRITERIA

For students to make effective use of the criteria, they need a clear understanding of what they are and how to apply them. Here are some ways to share success criteria and to check that students understand them:

- Provide opportunities for students to discuss assessment criteria and engage in the development of assessment tools that are clear, detailed and focused

- Provide concrete models, anchor papers or exemplars that define the quality of both strong and weak work based on agreed upon success criteria

For further information, see:


For students to make effective use of the criteria, they need a clear understanding of what they are and how to apply them. Here are some ways to share success criteria and to check that students understand them:

- Model the use of a checklist of success criteria to analyze and critique anonymous student work focusing on one or two particular criteria.

- Teach students to use assessment tools such as checklists, rubrics or portfolios based on assessment criteria.
A T-chart is a graphic organizer that can be used to examine or compare two aspects of a topic. In an assessment for learning context, a T-chart can be used:

- To help students understand the success criteria for a task or performance
- To record and organize success criteria
- To organize brainstorming by students when examining a sample of student work
- By students as a tool to monitor their learning and assess their level of proficiency with respect to a learning goal
Illustration:
**Gr. 8 Mathematics, Geometry and Spatial Sense**

The teacher designs a task that guides students through an investigation of the Pythagorean relationship. He/she asks students to brainstorm the criteria for success, both with respect to the work on the investigation and the product they will produce. He/she provides students with a sample of anonymous student work from a previous school year, then leads a discussion about the important features of the work while recording their ideas. Next, he/she asks students to organize their ideas into categories. This information is developed into the following T-chart, showing the main criteria on the left and details of what it “looks like” on the right:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a hypothesis</td>
<td>• Clearly state an idea about the relationship between the areas of the squares on the sides of the triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test the hypothesis</td>
<td>• Show other examples, using words, numbers, drawings, models, and appropriate mathematical language, that support the hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw a conclusion and justify it</td>
<td>• Confirm or refute the hypothesis, making clear reference to the examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chart is then posted in the classroom for easy reference during the task.
FEEDBACK LOGS

These provide a means of recording feedback about achievement of a learning goal and monitoring the student's follow-up on that feedback.

For further information, see:

For further information, see:

For further information, see:
Research indicates that it is the quality of the feedback, rather than its presence or absence, that improves student learning. Feedback should:

• Identify what was done well and what needs improvement
• Provide specific next steps for students to improve their learning
• Focus on two or three priorities at one time, at most

Students also need time to implement the feedback during the instructional day. Teachers need to monitor whether and to what extent the feedback has been implemented. To do this, teachers may require students to keep and complete a feedback log, kept in the back of each student’s notebook, illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Action taken (to be completed by student)</th>
<th>Action completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
<td>Your topic sentence is clear. You provided 7 details about the character.</td>
<td>For each detail, I will find one piece of supporting evidence in the text.</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research indicates that students benefit when teachers provide time to think between:

a) Posing a question and eliciting a student response (THINK TIME 1) and
b) The end of a student's response and the teacher's or student's reaction (THINK TIME 2).

Adapted from:
Teachers typically provide less than one second of think time between question and answer. Students need this think time to process the question and formulate a response. When teachers provide three or more seconds of think time:

- Students’ answers are longer and more detailed
- Unsolicited and appropriate responses increase
- Failure to respond decreases
- More alternative explanations are offered
- Student engagement is increased

For further information, see:
ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING STRATEGIES
NO HANDS

NO HANDS

• Is a questioning strategy that aims to engage ALL students in thinking about a topic or problem
• Requires a classroom environment where students feel comfortable to take risks and express their ideas
• Carries the expectation that all students participate
To use the no hands strategy, the teacher:

• Explains to students that, for a specified period of time, they are not to raise their hands in response to a teacher-posed question
• Poses an open question and provides ample time for students to process and formulate a response (may include a think-pair-share)
• Selects students to respond to the question and facilitates a discussion
• Allows students to pass if they are uncomfortable or unable to provide a response when called upon, with understanding that he or she will return to the student for follow-up

Illustration:

Ms. C.: Why do you think Big Bear received the treatment he did from Canada’s legal system? Nika?
Nika: Uh, I’m not sure...
Ms. C.: That’s ok. I’ll give you some time to think about it, and will come back to you. Sanjay?
Ms. C.: (after eliciting responses from other students): OK, Nika. You’ve heard some other opinions. What are your thoughts?

For further information, see:
TRAFFIC LIGHT

- Is a strategy students can use to assess their progress toward achieving learning goals
- Is used by teachers to obtain immediate feedback on student understanding during instruction
When using a traffic light strategy to monitor student learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students:</th>
<th>Teachers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Assess their achievement of a learning goal by placing a coloured dot on their work—green to indicate confidence in achievement (“I've got it”), amber to indicate partial mastery or understanding (“I'm not quite sure; I have some questions”), or red to indicate little or no understanding (“I don’t understand this”) | • Scan the students’ traffic lights  
  • Respond to the feedback by making instructional adjustments (e.g., pair up greens and yellows to clear up areas of misunderstanding or misconceptions, work with the reds to help them in a small group setting) |

Similar strategies include:
- Providing students with individual whiteboards and markers to provide brief responses to short-answer items
- Asking students to indicate their level of understanding using a “thumbs up, thumbs down” indicator
- Providing students with a set of lettered index cards (A, B, C, D, E, etc.), which they can use to indicate a response to a multiple choice question posed orally by the teacher
Co-constructing criteria is the process of working collaboratively with students to develop the criteria and indicators for successful demonstration of knowledge and/or skills related to learning goal.

Engaging students in identifying and developing the criteria promotes their understanding of the criteria and facilitates effective self-assessment.
When co-constructing criteria, teachers and students:

- Identify and clarify the learning goals
- Analyze an example of strong work for its strengths and weaknesses
- Brainstorm a list of possible indicators based on the analysis
- Organize the indicators into related categories to develop criteria
- Record the criteria and indicators using an appropriate tool‡
- Critique the assessment tool and revise it for clarity
- Come to agreement prior to beginning the task

‡Teachers and students may develop a variety of tools for self-assessment, including checklists and rubrics. Consider starting with checklists, as they are easier to construct and use.
ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING STRATEGIES

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

A portfolio is an organized, purposeful collection of student work that displays learning over a specified period of time. Typical content includes student reflections, lesson reflections, project self-assessments, pencil and paper tasks, performance tasks, final drafts, presentations, sample notes, homework assignments, teacher feedback, conference notes/summaries, and summative evaluations.

When a portfolio is used as a self-assessment strategy, it provides a profile of the student’s emerging skills to help him or her become an increasingly independent learner and to “assume ownership” of learning (Paulson et al., 1991). A portfolio becomes a self-assessment record of a student’s growth and areas of improvement.
The portfolio is far more than a procedure for gathering samples of student work; its use changes the climate of the classroom and the nature of teacher-student interactions. Portfolios permit instruction and assessment to be woven together in a way that more traditional approaches do not (Barootchi, N. & Keshavarz, M., 2002).

**Illustration:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When engaging in portfolio assessment, students:</th>
<th>When engaging in portfolio assessment, teachers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify the knowledge and skills related to the learning goals and success criteria</td>
<td>• Ensure that the students understand the learning goals and success criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-assess their performance, based on the success criteria</td>
<td>• Provide feedback related to the learning goals and success criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review their work and select piece(s) that represent significant learning based on the learning goal and success criteria</td>
<td>• Model, perhaps in a conference, how to select pieces that represent growth in achievement of learning goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, needs, and goals</td>
<td>• Use information from student reflections to inform and differentiate instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conference on their progress in pursuing the learning goal</td>
<td>• Conference with students on areas of growth, improvement and setting meaningful learning goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information, see:
Ponder and pass is an assessment strategy that provides teachers and students with information regarding students' prior knowledge, experience and interests in a topic or skill. It is used prior to beginning instruction, and can inform the teachers' planning.
Teachers:
• Tell students about the new topic
• Pass an organizer containing questions or prompts around the class
• Ask students to complete the organizer

Illustration:

The ponder and pass organizer may contain a variety of prompts and/or questions that elicit information from students. Design the prompt to elicit a brief response. In Differentiated Assessment Strategies: One Tool Doesn’t Fit All, Chapman and King provide the following examples:

• My background or experience on this topic is...
• I want to learn...
• My feelings about this topic are...

Teachers may also encourage students to provide prompts or questions, or to develop the ponder and pass organizer together.

While students are waiting to complete the organizer, they should be encouraged to make notes of their ideas. These might be done on a self-stick note and then simply applied to the organizer when it arrives.

For further information, see: