

Ambition

Syllables
am•bi•tion

Pronunciation
am-bish-uhn

Definition

Wanting to get, do, or become something. Wanting to achieve a goal.
(Fay's **ambition** was to become a third grade teacher.)
Simply put: really, really, really wanting something.

Related Terms

Goal: Something toward which one works.
Intention: Something that one plans to do.
Purpose: Acting in a particular way to meet a goal.

Fundamental Question:

How does ambition help people reach their goals?

Students will investigate the idea that ambition is a necessary component in the attainment of goals.

Objectives

Each student will:

1. Identify a personal, short-term (up to two weeks) goal.
2. Determine his or her own level of ambition.
3. Attempt to reach the goal within the allotted time period(s).
4. Evaluate how his or her level of ambition affected the attainment of the goal.
5. Draw conclusions about the role ambition plays in reaching goals.

Optional: Something Extra (between steps 2 and 3)

Each student will suggest a series of steps required to reach the goal and propose a time frame for completing each of the steps.

Before you begin

- Be sure your students understand the concept of an achievable goal, that is, one they have a reasonable chance of accomplishing within the allotted time.
- Print out a copy of *My Highly Ambitious Ambition Study* for each student.

Suggested Sidebars:

Speaking of Ambition (Discussion Idea)

Discuss: Are you as ambitious about cleaning your room as you are about finishing your dessert? How does a person's ambition change depending on the goal?

Ambition

Taking It to the Next Level

Be ambitious about repairing our world. Set attainable goals (like “I will pick up all of the litter on my block and put it in a garbage can this afternoon” or “On Sunday, I will bring flowers to my neighbor who is ill”) and reach them!

Procedure

1. Display a pair of running shoes, a sign that says “Finish Line,” or other items that represent a race. (Better yet, come to class dressed for a footrace or start the lesson with one!) Ask: “Pretend you were a professional racer. What do you think your goals would be in a race?” Encourage the children to generate many and varied responses. (Answers might include ideas such as “to win,” “to beat the racer next to me,” “to get the trophy,” “to make my parents proud,” and so forth.) Ask: “The racers all start from the same place and all end at the same point. Why do you think their goals are so different?” (“Goals are based on individual needs and desires,” etc.)
2. Remind the students that one thing the racers probably have in common is they all know that the first step in the race is to determine where they want to go (the finish line). Then they must be sure that each step they take is a step in that direction. Distribute the *My Highly Ambitious Ambition Study* sheets and assist your students in determining their own “finish lines” as they propose a personal, short-term (up to two weeks) goals. (The best goals will be easy to break down into small, bite-size sub-goals so the students will be able to see rapid, preferably daily, progress.)
3. Discuss the idea of **ambition**. Is ambition all-or-nothing (you either want something or you don’t) or does it come in degrees (somewhat ambitious, highly ambitious)? Have the students think about their own levels of ambition and to complete the second section of their work pages.
4. Collect the papers for safe keeping, but recommend that the students keep a log of their journeys to the “finish line” (goal), recording ideas, successes, set-backs, and more. Display the student names and corresponding goals in the classroom. Suggest that the students become aware of each other’s projects and help each other meet their goals.
5. On the goal date, redistribute the *My Highly Ambitious Ambition Study* sheets. Discuss: “From your own experiences during this project, what conclusions can you draw about ambitions and goals?” Record the responses on the board or chart paper.
6. **Follow Up:** Haiku is a poem that has three lines. The first and third lines each have five syllables. The second line has seven. Instruct the students to write haiku verses about their conclusions.

Name _____

Reminder: Ambition means wanting to get, do, or become something; wanting to achieve a goal.

My Highly Ambitious Ambition Study

Goals:

This is my goal (exactly what I plan to do). My goal will be challenging, but not impossible.

I will reach my goal by (date): _____

I believe I will be able to reach my goal on time because _____

I will know if I reached my goal because _____

Ambition:

___ very ambitious

___ somewhat ambitious

___ unambitious

because _____

When it comes to this project, I am:

___ very ambitious

___ somewhat ambitious

___ unambitious

because _____

Return this paper to your teacher until your goal date. Then answer the following:

Did you reach your goal? ___ Yes ___ No

How do you think that your level of ambition (very, somewhat, not at all) affected whether or not you reached your goal?

What conclusions can you draw about ambitions and goals? Write them here.

Today's Thought: *It's fun to set goals, reach goals, and reset them.* — **Bonnie Blair, speed skater**