

Think About It



Have you ever been in a class working on an activity but not quite sure why you were working on it or what you were supposed to be learning? Were there ever times when you didn't quite exactly know what you had to do to be successful? There are a lot of students who would answer yes to those questions, which is why we are taking the time to talk about learning intentions and success criteria as a class today, and how you can use them to self-assess yourself as a learner.

What Are Learning Intentions and Success Criteria?

Learning intentions describe what you need to learn, and it is incredibly important that you have a clear understanding of what those learning intentions are. Understanding the learning intentions is a key component of being an assessment-capable visible learner. Learning intentions are created by looking at learning standards for each grade level and subject, and they help define the purpose of the lesson and the skills you need to master. Both you and your teacher should always have a clear picture of your learning destination, and effective learning intentions provide that.

Success criteria represent what you will have to *be able to* do in order to master the learning intention. These are often like steps of a ladder that you will climb. You can use the success criteria to determine whether you are making progress toward the learning intentions.

Let's take a look at a sixth-grade English language arts standard and an example learning intention and success criteria.

6th-grade ELA standard:

Cite textual evidence to **support** the analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

When we look at the standards for our subject and grade level, we need to look at the *skills and concepts* in the standard. This standard has two major skills that students need to master. Students have to CITE and they have to SUPPORT. See the boldfaced text above in the standard.

Next, we need to think about how students will apply the skill in the standard.

1. With the standard above, what one thing do students need to *cite*?

2. With the standard above, what two things do the students need to *support*?

Now that we've taken a deeper look at what the sixth-grade English language arts standard entails, let's go one step further and think about the learning intentions students will need to master. Here is one example of a learning intention and success criteria for this standard for students who are going to read a story whose main character is a girl named Mary.

Learning Intention and Success Criteria – Student Example	
Learning Intention:	I am learning to cite textual evidence to support inferences that I have drawn about a character from the text.
Success Criteria:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can identify key details about Mary's character in the text. • I can use the key details to determine three inferences about Mary's character in the text. • I can support each inference with two pieces of evidence from the text.



Reflect

How would knowing the learning intention and success criteria for a lesson support you as a learner?

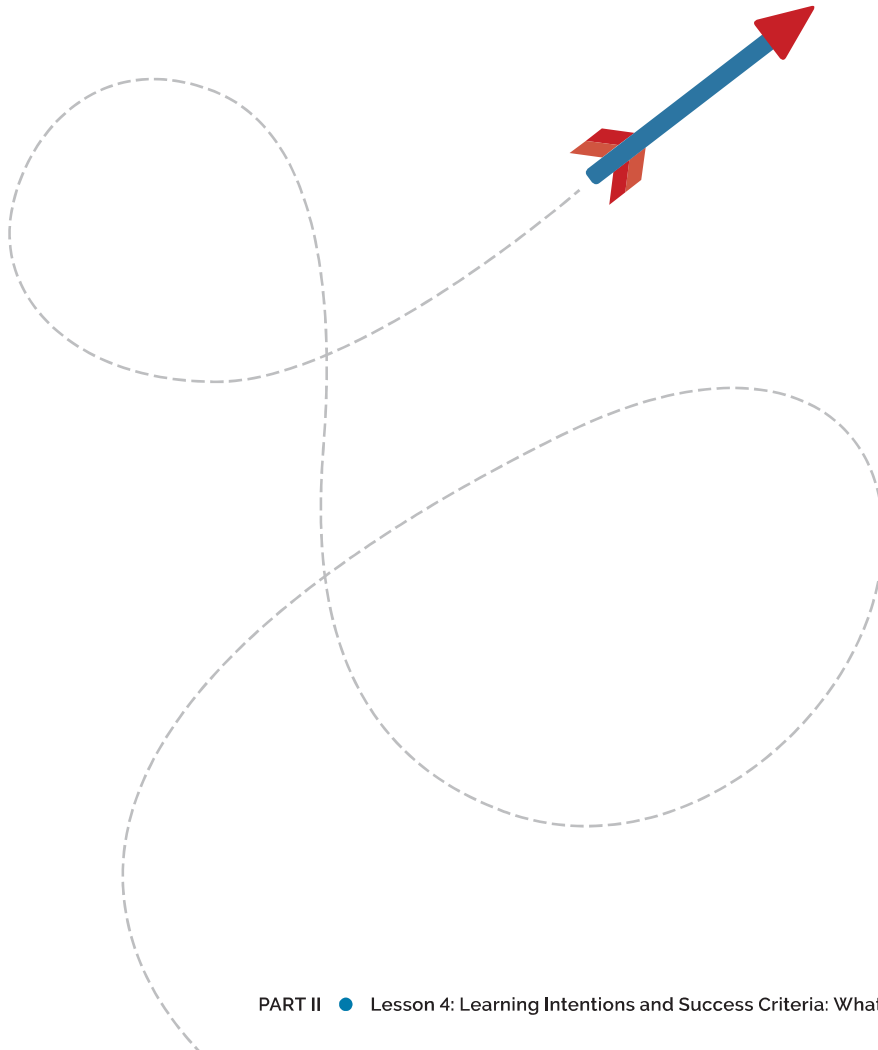
Why Are Learning Intentions and Success Criteria Important?

What if you found out that tomorrow you were going on a really exciting trip, but you had no idea why you were going there, how you were going to get there, or what you would do once you arrived. It could possibly turn the excitement about the trip into fear because of all of the uncertainty. That can happen in learning, too. Sometimes we don't have a clear destination for what we are learning, why we are learning it, and how we will be successful. That's where learning intentions and success criteria come in. They provide the road map you need as a learner so that you are aware of what you are learning, why you are learning it, and how you will demonstrate success of your learning.

Think about the previous example for the sixth-grade English language arts standard. In looking at the learning intention and success criteria, students have a clear picture of where they need to go in their learning and what they need to do in order to be successful.

Research shows that when you are aware of the learning intentions and success criteria, your learning can grow at double the speed. In order for learning intentions and success criteria to have such an impact on your learning, you need to make sure that you understand what the learning intention and success criteria say. One way to do that is by thinking about what you already know about the learning intention and success criteria for a given lesson.

Let's practice by using the self-assessment on the next page. Your teacher will explain what to write in each of the boxes along the left side of your paper.





Learning Intentions and Success Criteria Self-Assessment

Date: _____

Part 1: What knowledge and experiences do you already have?				
	Skills and Concepts	I have done this a lot before.	I have done this a little before.	This will be new for me.
1				
2				
3				
4				

Part 2:

What words or phrases are unclear?

What do I think they might mean?

**Turn
& Talk**

Turn to a classmate and share what you captured in your self-assessment and why you checked the choices you did. Next, talk about any words and phrases that might be unclear and what you think they mean.

**Closing
Reflection**

A critical part of becoming an assessment-capable visible learner is having a clear understanding of what the learning intentions and success criteria mean. What actions can you take on your own or with your classmates or teacher to ensure you understand the learning intentions of each lesson?