

Chemistry CP

Name: _____

What Types of Goals Do You Have?

Section: _____

Your goals led you to decide to enroll this year in Chemistry CP, and presumably you are motivated to succeed in this class. Motivation is a powerful force for success! Motivated students put more energy and effort into their work; they begin and complete assignments, they are more likely to pay attention and try to understand the material. Some people are motivated **intrinsically**—they are motivated to do something because they like it or because they think it is important. Others are motivated **extrinsically**—they are motivated because they get something for it, perhaps good grades, money, or praise. What drives you to succeed in this class?

The objective of this exercise is to help you think about your goals for this class. It is neither a test nor a judgment of your value as a person, but an opportunity for personal reflection and a chance to think about how your learning is affected by the particular goals you have.

Consider the following statements. Which one better reflects your personal goals for this class?

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| A. I have to get a certain grade (say, a B or higher) in this class.
B. It doesn't matter what grade I get in this class, as long as I am trying hard and am learning new things. |
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Are your goals about acquiring new information and skills, or are your goals about how well you do? We can classify most goals into two classes: learning goals and performance goals. A **learning goal** is a desire to acquire additional knowledge or master new skills. A **performance goal** is a desire to look good and receive favorable judgments from others or else *not* to look bad and receive unfavorable judgments.

- If your answer to the above question was A, then your goal for success in chemistry is a **performance goal**.
- If your answer to the above question was B, then your goal for success in chemistry is a **learning goal**.

Now consider the following pairs of statements. For each pair, make a mark next to the statement which reflects your approach to learning chemistry.

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| A. I hate science and I am only taking this class because I have to.
B. I like science and I'm taking this class because I want to know more about how things work. |
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| A. Either you are competent at science or you're not.
B. I can become more competent in science with effort and persistence. |
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| A. If someone is good at science, he or she doesn't have to work hard.
B. To do well in science, you have to work hard (or at least consistently). |
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| A. I would rather do easy assignments that show I am competent than challenging assignments that require considerable thought and effort.
B. I would rather do challenging assignments that require considerable thought and effort than easy assignments that are boring. |
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| A. I'll say I'm doing well in class if I'm doing better than my friends (or better than average).
B. I'll say I'm doing well in class if my work shows progress over the course of the year. |
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- A. When I make mistakes, it's because I'm not very good at this. Mistakes just mean I will never get this stuff.
- B. When I make mistakes, it's because I'm still learning how to do this. Mistakes show me what I need to improve.

- A. I view my teacher as a judge—if I do well, I will be rewarded; if I fail, I am being punished.
- B. I view the teacher as a resource and guide to help me learn.

Summarize your results.

Number of A statements marked: _____ Number of B statements marked: _____

The nature of your goals for this class can dramatically influence your attitudes and behaviors in this class. If your goals for this class are performance goals, did you also mark mostly "A" statements? If your goals for this class are learning goals, did you mostly mark "B" statements?

How do you think the goals you have for yourself in chemistry will affect how much chemistry you will learn this year?

As your teacher, I hope to foster a **motivation to learn** in each of you. I think chemistry is a fascinating subject, one that explains many everyday phenomena. I know that you can learn chemistry! Studying chemistry will help you with general problem solving. Understanding how scientific research is carried out can help you to be critical of science as portrayed in popular media. Understanding how molecules interact can help you to make wise choices as consumers.

You need to keep setting goals for yourself—those goals should be challenging, yet achievable. While performance goals are more common, I encourage you, as long as you are a student, to focus on learning goals. Direct your efforts toward understanding and mastering the subject matter, rather than just getting good grades.

Finally, here is another question for you that I hope you will occasionally reflect upon: What types of goals have you set for yourself in your other classes? How does this affect your success in school?