



PE.SP2 Sport Psychology: Goal Setting and SMART Targets

AQA 8582 · Calculators not allowed · about 50 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

1 In the SMART principle of goal setting, what does the letter 'M' stand for?

- ☐ A) Motivating
- ☐ B) Measurable
- ☐ C) Managed
- ☐ D) Maximal

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 A well-written target should follow the SMART principle.

- (a)** State what the S in SMART stands for. (1)
- (b)** State what the M in SMART stands for. (1)
- (c)** State what the A in SMART stands for. (1)
- (d)** State what the R in SMART stands for. (1)
- (e)** State what the T in SMART stands for. (1)

(Total for Question 2 is 5 marks)

3 Goals set for a performer can be classified as outcome goals, performance goals or process goals.

(a) Describe what is meant by an 'outcome goal', giving a sporting example. (2)

(b) Describe what is meant by a 'performance goal', giving a sporting example. (2)

(c) Describe what is meant by a 'process goal', giving a sporting example. (2)

(Total for Question 3 is 6 marks)

4 Setting goals can have a positive effect on a performer.

(a) Explain one way that setting goals can improve a performer's motivation. (2)

(b) Explain one way that setting goals can improve a performer's focus during training. (2)

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

- 5** A golfer, Priya, currently has a handicap of 18 and wants to lower it before the end of the summer season. Her coach helps her write the following target: 'Lower my golf handicap from 18 to 14 by the end of the summer season (12 weeks' time), by practising short-game shots (chipping and putting) for 30 minutes, three times a week.'
- (a)** Identify the part of Priya's target that satisfies 'Specific'. (1)
 - (b)** Identify the part of Priya's target that satisfies 'Measurable'. (1)
 - (c)** Identify the part of Priya's target that satisfies 'Achievable'. (1)
 - (d)** Identify the part of Priya's target that satisfies 'Relevant/Realistic'. (1)
 - (e)** Identify the part of Priya's target that satisfies 'Time-bound'. (1)

(Total for Question 5 is 5 marks)

- 6** A different performer sets the target: 'I want to get fitter.'
- (a)** Explain why this target is not a well-written SMART target. (2)
 - (b)** Rewrite this target so that it meets the SMART principle, for a named sport of your choice. (2)

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

- 7** Aisha is a club-level 800m runner. She wants to qualify for the regional championships in 6 months' time, which requires her to reduce her personal best time from 2 minutes 20 seconds to 2 minutes 12 seconds.

Discuss how Aisha's coach could use SMART target setting to help her work towards regional qualification, and evaluate how effective this approach is likely to be.

(Total for Question 7 is 9 marks)

- 8** A tennis player focuses only on the outcome goal of winning an important match, and becomes increasingly anxious as the score gets close in the final set.

(a) Explain one disadvantage of focusing only on an outcome goal in this situation. **(2)**

(b) Suggest how using a process goal during the match could help the player manage this pressure. **(2)**

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

9 Six weeks into her programme (see Question 7), Aisha picks up a minor injury and has to reduce her training for two weeks.

(a) Explain why it may be necessary for Aisha's coach to review and adjust her original SMART target after this injury. (2)

(b) Explain, using two of the SMART letters, how Aisha's coach could adjust her target to keep it appropriate and motivating. (3)

(Total for Question 9 is 5 marks)

10 A youth coach sets identical SMART targets for every player in an U14 football squad, regardless of their individual ability.

(a) Identify one problem with this approach. (1)

(b) Suggest a better approach the coach could take. (2)

(Total for Question 10 is 3 marks)

11 State two effects that well-set goals can have on a performer's confidence.

(Total for Question 11 is 2 marks)

12 Explain why a coach might set a performer both a long-term outcome goal and several short-term process goals for the same competition.

(Total for Question 12 is 3 marks)

13 Which type of goal is generally most useful for helping a nervous performer focus on something within their control during a competition?

- ☐ A) Outcome goal
- ☐ B) Performance goal
- ☐ C) Process goal
- ☐ D) None of these help with anxiety

(Total for Question 13 is 1 mark)

14 A swimmer, Yusuf, wants to qualify for his county's summer swimming gala. His coach sets him the target: 'Swim 100m freestyle in under 62 seconds by the county qualifying meet in 10 weeks, by completing two technique-focused speed sessions per week.'

- (a) Identify the part of Yusuf's target that satisfies both 'Specific' and 'Measurable'. (1)
- (b) Identify the part of Yusuf's target that satisfies 'Time-bound'. (1)

(Total for Question 14 is 2 marks)

15 Explain one reason why a goal that is not time-bound may fail to motivate a performer effectively.

(Total for Question 15 is 2 marks)

Mark scheme · PE.SP2 Sport Psychology: Goal Setting and SMART Targets

Question 1

- **B1** B (Measurable)
- **Answer: B (Measurable)**

Question 2

- (a) **B1** Specific
- **(a) Answer: Specific.**
- (b) **B1** Measurable
- **(b) Answer: Measurable.**
- (c) **B1** Achievable
- **(c) Answer: Achievable.**
- (d) **B1** Realistic (accept Relevant)
- **(d) Answer: Realistic (or Relevant).**
- (e) **B1** Time-bound
- **(e) Answer: Time-bound.**

Question 3

- (a) **B1** a goal focused on the end result of a competition, oe
- (a) **B1** sporting example, e.g. winning a match, beating a specific opponent, or winning a medal, oe
- **(a) Answer: An outcome goal is focused on the final result of a competition, for example winning a match.**
- (b) **B1** a goal focused on achieving a personal standard, independent of other competitors, oe
- (b) **B1** sporting example, e.g. running a personal best time, or improving a serve percentage by a set amount, oe
- **(b) Answer: A performance goal is focused on achieving a personal standard, independent of other competitors, for example running a personal best time.**
- (c) **B1** a goal focused on the actions/technique needed during performance, oe
- (c) **B1** sporting example, e.g. maintaining a high elbow during a swimming stroke, or following a set pre-shot routine in golf, oe
- **(c) Answer: A process goal is focused on the technique or actions carried out during performance, for example maintaining a high elbow during a swimming stroke.**

Question 4

- (a) **B1** achieving smaller sub-goals along the way gives a sense of progress/success, oe
- (a) **B1** this builds confidence and keeps the performer motivated to keep working towards a larger, longer-term goal, rather than losing interest, oe
- **(a) Answer: Achieving smaller sub-goals along the way gives the performer a sense of progress, which builds confidence and keeps them motivated to keep working towards a bigger, longer-term goal.**
- (b) **B1** a specific, clear goal directs the performer's attention and effort onto the exact skill/fitness component that needs to improve, oe
- (b) **B1** rather than training in an unfocused or general way that may not target what actually needs to improve, oe
- **(b) Answer: A specific, clear goal directs the performer's attention and effort onto exactly what needs to improve, rather than training in a general, unfocused way that may not target the right thing.**

Question 5

- (a) **B1** lowering her handicap from 18 to 14 specifically, rather than a vague aim such as 'get better at golf', oe
- **(a) Answer: A precise target (18 to 14), not a vague aim like 'get better at golf'.**
- (b) **B1** her handicap is a numerical score that can be recorded/tracked over the 12 weeks, oe
- **(b) Answer: Handicap is a number that can be tracked over time.**
- (c) **B1** a 4-point reduction is a challenging but attainable amount over 12 weeks (rather than an unrealistic drop, e.g. 10 points), oe
- **(c) Answer: A 4-point drop over 12 weeks is challenging but realistic for her ability.**
- (d) **B1** the practice focuses on short-game shots (chipping and putting), which are directly relevant to lowering a golf handicap, oe
- **(d) Answer: The practice (chipping and putting) is directly relevant to lowering a handicap.**
- (e) **B1** the 12-week/end-of-summer-season deadline, oe
- **(e) Answer: The 12-week (end-of-summer-season) deadline.**

Question 6

- (a) **B1** it is not specific (no clear definition of what 'fitter' means) and not measurable (no numbers/data given to track progress), oe
- (a) **B1** it has no time-bound deadline by which it should be achieved, oe
- **(a) Answer: It is not specific (no clear definition of 'fitter') or measurable (no numbers to track), and it has no time-bound deadline.**
- (b) **B1** a specific, measurable, numerical target named to a particular sport/fitness component, e.g. 'increase my 5 km running time trial pace' or a similar quantified aim, oe
- (b) **B1** includes a realistic figure and a clear time-bound deadline, oe
- **(b) Answer: For example: 'Reduce my 5 km running time from 28 minutes to 25 minutes within 8 weeks, by running three times a week.'**

Question 7

- **Level 3** (7-9): A detailed and coherent response that applies most or all of the SMART elements accurately and specifically to Aisha's context (referring to her times, deadline and training), and evaluates the effectiveness of the approach with a balanced judgement covering both benefits and limitations. Sustained, accurate use of sport psychology terminology throughout.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some accurate application of several SMART elements to Aisha's specific context, with some evaluation of effectiveness, though this may be underdeveloped or one-sided. Generally correct use of terminology.
- **Level 1** (1-3): Basic or generic statements about SMART or goal setting with little or no specific application to Aisha's context, and little or no evaluation of effectiveness.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Specific: the coach and Aisha agree a precise target, e.g. 'reduce 800m time from 2:20 to 2:12', rather than a vague aim like 'get faster'.
 - Measurable: her time can be recorded/timed at races or time trials so progress towards the 2:12 target can be tracked objectively.
 - Achievable: the target must suit Aisha's current ability and training age; too ambitious a cut could reduce motivation through repeated failure, while too easy a target under-challenges her.
 - Relevant/Realistic: training should be relevant to 800m running specifically (e.g. pace-judgement and speed-endurance sessions) rather than unrelated fitness work.
 - Time-bound: the 6-month regional-qualifying deadline gives Aisha's training a clear timeframe, allowing the coach to plan how her training should progress across that period working back from the deadline.
 - Process and performance goals: short-term process goals (e.g. improving running technique/pacing in each session) and performance sub-goals (e.g. a small time reduction each month) can be set alongside the outcome goal to maintain motivation along the way.
 - Benefit: breaking the outcome goal into smaller SMART sub-goals increases Aisha's confidence as she achieves each one, keeping her motivated over a long 6-month programme.
 - Benefit: SMART targets focus Aisha's and her coach's effort on the specific areas that need to improve (e.g. pace judgement, speed endurance), making training sessions more purposeful.
 - Limitation/evaluation: if targets are not reviewed and adjusted (e.g. after an injury or illness disrupts training), a fixed SMART target can become unachievable, which may reduce motivation rather than increase it.
 - Limitation/evaluation: SMART goal setting alone does not guarantee improvement; it must be combined with appropriate physical training (e.g. correct application of the principles of training) and other psychological factors, such as confidence and focus, to be effective.

Question 8

- (a) **B1** an outcome goal depends partly on the opponent's performance, something outside the player's own control, oe
- (a) **B1** focusing only on winning can therefore increase anxiety/pressure, especially in a close match, which can harm performance, oe
- (a) **Answer: An outcome goal depends partly on the opponent, something the player cannot control, so focusing only on winning can increase anxiety in a close match, which can harm performance.**
- (b) **B1** a process goal (e.g. focusing on a specific technical cue such as watching the ball onto the racket, or following a consistent between-point routine) keeps the player's attention on something they can fully control, oe
- (b) **B1** this can reduce anxiety and help maintain performance under pressure, oe
- (b) **Answer: A process goal, such as focusing on watching the ball onto the racket or following a consistent between-point routine, keeps the player's attention on something fully within their control, which can reduce anxiety and help maintain performance.**

Question 9

- (a) **B1** the original time-bound target may no longer be achievable at the original rate of progress, because two weeks of reduced training will likely slow her improvement, oe
- (a) **B1** continuing to pursue the unmodified target could reduce Aisha's motivation if it becomes unrealistic to achieve, oe
- **(a) Answer: Two weeks of reduced training will likely slow Aisha's progress, so the original target may no longer be achievable at the planned rate; continuing to chase an unmodified, now-unrealistic target could reduce her motivation.**
- (b) **B1** Achievable: set a slightly less demanding intermediate target given the lost training time, so it remains realistic for her to achieve, oe
- (b) **B1** Time-bound: extend the deadline slightly, or set a new short-term target working back from a later date, oe
- (b) **B1** coherent explanation linking the adjustment to keeping Aisha motivated/confident rather than facing an unrealistic target, oe
- **(b) Answer: For example, the coach could adjust the Achievable element by setting a slightly less demanding intermediate time given the lost training, and adjust the Time-bound element by extending the deadline slightly, keeping the target realistic so Aisha stays motivated rather than facing a target she can no longer reach.**

Question 10

- (a) **B1** it does not account for individual differences between players (different starting ability, fitness or experience), so a target may be too easy for some players and too hard for others, oe
- **(a) Answer: It ignores individual differences between players, so the same target may be too easy for some and too hard for others.**
- (b) **B1** set individualised SMART targets for each player based on their own current ability and needs, oe
- (b) **B1** so that each target is appropriately achievable and challenging for that specific player, oe
- **(b) Answer: The coach should set individualised SMART targets for each player, based on their own current ability and needs, so each target is appropriately achievable and challenging for that specific player.**

Question 11

- **B1** achieving a goal/sub-goal increases a performer's belief in their own ability (self-efficacy), oe
- **B1** a second distinct effect, e.g. reduces anxiety about performance because progress can be seen clearly, or gives evidence of improvement that reassures the performer, oe
- **Answer: Achieving a goal increases a performer's belief in their own ability, and seeing clear evidence of progress can reduce anxiety about their performance.**

Question 12

- **B1** the long-term outcome goal gives the performer an overall direction/target to aim for, oe
- **B1** the short-term process goals give the performer something specific and controllable to focus on in each individual training session/competition, oe
- **B1** combining both keeps the performer motivated over the long term while managing anxiety/focus in the short term, gaining the benefits of each type of goal, oe
- **Answer: The outcome goal gives overall long-term direction, while the process goals give the performer something specific and controllable to focus on in each session; together they combine long-term motivation with short-term focus and reduced anxiety.**

Question 13

- **B1** C (process goal)
- **Answer: C (process goal)**

Question 14

- (a) **B1** the precise, numerical time target (under 62 seconds for 100m freestyle), which can be timed/recorded, oe
- **(a) Answer: The precise time target of under 62 seconds for 100m freestyle, which can be timed and recorded.**
- (b) **B1** the 10-week deadline to the county qualifying meet, oe
- **(b) Answer: The 10-week deadline before the county qualifying meet.**

Question 15

- **B1** without a deadline, there is no urgency to work towards the goal, so training can be put off/deprioritised, or
- **B1** it also becomes harder to judge whether progress is on track, which removes a useful source of motivation and feedback, or
- **Answer: Without a deadline there is no sense of urgency, so training towards the goal can easily be put off, and it also becomes harder to judge whether progress is on track, removing a useful source of motivation.**