



## Technique: BEGIN WITH THE END

Progress from unit planning to lesson planning. Define the objective, decide how you'll assess it, and then choose appropriate lesson activities.

Successful planning usually begins with a larger goal – something important you want your students to achieve or master in a unit that stretches over days or even weeks. Once you've identified that larger goal, the next step is to break it down into a sequence of smaller, daily *objectives*. Once you've done that, you design the lessons and activities your students will do achieve those daily objectives.

This sequence order is essential:

1. **Define the major goal or topic for a unit.** It could be the water cycle, adding and subtracting fractions, or understanding *Lord of the Flies* as literature. To begin, list as concretely as possible the three to five most important things students will have to master to be successful in this unit.
2. **Break the unit goal down into daily lesson objectives.** One goal might be to understand how condensation works in the water cycle or to analyze the symbolism in chapter 3 of *Lord of the Flies*. Consider roughly the number of sessions of classroom weeks you have to draft a sequence of objectives, one for each day in the unit.
3. **Determine how you'll assess your effectiveness in meeting each daily objective.** You might come up with, "Students will describe the process of condensation and differentiate it from precipitation by comparing and contrasting," or "Students will identify and explain symbolism in a given passage from the chapter, comparing it to other symbols in the book." Under each objective, make some notes about how you might assess your students both at the end of that day (maybe an exit ticket) and at the end of the unit.
4. **Choose lesson activities that work toward the objective and that will result in mastery on your assessment.** For two to three of those objectives, plan lesson activities that will ensure that students meet those objectives.

See **BEGIN WITH THE END** in action  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Intervention/247>