

LESSON 4

A Goal That Lands After the Leaving Cert

60 minutes

Strand 1.1: Understanding Myself

Applying

Outcome LCW.M1.S1.PD.2

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

This lesson extends the SMARTER goal framework to a long-horizon target finishing after the Leaving Certificate. Students review key terms, write a new goal with checkpoints and evidence, and begin a short reflection on handling setbacks across the months between now and that finish line.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M1.S1.PD.2	create goals for personal development and reflect on their progress.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Write a SMARTER goal with a finish line after the Leaving Certificate
- Set three dated checkpoints with evidence you would check at each
- Compare which of your two goals would survive a bad month and why

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Long-horizon goal	A goal whose finish line sits past the Leaving Certificate, so the result is months away (sometimes more than a year) rather than a few weeks.	Being able to raise a concern calmly in a real workplace or college setting by the September after your exams
Checkpoint	A dated stop along the way where you check real evidence, closer together than the finish line itself.	End of this term, Easter of sixth year, and August after the Leaving Certificate
Evidence	Something you could actually hold or point to at a checkpoint: a dated note, a shift completed, a message sent, a result you can name.	A phone note with the date, what you said, who was there, and what changed

BEFORE THE BELL

- Ensure all students have their Self-audit document and SMARTER Goal 1 from previous lessons available for reference.
- Confirm students still have access to Self-audit and SMARTER Goal 1 from earlier lessons.
- On screen this lesson: worked example.

A Goal That Lands After the Leaving Cert

HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
5 min	introduction	Getting Started
4 min	content	Key Terms
40 min	activity	Write Your Post-Leaving Cert Goal
6 min	content	Think About It
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Open by asking who can still name their Lesson 2 goal without looking. That is the short-horizon baseline. Name today's phase as *applying*: same SMARTER shape, different distance.

Remind the room that Goal 2 comes from the Lesson 3 Self-audit. Goal 1 was written in Lesson 2, before that audit existed, so do not ask which audit area it came from, ask only that Goal 2 is not about the same thing. Give thirty seconds for students to find both documents before Key Terms.

4 min Key Terms

Keep this tight: a checkpoint is not a mini-goal, and evidence is not a vibe. If a student offers "I will feel more confident", push for what a stranger could check. Ask one student roughly how many months they have until the September after their exams so the room hears that the distance is personal, not a fixed eighteen months.

40 min Write Your Post-Leaving Cert Goal On screen: worked example

SUGGESTED TIMING

- About 8 to 10 minutes walking the worked example with the class (beats in order on the board or shared screen; two later beats can be taken as read if the room is ready)
- About 25 to 28 minutes of individual drafting
- Last 2 minutes: every student saves **SMARTER Goal 2**; anyone without the survival paragraph writes the finish-up note at the bottom

TEACHING TIPS

Facilitate the worked example walk yourself: students study the two versions and follow the on-page annotations while you lead the beats. Do not leave the board walk as a student instruction.

Pause after the checkpoint beat and ask: *If the finish line is many months out, why can the first checkpoint not also sit at the finish line?*

Watch for goals that are still term-length dressed up with a post-exam date, and for evidence that is only a feeling ("I will know because I feel ready").

The survival paragraph is the harder half for many students. A good answer names a real pressure (illness, a bad run of results, family load) and says which goal still has a next move under that pressure. It is started in class; incomplete is acceptable if the must-finish list is done and the finish-up note is on the page.

LOOK-FORS

- Finish line clearly after the Leaving Certificate
- Three checkpoints with actual dates and named evidence
- Development area different from Goal 1
- Survival paragraph (or a clear finish-up note) that will pick one goal and give a reason, not "both matter equally" with no argument

6 min Think About It

Keep this as paired or whole-class talk. Centre the room on off track versus too early: no evidence at the first checkpoint is information; no evidence at the second is a problem. The partner stress-test should force vague evidence into something observable. The survival next-move line is optional repair only, not a full rewrite of the paragraph. Invite two or three pairs to share one sentence only.

5 min What you covered

Quick scan before dismissal: every student should have a SMARTER Goal 2 document with a post-Leaving Certificate finish line and three checkpoints. Survival paragraph complete or a finish-up note on the page both count as an acceptable exit. Note anyone still missing the Self-audit source material so you can catch them next time.

ANSWERS AND LOOK-FORS

- "By Easter I will have raised a concern" - Short finish line - Version A is a solid term goal, the kind you wrote in Lesson 2. It is specific and checkable, but the finish line is still inside school time.
- "September after my Leaving Certificate" - Long-horizon finish - Version B moves the result past the exams. The skill has to work in a setting school does not control, which is what makes the distance real.
- "Checkpoint 1, end of this term" - Checkpoints closer in - The finish line is far away, so the stops cannot be. Three dated checkpoints give her something to review long before September.
- "dated note of what happened, who was there" - Evidence she can collect - When the finish line is many months away you cannot rely on memory. She decides now what proof she will keep at every stop.
- "one with an adult who is not a teacher" - Off track vs too early - By Easter of sixth year she expects evidence outside pure school tasks. Only school examples by then would be a signal, not a disaster, and she has already said what she will do.
- "I will not drop the goal" - Revise, do not abandon - The R in SMARTER on a long goal. She changes the route and the final date rather than quietly forgetting the whole thing.
- "Version A does not survive that" - Which one survives a bad month - The last thing you write today. It is not a motivation line: it names a specific bad month and asks which goal still has room afterwards. A goal with all its chances inside one term has none.

TEACHING MOVES

- Model the differences between short and long horizon using Róisín's example with the class; you lead the beats while students follow the on-page annotations.
- State the must-finish list at the start of drafting: full SMARTER statement plus three checkpoints with evidence; survival paragraph started, finish-up allowed before next lesson.
- Circulate during the writing activity to prompt specific evidence rather than vague feelings.
- In Think About It, keep the talk on off track versus too early and the partner evidence stress-test; the survival next-move line is optional repair only.
- During summary, verify that every document includes three checkpoints and either a survival paragraph or a finish-up note.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Setting checkpoints too close together or without dates: remind students to space them realistically across the months between now and the September after their exams.
- Describing evidence vaguely like 'feel more confident': require something observable like a dated note or completed task.
- Using the same development area as Goal 1: direct students to choose a different area from their Self-audit.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: provide sentence starters for the goal statement and checkpoint evidence.
- Extension: ask students to consider potential obstacles and plan contingency checkpoints.
- Support: pair students who need help identifying a new development area.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- SMARTER Goal 2: post-Leaving Certificate goal with three dated checkpoints and a survival paragraph