

# Lesson Planning with the Learning Goals from the Dharma Learning Framework

The Dharma Learning Framework (DLF) contains 175+ learning goals that can enrich teaching across multiple subjects. Whether you're teaching world history, ethics, mindfulness, or creative arts, these goals can extend and deepen student learning while introducing valuable perspectives from Buddhist wisdom traditions.

Please also see the Lesson Planning Example, where we put these instructions into practice, and a sample lesson plan created with this process.

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## Two Ways to Use the Framework

### Option 1: Teaching Buddhist Content Directly

Use learning goals as the primary content for Buddhist studies, world religions, philosophy courses, or in after-school or community education initiatives.

### Option 2: Integrating with Existing Curriculum

Enhance your current units by incorporating Buddhist perspectives that align with state/national standards (Common Core, etc.).

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## Understanding Framework vs. Curriculum

**Critical for Success:** The DLF provides learning standards and outcomes, not complete lessons.

### What this means for you:

- The framework gives you the **what** (learning goals) and **how** (structure), but you provide the **content**
- You'll need to research and gather specific examples, readings, case studies, and materials that bring these goals to life
- Think of each learning goal as a blueprint – you're the architect who builds the actual lesson

**Before you begin:** Plan time to research and develop the content materials your students will need. The KNOWLEDGE section and resource links are starting points, not complete content packages.

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# Quick Start: Try Your First Learning Goal

Want to jump in immediately? Follow these 4 essential steps:

## Step 1: Pick Your Goal (5 minutes)

- Browse the subject area pathways above
- Choose ONE learning goal that connects to content you already teach
- **Beginner-friendly options:** "Four Noble Truths Overview" (430), "Right Speech" (411), or "Compassion" (443)

## Step 2: Read and Translate (10 minutes)

- Read the **ACTION** section – this is what students will demonstrate
- Rewrite it in simple, student-friendly language (your "big idea")
- **Example:** Action: "Analyze anger as a mental state..." becomes "Understand how anger works and learn to respond instead of react"

## Step 3: Gather Content (20-30 minutes)

- Use the **KNOWLEDGE** section as your research starting point
- Find 2-3 concrete examples that students can relate to
- Prepare one hands-on activity from the **EXPERIENCE** section

## Step 4: Plan One Lesson (15 minutes)

- Decide: Will this be one class period or multiple sessions?
- Create a simple structure: Opening activity → Content → Practice → Reflection
- Plan how you'll assess if students met the **ACTION**

**Success tip:** Start with a 50-minute lesson focusing on just part of the ACTION. You can always expand later!

**Even faster start:** Use our complete sample lesson plan for "Right Speech" as a template, adapting the content to a different learning goal.

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## Find Your Entry Point by Subject Area

### If you teach Social Studies or History:

- Explore the "Social Studies & Global Cultures" pathway
- **Try:** "History of Buddhism" (238) or "Women in Buddhism" (239)

### If you teach Health, Psychology, or SEL:

- Check out "Health & Wellness" or "Foundations of Mindfulness" pathways
- **Try:** "Four Noble Truths Overview" (430) or "Compassion" (443)

### **If you teach Ethics, Civics, or Leadership:**

- Look at "Ethics & Civics" or "Leadership Development" pathways
- **Try:** "Right Motivation in Leaders" (105) or "Engaged Buddhists" (124)

### **If you teach Arts or Creative Writing:**

- Explore the "Creative Expression" pathway
- **Try:** "Musical Awakening" (510) or "Contemplative Arts" (517)

### **If you teach Philosophy or Critical Thinking:**

- Look at the "Philosophy & Critical Thinking" pathway
  - **Try:** "Buddhist Debate" (125) or "Dependent Origination Overview" (448)
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## **Anatomy of a Learning Goal – Quick Reference**

- **ACTION:** What students will demonstrate (your main assessment target)
  - **UNDERSTANDING:** The key insight or principle students will grasp
  - **CONTENT KNOWLEDGE:** Information students should learn and remember
  - **GUIDING QUESTIONS:** Discussion starters and inquiry prompts
  - **EXPERIENCE:** Hands-on activities and reflection exercises
  - **VOCABULARY:** Key terms to teach and define
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## **Eight Steps to Create Your Lesson**

### **Step 1: Define Your Core Outcome**

- Read the ACTION section to identify the essential skill or demonstration
- Translate this into student-friendly language that captures your "big idea"
- This becomes your main learning target

### **Step 2: Determine the Essential Action**

- Break down the multi-part skill being cultivated
- Identify component skills students need to master

### **Step 3: Rewrite in Student-Friendly Language**

- Create the "big idea" that resonates with students

<https://middlewayeducation.org/framework/lesson-planning/>

- Make the outcome accessible and motivating

## Step 4: Determine Session Length and Scope

- Assess the complexity of the action against students' prior knowledge
- Consider how much time you have available—it's up to you how deep you want to go
- You can teach part of the action standard, see how it goes, and develop plans to teach the rest
- Some learning goals could be taught in a single lesson, but most are appropriate for multi-day units spanning multiple lessons
- The depth depends on the content materials you end up using

## Step 5: Develop Learning Objectives

- **Knowledge Objectives:** Use the CONTENT KNOWLEDGE section to create specific, measurable objectives for what students should remember and understand
- **Understanding Objectives:** Apply Bloom's Taxonomy to sequence from basic (identify, describe) to advanced (analyze, evaluate)
- **Application Objectives:** Focus on what students will synthesize, create, or apply
- **Differentiation Note:** Each grade band is designed for approximately three grade levels, but teachers know their students. If it seems like a stretch, simplify it; if it seems simple, enrich it. Make sure learning tasks are achievable so students feel the joy of mastery while experiencing appropriate challenges

## Step 6: Design Learning Activities

- **Resource Development:** Remember that the framework is not a curriculum. The knowledge content, guiding questions, and resource links are jumping-off points for educators to research and build the materials they need to teach the content
- Use the CONTENT KNOWLEDGE section for direct instruction—but supplement extensively with additional materials
- Use GUIDING QUESTIONS for discussions and inquiry-based activities
- Use the EXPERIENCE section for hands-on, reflective, or experiential learning
- Sequence activities to build toward your core outcome across planned sessions

## Step 7: Determine Assessments

- **Assessment Focus:** Assessment means looking at student work to see evidence of mastery of the ACTION
- **Formative Assessment:** Can be based on informal observations while students are engaging during lessons, with support from teacher and peers
- **Summative Assessment:** Should show students demonstrating mastery without support
- **High-Level Demonstrations:** Writing to a prompt, creating a project, or giving a presentation are effective ways for students to show what they know, understand, and can do

## Step 8: Break Down the Action into Student-Friendly Steps

- Create sequential, manageable components of the complex action
- Ensure clear progression toward completing the full action

<https://middlewayeducation.org/framework/lesson-planning/>

- Make each step achievable and clearly connected to the next
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## Integration with Standards

When aligning with existing curriculum standards:

- Search the framework for keywords that match your required content
- Use learning goals to deepen critical thinking within mandated topics
- Apply Buddhist analytical frameworks to enhance students' perspective-taking and ethical reasoning skills