Make a New Year’s WISH PILLOW
MAKE A

New Years Wish Pillow

- Turn your dreams into actions with this DIY throw pillow stuffed with your very own goals for the new year.

About the Activity
This fun craft activity, courtesy of The Ponysitters Club, is a great way to set goals for the New Year to help inspire you to achieve your wishes and dreams.

Supplies
- Piece of Fabric (about 12”x12”)
- Paper and Pen to write with
- Glue Gun (ask adult for help)
- Markers or Paint (to decorate)
- Buttons, beads, sequins or anything else you want to decorate your pillow with!

Grades: 3-8
Topic: Crafting, Mindfulness
Time: 30 minutes
Activity Steps

Follow these steps to craft a decorative pillow stuffed with your goals.

Before you start, you might be asking yourself, “Why stuff a pillow with goals?” Good question! New Years is an ideal time to think about goals because they motivate you both in the short term and for the long term. The act of writing them down is like mapping out a better future. Plus when you get specific, you can measure (and celebrate) your success as you go.

So let’s get started.

1. Fold your piece of fabric in half so that there is an opening at the top.

2. Now, use the hot glue gun to glue the side and bottom into place.

**FUN FACT:** A glue gun works by heating up a stick of glue so hot that it liquefies, then is squeezed through the dispenser as you squeeze the trigger. But watch out – that glue is so hot that it can burn your skin, so be very careful!

3. Next, cut the piece of paper into strips. Fold the paper in half, then fold that doubled-over piece into short sections, similar to how a fan is folded. Then cut across the middle seam, and then cut each half of the smaller seams into strips.

4. With your pen and paper, write out your goals for the new year. If you get stuck, use these categories for ideas: health and fitness, your future career, education, friendships, family, creativity, saving money, community projects. But don’t confuse goals with values. “Be kind to animals” can be an ongoing value you have, while “volunteer at the animal shelter” is something specific you can check off your list in the new year.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Many people have goals, but researcher Gail Matthews found that people who took the extra steps of writing them down, as well as telling a friend their plans and sending their friend weekly updates, were 33% more successful in achieving them.

5. Now, use the strips of paper to stuff your pillow. The more wishes and dreams, the better!

**FUN FACT:** Research shows that when you reach specific, measurable goals that you’ve set, your dopamine levels increase – that literally makes you feel good, because dopamine is a chemical in your brain that creates the feeling of pleasure.

6. When finished, use the glue gun to seal up the remaining seam.

7. Personalize! Decorate your wish pillow with whatever you want and have on hand – sequins, colored feathers, you name it!

**FUN FACT:** You haven’t completed these goals yet, but you’ve already made progress: By getting creative and decorating your pillow, you’re creating a result, which also sends a fresh supply of dopamine to make you feel good and help you feel motivated.
How well do you know goal-setting?

QUESTION 1
Why is it important to set goals?
a) Give you long-term vision and short-term motivation
b) Provides a clear path to success
c) Helps measure progress
d) All of the above

QUESTION 2
Which of these plays a role in goal achievement’s boost to your sense of well-being?
a) Dopamine
b) Serotonin
c) Adrenaline

QUESTION 3
“Be kind to animals” is a:
a) Goal
b) Value

QUESTION 4
“Get an after-school job” is a:
a) Goal
b) Value

QUESTION 5
Aside from just stuffing a pillow, why does this activity have you write down specific goals?
a) To make you feel good
b) You are more likely to achieve them
c) To improve your handwriting

Questions to deepen wonder and understanding.

• Why do you think telling others about the goals you’ve set for yourself helps you to achieve them?

• How did it feel when you wrote down so many wishes that you want to come true?

• We all have dreams of who we want to be and what we want to do. But do you see how turning those wishes into actionable goals makes those dreams achievable?
Take your new knowledge to the next level.

Anyone can set goals, but for them to be successful, Matthews’ research emphasized the importance of accountability, commitment, and writing.

Another well-known way to effectively set goals is to be S-M-A-R-T. Those letters are a mnemonic (pronounced: nu-maa-nik) device, which means a way of learning that uses a pattern of letters or simple associations. And this mnemonic device helps you to outline how to make your goals achievable:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**ttainable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-bound

For instance, you can have the value of being kind to animals. But to translate that into a SMART goal, you would say: I will volunteer at an animal shelter (specific, attainable, relevant) once (measurable) before the summer (time-bound).

Regardless of your eventual results with the goals you write today, just the act of thinking about your dreams coming true is positive thinking, and research shows that positive thinking benefits your health and happiness. So, it pays to keep writing down those SMART wishes – and working toward achieving them.

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