

Dear SmartScoopers,

Wish You All A Very Happy New Year!

This edition of SmartScoop is doing something a little different. Instead of diving into our usual mix of geopolitics, science, sports, and current affairs, we're pausing. Just for this issue. Because the start of a new year feels like the right moment to think about new goals and better habits, so all our scoops are here to help you with simple tips to achieve them.

So this time, we're talking about:-

- **Scoop1:** New Year, New Moves: Setting goals that actually stick (Part I)
- **Scoop2:** New Year, New Moves: Setting goals that actually stick (Part II)
- **Scoop3:** New Year Habit Playbook: Brain hacks for better habit
- **Scoop4:** Was 2025 A Reading Slump?: Let's get you turn pages in 2026
- **Scoop5:** Puzzle Of The Week: The coloured socks

Think of this edition as a fresh notebook page. Clean, calm, and full of possibilities.

Throughout 2026, you can expect SmartScoop to bring you more of what you love, and more of what matters: deeper geopolitics, health, climate change, more news explainers, pop culture, and stories that help you understand the world better.

We're glad you're here for another year of reading, questioning, and discovering with us.

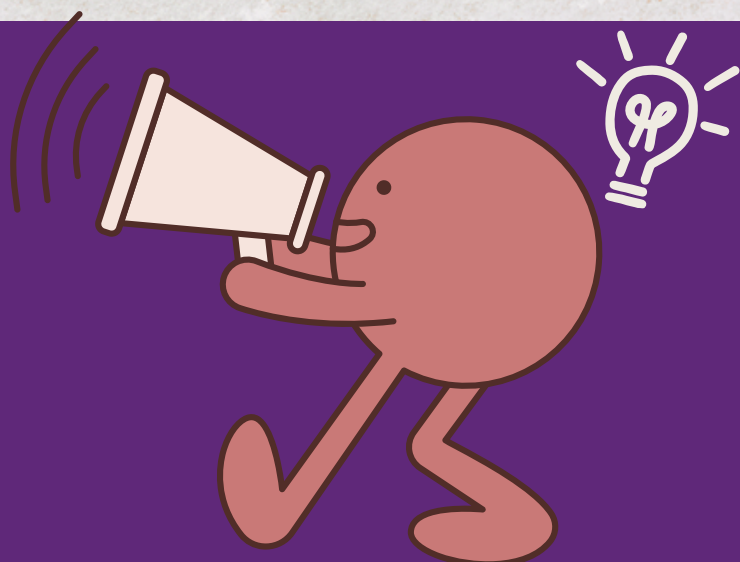
Warm regards,

Team SmartScoop

Our mascot, Blurt
will follow us
along the way.

Blurt /blurt/
noun:

A loud, round, super-curious character who just can't keep a fact in.



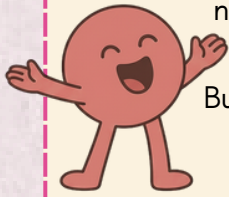
New Year, New Moves

SETTING GOALS THAT ACTUALLY STICKS

Okay, so it's Jan 2026, and you're ready to make this year awesome. Maybe you want to learn a new skill, make it to the sports team, boost your grades, or finally finish that project you've been thinking about. That's amazing!

But here's the truth: For most people goals decided beginning of the year, disappears by March... But not you. Not this year!

This guide will show you how to set goals and achieve them. No fluff, just real strategies.



1 Begin with the End in mind...

Stephen Covey, who wrote "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens," says "begin with the end in mind."

Close your eyes for a second... Imagine it's December 31, 2026.

What do you want to be celebrating?

What do you want to have accomplished?

Can you see it?

Can you feel it?



That's your target



2 The SMART Goals Framework

(You've probably heard before...) Think of SMART like a cheat code:

Specific: Don't say, "Get better at math". Say, "Raise my math grade to a B".

Measurable: Be able to track your progress. "Read more" becomes "read 24 books this year" (that's just 2 per month and you can track it!).

Achievable: Have big goals, but realistic ones. If you're barely surviving PE laps right now, don't aim to crush the school marathon tomorrow. Start with 2K run without stopping by summer and increase your goal.

Relevant: Does this goal actually matter to YOU? Not your parents, not your friends but YOU. If you're only doing it because someone else wants you to, you'll lose motivation fast. So it has to be your goal.

Time-bound: Give yourself a deadline. "Learn guitar" is vague. "Learn to play three full songs by June" is a real goal.

New Year, New Moves

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3 Don't do it alone:

Goals stick better when someone knows about them. When you keep goals secret, it's easy to let them slide. But when you share them, you create accountability.



4 When you mess up... (because you will)

Let's be real: life is messy. You'll get sick. You'll have friend drama. You'll have weeks where homework takes over everything. Your goals will get derailed. And that's totally normal. Just remember the following:

Missing once = Is normal/ Its fine

Missing twice = Danger zone. Never miss twice in a row. One missed day is an accident. Two is the start of quitting.

It's not about never failing, it's about getting back up every time you fall.

If you miss a week of practice, don't think "I've failed, might as well quit." Think "Okay, last week was rough. Today's a new day" and get back on track.

5 Your 2026 Action Plan (Do this today!)

Alright, let's make this real.

Step 1: Grab a nice diary or create a vision board or take a A4 sheet paper.

Step 2: Write down 3-5 goals for 2026. Make them SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound).

Step 3: For each goal, write down the daily or weekly habit that will get you there.

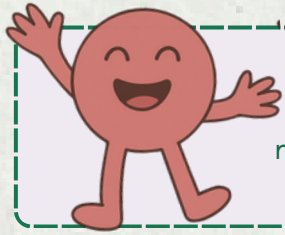
Step 4: Choose your accountability method. Who will you tell? How will you track progress?

Step 5: Put one small action toward your first goal on your calendar for tomorrow. Not next week, for tomorrow! Do one tiny action tomorrow.



The magic isn't in the finish line, it's in the journey. It's in the person you're becoming day by day, choice by choice, habit by habit.

BRAIN HACKS FOR BETTER HABITS



So we discussed how to set goals for this year. Awesome!!! Now comes the part that actually makes it happen. **Strong habits.** The kind that don't need motivation every day and don't feel like a chore. Let's learn how to build habits that stick and help you reach your goals without stressing out.

Why Your Brain Loves (and Hates) Habits



First, let's talk about why **HABITS** are so powerful!

Your brain is basically lazy (in a good way!). It doesn't want to make a million decisions every day, so it creates shortcuts called habits. When you do something enough times, your brain puts it on autopilot.

That's why you can brush your teeth while thinking about what you're going to carry for snacks to school. Your brain has turned tooth-brushing into a habit. James Clear, who wrote "Atomic Habits" (a book that's basically the bible of habit formation), says that tiny changes can lead to remarkable results. He's talking about getting just 1% better every single day. And here's the cool part: if you improve by 1% every day for a year, you'll end up 37 times better than when you started.



FOR STRONG Habits

Tiny Habits: The key? Start so small it feels almost silly. Take tiny steps. Want to read more? Don't aim for a whole book instead read one page before bed. Want to learn Spanish? Practice just five words while you eat breakfast. BJ Fogg, who wrote "Tiny Habits," calls this the "starter step." Make it so easy you can't say no.



Stack Your Habits Like Building Blocks: Here's a genius trick from James Clear: Habit stacking. It's super simple. You take a habit you already do and attach a new habit to it. The formula is: "After I [CURRENT HABIT], I will [NEW HABIT]." For example: After I brush my teeth, I will do 5 push ups. You're basically using your existing habits as anchors for new ones. Sneaky, right?



5 pull-ups
5 push-ups
5 Jumping jacks
Anchor: Brushing Teeth

The Identity Shift: Here's something that'll blow your mind: the best way to build habits isn't to focus on goals, instead to focus on who you want to become. This is huge. Instead of saying "I want to get good grades," say "I'm the kind of person who studies every day." Instead of "I want to make the basketball team," say "I'm an athlete who practices consistently."



Make It Fun (Or You'll Quit): Let's be real: if something feels like torture, you're not going to keep doing it. This is where "temptation bundling" comes in (another James Clear trick). Pair something you NEED to do with something you LOVE to do: Only listen to your favourite podcast while organising your room. Only watch YouTube while exercising.



Was 2025 A Reading Slump?



LET'S GET YOU TURNING PAGES IN 2026



You want to read... but somehow you don't. The book is right there. Your brain says "just one chapter," but your hands reach for your phone instead. Sound familiar? If yes, you're officially in a reading slump. And don't worry, it happens to everyone. A reading slump doesn't mean you don't like reading anymore. It just means your brain needs a little restart. Here's how to press that reset button

Stop Forcing "Serious" Books



One big mistake? Thinking every book has to be important, smart, or impressive. Right now, your goal isn't to read a masterpiece. Your goal is to enjoy reading again. Try: comics or graphic novels, funny books, short adventures, mystery or fantasy, books you've already loved once. Reading for fun still counts. Always!

Start Small (Like, Really Small)

Start with: 10 minutes | One chapter | Even just 5 pages

Once you start, you'll often want to keep going. And if you don't? That's okay too. Small wins build momentum



Change How You Read



If reading in your room feels boring, switch it up.

Try reading: on the couch | before bed | during a car ride | with soft music | as an audiobook while following the text. Sometimes it's not the book. It's the setting.

Pick Page-Turner Books

Slumps disappear faster with hard-to-put-down stories.

Look for: short chapters | cliff-hangers | lots of action or humor | strong main characters. If a book doesn't hook you after a few chapters, it's okay to stop. Yes, really.



Make Reading Social

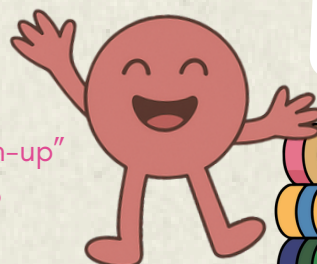


Reading doesn't have to be lonely.

You can: read the same book as a friend | join a school book club | talk about books online | tell someone what you're reading
Sharing stories makes them more exciting

Lower the Pressure

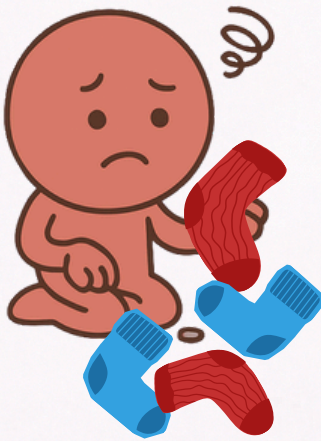
You don't have to: finish every book | read fast | read "grown-up" books | read what everyone else is reading. You only have to read what you enjoy.



Enjoy



THE COLOURED SOCKS



Ten red socks and ten blue socks are all mixed up in a laundry basket. The twenty socks are exactly alike except for their color. The room is in pitch darkness and you want two matching socks. What is the smallest number of socks you must take out of the basket in order to be certain that you have a pair that match?

Solution:

A lot of people overthink this puzzle at first.

They imagine pulling out a red sock, then thinking, "Okay, I need another red one." But since the drawer is dark, the next sock could be blue. And the next. And the next. You might even imagine pulling out all ten blue socks before finally getting another red one. That's how people end up saying the answer is twelve socks.

But there's a small detail they're missing.

The socks don't have to be red. They just have to match.

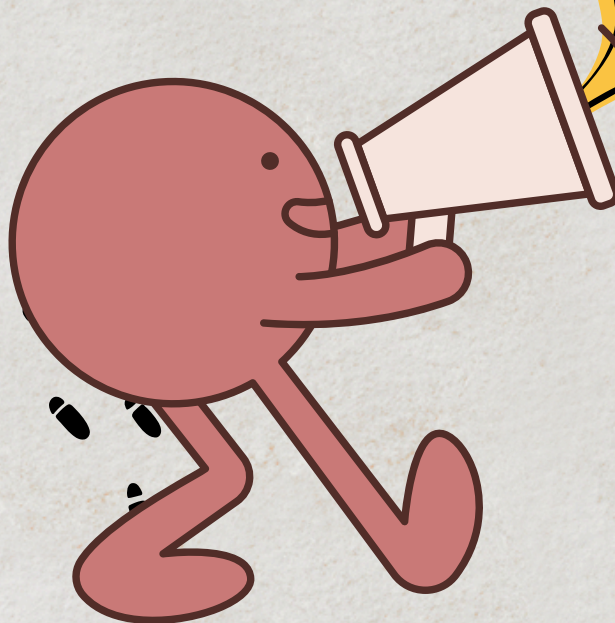
If you pull out two socks and they're the same colour, boom! you're done!

If they're different colors (one red and one blue), then the third sock you pull out has to match one of them.

No matter what, by the time you've picked three socks, you're guaranteed a matching pair.

Smart
Scoop

Writing down a habit or
goal makes you 42%
more likely to follow
through.



So go ahead, set your goals for
2026 if you haven't already.
There's no better time than now!

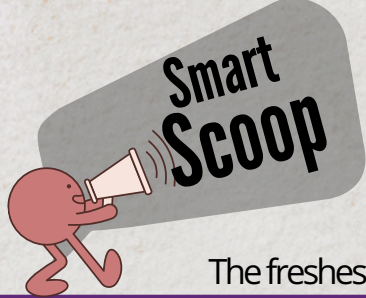
Got some feedback or want to share something with us?

Write to us here:

smartscoopteam@gmail.com

<https://www.smartscoop.in>

We'd love to hear from you! Mostly Blurt tbh..



The freshest finds for clever minds!!!

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