

Learning Objectives Quick Guide

Learning Objectives are specific behaviors (outcomes) that students must exhibit at the end of a segment of learning. Objectives also need to be written in a way that maps out **what** learners are expected to do **where** they will do it and **how well**.

A learning objective has three major components:

- What: A description of what the student will be able to do
- Where: The conditions under which the student will perform the task.
- How well: The criteria for evaluating student performance.

How do you write a Learning Objective? In writing a Learning Objective:

- Focus on student performance - not teacher performance.
- Focus on product - not process.
- Focus on terminal behavior - not subject matter.
- Include only one general learning outcome in each objective.

Characteristics of Learning Objectives

There are three characteristics essential to insuring clear statements of objectives:

Behavior - An objective must describe the competency to be learned in performance terms. The choice of a verb is all-important here. Such frequently used terms as know, understand, grasp, and appreciate do not meet this requirement. If the verb used in stating an objective identifies an observable student behavior, then the basis for a clear statement is established.

Criterion - Second, an objective should make clear how well a learner must perform to be judged adequate. This can be done with a statement indicating a degree of accuracy, a quantity or proportion of correct responses or the like.

Conditions - Third, an objective should describe the conditions under which the learner will be expected to perform in the evaluation situation. What tools, references, or other aids will be provided or denied should be made clear.

Example:

OBJECTIVE: "Given a set of data the student will be able to compute the standard deviation."

Condition - Given a set of data

Behavior - the student will be able to compute the standard deviation.

Criterion - (implied) - the number computed will be correct.

How will you know students have achieved the learning objectives?

Construct your objectives so that it's clear to your students what is expected of them. What will they be able to do at the end of the course that they couldn't do when they started? How will you know they have achieved the objective?

Here are a few examples of vague objectives that have been transformed into more clearly defined and measureable outcomes.

Vague Expectations

Gain an appreciation of Minoan art.

Understand the elements of good writing.

Demonstrate knowledge of geologic time.

Develop diagnostic skills.

Clear Expectations

Identify the qualities and characteristics present in Minoan art.

Identify 5 characteristics of good writing.

List (from the oldest to most recent) the ages, epochs, and eras that make up the geologic time scale.

After examining the patient and reviewing the standard blood tests, select a course of treatment.

Action Words for Objectives:

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Define	Classify	Apply	Analyze	Arrange	Appraise
Identify	Describe	Compute	Appraise	Assemble	Assess
Indicate	Discuss	Construct	Calculate	Collect	Choose
Know	Explain	Demonstrate	Categorize	Compose	Compare
Label	Express	Dramatize	Compare	Construct	Contrast
List	Identify	Employ	Contrast	Create	Decide
Memorize	Locate	Use	Criticize	Design	Estimate
Name	Paraphrase	Illustrate	Debate	Formulate	Evaluate
Recall	Recognize	Interpret	Determine	Manage	Grade
Record	Report	Investigate	Diagram	Organize	Judge
Relate	Restate	Operate	Differentiate	Perform	Measure
Repeat	Review	Organize	Distinguish	Plan	Rate
Select	Suggest	Practice	Examine	Prepare	Revise
Underline	Summarize	Predict	Experiment	Produce	Score
	Tell	Schedule	Inspect	Propose	Select
	Translate	Shop	Inventory	Set up	Value
		Sketch	Question		