How to write great learning objectives

3. How do I write Learning Objectives?

A learning objective is an explicit statement that clearly expresses what the student <u>will be able to do</u> after taking a course.   It is an observable and measurable student outcome statement. A learning objective identifies what behavior(s) a student must demonstrate in order for the instructor to know that the planned learning took place.

Learning objectives also benefit students by helping them clarify their personal goals for a course and give them a framework against which to measure their own success.

Learning objectives should be concise and concrete so they are open to limited interpretation. They may be used for both Synchronous and Asynchronous style courses.

A Learning Objective is Made Up of 3 Parts:

1. BEHAVIOR:
Describes what participants will be able to do as a consequence of taking a course. (example: calculate)

2. CONDITION:
Describes conditions under which the student will perform the behavior.
(example: using the sample course residential project...)

3. CRITERIA:
Describes the criteria you will use to evaluate student performance.
(example: the total cost of materials)

Combine the behavior, condition, and criteria and you have a official learning objective!

EXAMPLE: Participants will be able to calculate the total cost of materials using the sample course residential project.

WRITING A LEARNING OBJECTIVE IN 4 STEPS

STEP 1. What BEHAVIOR will the student be able to do after taking the course?

Describe what new information, skills, or behaviors participants will be able to do at the conclusion of your course. Behavior must be observable and/or measurable.

(Use behavioral verbs below)

EXAMPLE: Participants will be able to define 3 high-end performance goals in terms of site, water, materials, energy, indoor environmental quality, mobility, or community.

STEP 2. Under What CONDITION will the behavior be performed?

Explain HOW the behavior will be performed. Think of circumstances, commands, materials, and directions that the student will be given to perform the behavior.

EXAMPLE: Using an existing project...

STEP 3. Against What CRITERIA?

How will you evaluate the behavior? How often, how well, how many, how much, etc.

EXAMPLE: Evaluate if the project is still viable as measured against the performance goals.

STEP 4. Now Put It All Together

Combine the three steps into one or two complete sentences and you're finished.

Participants will be able to define 3 high-end performance goals in terms of site, water, materials, energy, indoor environmental quality, mobility, or community, using an existing project, to evaluate if the project is still viable as measured against the performance goals.

BEHAVIORAL VERBS TO USE WHEN WRITING A LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Use the following behavioral verbs when writing learning objectives since they describe observable and measurable behaviors. Using concrete verbs will

abstract, acquire, adjust, agree, analyze, apply, appraise, argue, assess, avoid, breakdown, build, calculate, carry out, catalog, clarify, classify, combine, compare, compute, conclude, construct, contrast, convert, cooperate, create, criticize, defend, define, demonstrate, derive, describe, design, detect, determine, differentiate, discover, discriminate, discuss, dissect, distinguish, employ, estimate, evaluate, examine, explain, explore, formulate, generalize, help, identify, illustrate, implement, indicate, inspect, instruct, integrate, interpret, investigate, join, judge, justify, label, list, master, measure, move, name,

observe, offer, operate, order, organize, participate, perform, plan, praise, predict, prepare, produce, propose, rank, recall, recognize, relate, repair, represent, reproduce, research, restate, resolve, select, sequence, solve, specify, state, summarize, support, systematize, taste, test, theorize, transform, translate, use, utilize, verify, weigh, write, etc.

BEHAVIORAL VERBS TO AVOID WHEN WRITING A LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Avoid using the following behavioral verbs when writing learning objectives because they are vague and difficult to measure. As mentioned previously, learning objectives must be observable and measurable.

appreciate, cover, realize, be aware of, familiarize, study, become acquainted with, gain knowledge of, understand, comprehend, know, learn

SAMPLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to identify the relationship between high-end goals and budget limitations, using a completed project to compare and create a new budget that incorporates high-end goals.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE RESOURCES

For more information on Learning Objectives, please visit the following websites from which most of the content found on this page was taken from.

[Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains](#)

[How to Write Learning Objectives that Meet Demanding Behavioral Criteria](#)

[A Clear Guide to Writing Learning Objectives](#)

TO LEARN HOW TO WRITE COMPLEX LEARNING OBJECTIVES VISIT OUR PAGE ON BLOOM'S TAXONOMY *[Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains](#)*