



Writing Educational Objectives

What are objectives?

Educational objectives are specific statements that detail what a learner or team of learners can expect to learn from an educational activity. For most Continuing Education (CE) activities, these statements describe knowledge, skill, and attitude changes that should occur upon successful completion of activity.

How many objectives do I need?

The number of objectives for the program should be sufficient to accomplish the intended purpose of the activity. Aim for 2-3 objectives per hour of content. If you have only 1 objective or more than 3 per hour, review your objectives and content. Are you trying to do too much? Are you trying to do too little?

Focus on the Learner

Objectives should fit the content and the learners. For example, a review lecture on the basic anatomy of a heart may not be appropriate for cardiac surgeons. Focus on more in-depth information or only pertinent information regarding the anatomy that is required to move forward. Content intended to incorporate interprofessional collaborative practice should include team-based objectives.

What makes an objective?

A good objective is specific, measurable, and answers: **WHO** is going to do **WHAT** by **WHEN**?

The **WHAT** portion should begin with a measurable verb. This means it must be able to be completed and be verifiable. (See the chart below for strong, measurable verbs.)

Examples:

- At the conclusion of this activity (**WHEN**), the learner (**WHO**) will be able to program an Alaris pump. (**WHAT**).
- At the conclusion of this activity (**WHEN**), the team (**WHO**) will be able to provide formative feedback to each other. (**WHAT**)

A *better* objective, adds **HOW**.

Examples:

- At the conclusion of this activity (**WHEN**), the learner (**WHO**) will be able to program an Alaris pump (**WHAT**) through the assistance of the user guide provided (**HOW**).
- At the conclusion of this activity (**WHEN**), the team (**WHO**) will be able to utilize the Concise Assessment of Leader Management (CALM) tool (**HOW**) to provide formative feedback to each other. (**WHAT**)

Common problems with objectives

- o Problem: Beginning with a poor verb (i.e., understand, learn) that is generic and hard to measure.
- o Solution: Think about what learners should be able to do with the information. Should they be able to recite? Utilize? Discriminate? Reconstruct? Use the verb charts to choose a more accurate verb.

- o Problem: Objective is from the wrong point of view – the presenters.
- o Solution: Remember, the objective is for the learner to know what they can expect to achieve. Begin your objectives with the phrase “At the conclusion of this activity, the learner will be able to” or “At the conclusion of this activity, the team will be able to” to help you keep the learner in mind.



Verbs or phrases to avoid

Acknowledge Appreciate Be aware of... Be conscious of... Believe
 Comprehend Grasp Internalize Realize Sense
 Understand Value

Choosing appropriate and strong verbs

Decide what you want your learners to accomplish and which category it falls under – Knowledge, Skill, or Attitude, and look at the appropriate chart/list below.

Knowledge Verb Chart

Knowledge is the most widely used category. As the chart moves left to right, the level of knowledge needed to perform a task increases.

← Critical Thinking →					
					Evaluation
					Argue
				Synthesis	Assess
		Analysis	Alter	Compare	Consider
	Application	Analyze	Assemble	Combine	Contrast
	Comprehension	Apply	Break down	Construct	Critique
Knowledge	Arrange	Calculate	Classify	Create	Decide
Attend	Categorize	Change	Conclude	Design	Determine
Choose	Chart	Complete	Criticize	Devise	Discriminate
Collect	Cite	Conduct	Debate	Expand	Estimate
Define	Compile	Demonstrate	Deduce	Formulate	Evaluate
Detect	Defend	Develop	Diagram	Generate	Interpret
Duplicate	Describe	Discover	Differentiate	Integrate	Judge
Find	Discuss	Employ	Distinguish	Manage	Justify
Identify	Document	Manipulate	Examine	Modify	Measure
Imitate	Explain	Operate	Induce	Originate	Rank
Indicate	Express	Organize	Infer	Rearrange	Rate
Label	Extrapolate	Plan	Inspect	Reconstruct	Recommend
List	Fill in	Practice	Inventory	Reorganize	Score
Mark	Follow	Predict	Recognize	Revise	Validate
Match	Gather	Prepare	Relate	Synthesize	<i>Make judgments on basis of given criteria</i>
Name	Generalize	Prescribe	Separate	Transform	
Order	Give example	Present	Structure	<i>Apply prior knowledge and skills to produce something new</i>	
Outline	Illustrate	Produce	<i>Examine information to identify motives or causes, make inferences, determine relationships or draw conclusions</i>		
Point	Interpolate	Propose			
Read	Itemize	Restructure			
Recall	Locate	Schedule			
Recite	Paraphrase	Show			
Repeat	Quote	Solve			
Reproduce	Report	Utilize			
Specify	Restate	<i>Use previously learned information in new situations</i>			
State	Summarize				
Write	<i>Discover the meaning of information</i>				
Retrieve learned information					



Skill Verbs

Skill verbs describe the ability of learners to perform at task or follow a procedure.

Advance	Anchor	Assort	Build	Carry
Climb	Converse	Convert	Demonstrate	Enlarge
Enter	Equip	Execute	Fabricate	Fill
Finish	Fix	Furnish	Gather	Generate
Grind	Heave	Inscribe	Inspect	Intersect
Juggle	Make	Manipulate	Observe	Operate
Perform	Practice	Proceed	Rebuild	Recast
Remodel	Straighten	Transfer	Transpose	Work

Attitude Verbs

Attitude objectives describe the feelings, values, and attitudes of learners. These objectives are the most difficult to measure. It is difficult to measure internal thoughts and feelings of learners. Please consider if this is the most appropriate verb for your objectives and presentation before using an attitude verb. Also, please make any attitude objectives as measurable as possible.

Accept	Admit	Allow	Aspire	Attain
Belong	Commend	Concur	Confer	Correspond
Dedicate	Deserve	Engage	Enhance	Enlist
Excel	Exhibit	Express	Flatter	Fulfill
Impart	Impel	Incite	Induce	Invigorate
Motivate	Perceive	Reinforce	Stimulate	Urge