

A Clear Guide to Writing Objective Statements

A well-written objective statement provides a clear picture of the outcome or performance you expect as a result of the lesson. It should be specific, concise, and, most importantly, *observable* or *measurable*.

Objective statements contain three parts: behavior, conditions, and criteria.

The following table shows how these parts interact.

Objective Part	Description	Example
Behavior	What students will be able to do	Students will <i>create</i> a time line of the main events at Gettysburg,
Conditions	How they will be able to do it	after generating a graphic organizer on Chapter 5: A Decisive Battle,
Criterion	Degree of accuracy observed	with a rubric rating of 3 (out of 5) or better.

In this example, the lesson plan would call for the students to first generate a graphic organizer about a chapter titled "A Decisive Battle." Then, the students will create a time line of the main events at Gettysburg. The teacher will assess each time line using a rubric. Any students who do not earn a rubric rating of a 3 or better will require additional instruction or reinforcement.

Additional Examples:

- Given four works of short fiction of contrasting genres, the student will analyze and match each work with its correct genre.
- Using the *washingtonpost.com* Web site, the student will correctly identify and print out two examples each of a news article and an editorial regarding a topical new item.
- Given twenty examples of incorrect verb tense usage, the student will identify and correct a minimum of sixteen instances.

When writing objective statements, ask yourself these questions:

- Does the objective focus on student performance?
- Is the task measurable or observable?
- What criteria will I use to establish that the objective has been reached?

Note:

- Avoid words like *understand*, *learn*, and *know*. They are not measurable because there is no product involved.
- Sometimes the degree of accuracy is implied by words such as *correctly* and *successfully*.
- Not all lessons result in a tangible product. Therefore, when students verbally demonstrate their learning, the measurable action involves *telling*, *explaining*, or *discussing*.