

The ABCD Model for Writing Objectives

Objectives are critical to effective instruction; they help tutors plan the strategies and activities they will use, including the materials and resources to support learning. It is essential that the objective be clear and describe the intended learning outcome. Objectives can communicate to learners what is expected of them—but only if they are shared with learners in a way learners can understand.

- Objectives must be specific, outcome-based, and measurable.
- Objectives must be observable and unambiguous to be effective.
- Avoid words like *understand* and *learn* in writing objectives; they are difficult to measure.

EXAMPLE

Given a standard sentence, the GED learner should be able to identify the noun and verb without error.

OBJECTIVES SHOULD CONTAIN:

- Audience – learners for whom the objective is written (e.g., ESL, ABE, GED);
- Behavior – the verb that describes what the audience will be able to do (e.g., describe, explain, find, communicate);
- Condition – the circumstances under which the audience will perform the behavior (e.g., when a learner obtains medicine from the pharmacy s/he will be able to read the dosage);
- Degree – acceptable performance of the behavior (i.e., how well the learner performs the behavior).

The objective does not have to be written in this order (ABCD), but it should contain all of these elements

AUDIENCE

- Describe the intended learner or end user of the instruction
- Examples: The GED learner, the ESL parent, the job-seeker

BEHAVIOR

- Describes learner capability
- If it is a skill, it should be a real-world skill
- Examples: ... should be able to write a note, should be able to describe the steps, should be able to answer simple questions

CONDITION

- Equipment or tools that may (or may not) be used in completion of the behavior
- Examples: ...given a calculator, given chapters 1-5 of *Charlotte's Web*, given a bank teller

DEGREE

- States the standard for acceptable performance (time, accuracy, proportion, quality, etc)
- Examples: ... without error, 9 out of 10 times, within 60 seconds.

Review of ABCD Objectives

- Who is to exhibit the performance?
- What observable performance is the learner to exhibit?
- What conditions are provided for the learner at the time of evaluation?
- What constitutes a minimum acceptable response?

ABCD Objective Writing Practice (becomes Step 1 of Lesson Plan)

Audience
Behavior <i>(can include demonstration of knowledge, skills, personal interaction, etc.)</i>
Condition <i>(can include environment, equipment, tools, or materials)</i>
Degree <i>(time, accuracy, quality, etc.)</i>

Lesson Objective:

Backward Design Lesson Plan Template—Sample

Step 1—Desired Results (What Learner will learn...)—Use ABCD Objective Model

Benchmarks or other objectives. What should learner know, understand, and be able to do as a result of the lesson?

Objective: *When her child has been absent from school due to illness, my learner will be able to write a note to the child's teacher with 90% accuracy.*

Step 2—Assessment/Evidence

What will learner do to show what s/he has learned?

Performance criteria—How good is good enough? Provide checklists.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name of child | <input type="checkbox"/> Name of child's teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child's grade | <input type="checkbox"/> Child's room number |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Date(s) of absence | <input type="checkbox"/> Reason for absence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home phone number | <input type="checkbox"/> Signature of parent |

Step 3—Learning Plan

Learning activities

- Introductory activity: Introduce desired results; connect with learner experience.
 - Do an easy activity that activates prior knowledge and focuses on the day's lesson
 - Relate the activity to learner's life
 - Assess prior knowledge of new material
- Learner-centered steps: Scaffold the lesson; specify assessment during practice and at the end.
 - Use many strategies to present the same material (auditory, visual, tactile-kinesthetic)
 - Constantly check for understanding
 - Model each activity
 - Include lots of practice time—practice to mastery
 - Provide immediate feedback
- Evaluation
 - Verify learner masters the skill using written or oral assessment
 - Have learner use checklist or otherwise confirm understanding and mastery
- Closure: Revisit and discuss next steps with your learner.
 - Provide an activity that challenges learner apply the learning beyond the lesson; encourage using this skill in another situation.

Resources, Timing, and Materials

- Materials to have ready
- Approximate time needed for each activity

Backward Design Lesson Plan Template

Step 1—Desired Results (What Learner will learn...)—Use ABCD Objective Model

Step 2—Assessment/Evidence

Step 3—Learning Plan

Learning activities:

Resources, Timing, and Materials