



7.1 | Apply: Identify / Write Good Outcomes/Objectives

In *Streamlined ID* (2027), the terms “outcome” and “objective” are both used to refer to concise statements of observable behaviors written from the learner’s perspective that indicate what the learner should know, do, and/or feel after completing a specified unit of instruction. Novice instructional designers often mistakenly write out a description of an *activity* (also known as a teaching/learning strategy) rather than writing a true outcome or objective. The difference between objectives and activities can be subtle, as noted in the following example:

Activity = *The class will watch a conflict management video and take a test on the contents.*

Objective = *After viewing the conflict management video, the student will correctly answer at least 9 out of 10 questions on the content of the video.*

So, what makes a good outcome/objective? A good outcome/objective is:

- Written from the learner’s perspective (as opposed to activities that are written from the perspective of the instructor or the instruction).
- Worthwhile, describing growth in knowledge, skills, or a change in attitude that is clearly relevant and desirable for the learner, defining something the learner will use in real life or that will empower the learner to acquire other knowledge or skills.
- SMART = Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, and Timely.

Complete the following exercises to test your ability to identify and write “good” and “worthwhile” outcomes/objectives. Check your answers with the answer key linked from the Ch. 7 website resources.

Part 1 – Distinguish between Objectives and Activities

Identify the nature of each statement below by labeling the objectives with an “O” and the activities with an “A.”

1. ☒ **A** The students will visit a community service agency on a class field trip.
2. ☐ **O** The student will write an original ballad.
3. ☒ **A** The student actors will rehearse for the play using prepared play books.
4. ☐ **O** The medical students will distinguish between patients with the flu and those with colds.

Part 2 – Identify Worthwhile Objectives

For each pair of objectives listed below (marked “a” and “b”), place a check by the objective that you think is the more worthwhile of the pair.

- 5a. ☐ Given a map with a scale of 1 inch to 100 miles, the student will describe how to figure the distance between two points on the map.
- 5b. ☒ Given a map with a scale of 1 inch to 100 miles and the names of five pairs of cities occurring on that map, the student will figure the direct distance between each pair of cities to the nearest 100 miles. *In our opinion, this objective is more worthwhile because the student is actually performing the desired behavior, as opposed to merely describing it.*
- 6a. ☒ The student will demonstrate a positive attitude toward drama by choosing to attend at least two out-of-school plays during the school year. *In our opinion, this objective is more worthwhile because the student is engaging in behavior that reflects a choice of how to*



spend his or her time, as opposed to merely rating activities that he or she may or may not choose carry out.

- 6b. ____ The student will demonstrate a positive attitude toward drama by rating drama activities favorably on a standardized interest survey.
- 7a. ____ The student will name the constitutional rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.
- 7b. ☒ Given examples of situations in which constitutional rights have been invoked or denied, the student will name the rights involved. *In our opinion, this objective is more worthwhile because it requires the learner to exercise a higher-level skill of applying what the student knows to identify examples of concepts in situations, while the first objective describes a lower-level skill of remembering and reciting.*
- 8a. ☒ The student will spell the new vocabulary words correctly when they are provided orally. *In our opinion, this objective is more worthwhile because the student is recalling the correct spelling of words from memory to actually spell the words (the desired terminal behavior), as opposed to merely recognizing the correct spelling of those words.*
- 8b. ____ The student will identify each correctly spelled word from a list of new vocabulary words spelled both correctly and incorrectly.

Part 3 – Write SMART Objectives

Review the section entitled *Defining Outcome Types and Level of Detail* in Chapter 6 of Streamlined ID. Then, write two well-designed objectives, following these guidelines:

Be Specific – Use as much detail as is appropriate to describe... *who* (Audience) is to accomplish *what* (Behavior), under *what conditions* and given *what tools* (Condition) and *to what extent* (Degree).

Make it Masurable – Describe the objective or outcome in terms that can be clearly measured and evaluated.

Use Action-Oriented Verbs – Use action verbs to describe the outcome or objective in terms that connote action rather than personal qualities.

Be Realistic – Define an objective or outcome that is actually attainable by the identified audience.

Make it Timely – Break down complex or time-intensive objectives/outcomes into single-task and/or shorter-term objectives with a clearly specified completion time/date.

9. [enter your objective]

10. [enter your objective]

Your answers in this section will vary, but the main points for each SMART element include:

***Specific** – Your objectives should be a precise statement of an observable competency demonstrated by the learner following the instruction.*

***Measurable** – Your objectives should clearly indicate how the learning will be measured or assessed.*

***Action-oriented** – Your objectives should be written with action verbs to describe the observable behaviors that learners will exhibit.*

***Realistic** – Your objectives are reasonable and realistic, given the time and resources available for implementation of the instruction.*

***Timely** – Your objectives define reasonable time boundaries for completion.*