

TAXONOMY FOR WRITING BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Verbs chosen for behavioral objectives must be overt, observable, and measurable. Such verbs allow for more appropriate evaluation of learning because the objective clearly states what the learner will know or be able to do at the conclusion of the educational session. Choose verbs based on the actual behavior you wish the learner to display when they demonstrate mastery of the objective, and on the sophistication of the learner and material.

There are six levels (1-6) of cognitive/psychomotor learning, indicated by the six categories below. Each level increases in complexity and degree of mental integration. Choose verbs for behavioral objectives that actually reflect not only what you want the learner to know or be able to do, but also indicate the degree of cognitive/psychomotor integration you desire from the learner to successfully complete the objective.

Behavioral Verbs

Knowledge (Level 1) Verbs

choose	itemize	outline
define	list	pick
examine	locate	recognize
find	match	select
identify	name	state
indicate		

Comprehension (Level 2) Verbs

classify	estimate	put in order
compute	explain	recite
coordinate	interpret	summarize
describe	measure	trace

Application (Level 3) Verbs

adjust	delineate between	operate
apply	demonstrate	perform (activity)
arrange (in an order)	determine	plan
assign	discuss	predict
assist with	document	prepare
calculate	draw	present
calibrate	implement	schedule
compile data	insert	solve
conduct	investigate	use
construct	make	

Analysis (Level 4) Verbs

analyze	differentiate between	infer
classify	draw conclusions from/about	determine
correlate	form generalizations	organize
deduce	interpret (relationships/outcome)	solve

Synthesis (Level 5) Verbs

coordinate (an activity)	develop	produce
create	initiate	write (original creation)
design	plan (an activity/event)	

Evaluation (Level 6) Verbs

assess	discriminate among	inspect
compare/contrast	evaluate	make a decision

Non-Behavioral Verbs

The following verbs are not overt, observable or easily measurable, and are open to interpretation as to how the learner will demonstrate mastery of an objective at the conclusion of the educational activity. Although we know these intellectual activities occur during adult learning, there is no easy way to measure achievement. These verbs may not be used in behavioral objectives:

appreciate	increase interest/ability in
be acquainted with	increase awareness of
be aware of	interact with
be familiar with	know/know how to
comprehend	learn
conceptualize	participate in
develop appreciation of/for	perceive
develop conceptual thinking	remember
gain an understanding of	sympathize with
grasp the significance of	think/think about
have/possess knowledge of	understand

Teacher-Centered Verbs

Behavioral objectives are learner-centered, not teacher-centered. They must describe what the learner will know/do at the conclusion of the activity, not what the teacher will do during the activity. The following verbs indicate teacher activities, and may not be used for behavioral objectives-

introduce (information
concepts, insights)
present
provide

share
show
talk about
tell