



## Strong Objectives: How to Write Aligned, Specific and Measurable Statements

### Overview

#### Why focus on writing strong objectives?

Objectives refer to a description of observable student knowledge and/or performance. The stronger the objectives, the higher the level of understanding the students will be able to reach. Objectives guide the activities and assessments we chose to improve and evaluate our students' understanding of concepts. It is important, therefore, that we learn to write strong objectives. Objectives should be the learning related to the standards, meaning, they describe the intended student learning outcome inherent in a standard.

### Writing Strong Objectives

#### What are the components of a strong objective?

A strong objective should be **clearly aligned to standards**, **specific** and **measurable**. It should answer two questions: (1) what is the student going to be able to do and (2) how is the student going to achieve the desired outcome? The objective should tell us explicitly what a student should be able to do fluently by the end of the lesson or unit to demonstrate proficiency of a specific standard or set of standards.

#### 1) What:

- What new pieces of knowledge (such as the description of a concept or the definition of a key term) will students be able to understand and explain?
- What new skill will students be able to perform? This is something each student is going to walk away with inside his or her head that wasn't there before.

#### 2) How:

- What process or strategy will students use to achieve the learning goal?
- What activities will we use to assess student understanding?

The answers to these questions should come from the knowledge and skills within a standard (or set of standards). Standards referenced at the end of each Course Description Document, in addition to the specific numbered standards that make up a course, can serve as a resource for creating objectives. Let's look at a template to get us started thinking about what makes up a strong objective.

#### Work It Out

##### Objective Structure

Students will be able to \_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_.  
*What?* *How?*

##### Check the Strength

- Is it clear how this objective connects to a standard or set of standards in my course?
- Is it clear what methods/activities students will use to gain and demonstrate their understanding?
- Is it specific enough to differentiate the distinct pieces of knowledge and/or skills students need?
- Is it measurable? Does it give details on specific activities a proficient student would be able to complete effectively to demonstrate their understanding?



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<p><b>Make it Specific!</b> A <u>specific</u> objective differentiates the distinct pieces of knowledge and/or skills a student needs to become proficient in a standard. It clearly describes, in detail, exactly what the teacher is going to cover and what the student will know by the end of the lesson/unit.</p>	
<p><b>Strong</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Students will compare and contrast the three primary types of business ownership.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Weak</b></p> <p><b>Understand business ownership.</b></p>
<p><b>Make it Measurable!</b> A <u>measurable</u> objective outlines specific activities students will be using to gain, and demonstrate, an understanding of the concept in the standard. It clearly describes, in detail, what a proficient student would be able to accomplish by the end of the lesson/unit. How a teacher would assess the knowledge/skill should be clear.</p>	
<p><b>Strong</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Design an 8 – 10 question survey for interviewing owner/manager of selected business.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Weak</b></p> <p><b>Identify continuation of business operations.</b></p>

### The Writing Process

#### Step 1:

The first step in the writing process is to refer to the specific knowledge and skills you are trying to accomplish. These should be based on your specific standard(s). For more information on unpacking standards into knowledge and skills, complete the *Knowledge and Skills: How to Unpack a Standard* worksheet.

**Example: Introduction to Business and Marketing  
Standard 7**

- Compare and contrast the three primary types of business ownership: sole proprietorship, partnership, and corporation. Research a local business in the community and compile a profile detailing the type of ownership, history and background of founding, and description of products or services offered. In an informative narrative, highlight any changes the business has made to its operations in response to market and population shifts, infrastructure development, inventions, expansion opportunities and other market factors. (TN Reading 2; TN Writing 2, 7)



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Writing Process Step 1: Identify Knowledge and Skills		
Standard	Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Compare and contrast the three primary types of business ownership: sole proprietorship, partnership, and corporation. Research a local business in the community and compile a profile detailing the type of ownership, history and background of founding, and description of products or services offered. In an informative narrative, highlight any changes the business has made to its operations in response to market and population shifts, infrastructure development, inventions, expansion opportunities and other market factors. (TN Reading 2; TN Writing 2, 7)</b></p>	<p><b>Types of business ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sole proprietorship</li> <li>• Partnership</li> <li>• Corporation</li> </ul> <p><b>Business profile</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ownership</li> <li>• history</li> <li>• description of products sold</li> <li>• description of services offered</li> </ul> <p><b>Business changes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• operations</li> <li>• infrastructure</li> <li>• inventions</li> <li>• expansions</li> <li>• other market factors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Compare and contrast</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R2 Determine central idea</li> </ul> <p><b>Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R2 Determine central idea</li> <li>• W7 Conduct short research project</li> </ul> <p><b>Compile</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W2 Write informative/explanatory texts</li> </ul> <p><b>Highlight</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W2 Write informative/explanatory texts</li> <li>• W7 Conduct short research project</li> </ul>

Refer to referenced standards for more details:

**TN Reading 2:** Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; trace the text’s explanation or depiction of a a complex process, phenomenon, or concept; provide an accurate summary of the text.

**TN Writing 2:** Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

**TN Writing 7:** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.



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### Step 2:

The second step is to arrange the knowledge and skills into a “students will be able to” statement, noting the distinct concept(s) you will be covering and also the approach you will be using with your students. Remember to make it specific and measurable.

Students will be able to (SWBAT)	Objective
SWBAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student will compare and contrast the three primary types of business ownership citing advantages and disadvantages of each.</li><li>• Student will design an 8 – 10 question survey for interviewing owner/manager of selected business.</li></ul>

*Important to note: the objectives provided are written for the standard, not for a single day of instruction. Some standards may take several days of instruction to cover.*

Use the “SWBAT *What by How*” formula to craft your own strong objectives from the knowledge and skills you have already unpacked from your standards. Follow along on the example on the next page to enhance your understanding of the process.

### Bridge to Practice

#### It’s your turn!

Follow the two-step process outlined above with a course of your choosing using the following templates.

- **Step 1:** Unpack the knowledge and skills of a standard, being sure to reference aligned standards.
- **Step 2:** Craft SWBAT statements that are specific and measurable.

Make sure that your objective clearly communicates and describes the intended learning outcome. Remember, it should answer two questions: 1) What students are going to be able to do and 2) How the student is going to achieve the desired outcome.

#### You’re done!

The writing is complete! These detailed objective statements will be useful when you move on to creating a curriculum map and student outcome-focused lessons.

Questions about this process or need assistance? Please contact [CTE.Questions@tn.gov](mailto:CTE.Questions@tn.gov).



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Students will be able to  
(SWBAT)

Objective

SWBAT

SWBAT

SWBAT

SWBAT

SWBAT

SWBAT

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**Students will be able to  
(SWBAT)**

**Objective**

**SWBAT**

**SWBAT**

**SWBAT**

**SWBAT**

**SWBAT**

**SWBAT**

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