



## 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>Students will demonstrate correct safety and handling procedures of knives following a multistep procedure outline in the textbook.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weak</b></p> <p>Be safe when using knives</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>Cite textual evidence from two sources to distinguish the different types of knives and classify their uses into a multi-column chart.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weak</b></p> <p>Identify knives in the commercial kitchen.</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: Culinary Arts I

##### Standard 19

Distinguish among the different types of knives (i.e. paring, serrated, slicers, utility, and chef's) and explain their elements of construction. Identify and demonstrate the correct use, sharpening techniques, and storage options for each type of knife examined. Create a how-to graphic outlining the proper safety handling techniques when using knives in the kitchen, citing evidence. (TN Reading 1, 3, 7; TN Writing 1, 9)



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Writing Process Step 1: Identify Knowledge and Skills		
Standard	Knowledge	Skills
<p>Distinguish among the different types of knives (i.e. paring, serrated, slicers, utility, and chef's) and explain their elements of construction. Identify and demonstrate the correct use, sharpening techniques, and storage options for each type of knife examined. Create a how-to graphic outlining the proper safety handling techniques when using knives in the kitchen, citing evidence. (TN Reading 1, 3, 7; TN Writing 1, 9)</p>	<p>Knives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paring</li> <li>• Serrated</li> <li>• Slicers</li> <li>• Utility</li> <li>• Chef's</li> </ul> <p>Elements of Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tang</li> <li>• Handle</li> <li>• Rivet</li> <li>• Heel</li> <li>• Edge</li> <li>• Blade</li> <li>• Bolster</li> </ul> <p>Correct Uses</p> <p>Sharpening Techniques</p> <p>Storage Options</p> <p>Safety Handling Techniques</p>	<p>Distinguish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R1 Cite Textual Evidence</li> <li>• W1 Arguments</li> </ul> <p>Explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R1 Cite Textual Evidence</li> <li>• W9 Draw evidence to support reflection</li> </ul> <p>Identify</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R1 Cite Textual Evidence</li> <li>• W9 Draw evidence to support reflection</li> </ul> <p>Demonstrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R3 Multiple step procedure</li> <li>• Create</li> <li>• R7 Translate technical information into visual form</li> <li>• W9 Draw evidence to support reflection</li> </ul> <p>Create</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R1 Cite textual evidence</li> <li>• R3 Multistep Procedure</li> <li>• R7 Translate words into visual form</li> <li>• W9 Draw evidence to support reflection</li> </ul>
<p><b>Refer to referenced standards for more details:</b></p> <p><b>TN Reading 1:</b> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to the precise detail of explanations or descriptions.</p> <p><b>TN Reading 3:</b> Follow precisely a complex multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks, attending to special cases or expectations defined in the text.</p> <p><b>TN Reading 7:</b> Translate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text into visual form and translate information expressed visually or mathematically into words.</p> <p><b>TN Writing 1:</b> Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.</p> <p><b>TN Writing 9:</b> Draw evidence from information texts to support analysis reflection and research.</p>		



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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
<b>SWBAT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cite textual evidence from two sources to distinguish the different types of knives and classify their uses into a multi-column chart.</li><li>• Students will demonstrate correct safety and handling procedures of knives following a multistep procedure outline in the textbook.</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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(SWBAT)

Objective

SWBAT

SWBAT

SWBAT

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SWBAT



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