

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This document was developed to help you create great learning objectives for your activity.

### Background

All accrediting bodies require the inclusion of learning objectives for CME/CE-certified educational activities. These learning objectives must:

- define what the learner should be able to do better at the completion of an activity
- be measurable and specific
- be developed to address the specifically identified educational need of the activity content
- describe learning outcomes in terms of learner competence, performance, or patient health
- be consistently communicated to the learner

### Differences Between Learning Goals Versus Learning Objectives

#### Learning Goals

- Provide a broad statement of purpose regarding the aim of the activity

#### Learning Objectives

- Provide clear/concise statements linking identified need with anticipated results
- Focus primarily on what participants will do/learn as a result of participating in the activity
- Are best when precise and measurable

#### Examples:

##### *Learning Goal*

Improve behavior management in patients with dementia

##### *Learning Objectives*

At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be better able to:

- Design treatment strategies based on nationally published guidelines that improve behavior management in dementia
- Select an appropriate treatment option based on NIH guidelines for mood stabilization in dementia

\*See more examples of learning objectives below.

### Components of High-Quality Learning Objectives

There are 3 main components of high-quality learning objectives.

**Condition:** commonly a disease, state, process, step

**Behavioral (“action”) verbs:** tells what is expected from the learner

**Standard:** Allows performance to be measured against some standard

### Importance of Choosing a “Good” Action Verb

Not all action verbs are created equal

- Some verbs are more effective than others
- Those that relate to specific actions or behaviors are critical
- Effective verbs
  - Relate to specific actions
  - Are open to fewer interpretations

\*See last page of this document for a list of good action verbs.



### Effective Action Verbs

- Involve cognitive outcome domains
  - Acquisition of knowledge
- Involve affective outcome domains
  - Receiving, responding, valuing
- Involve psychomotor outcome domains
  - Perception, adaptation, origination
  - Involve changes in attitudes, values, and/or feelings

### Weak Action Verbs

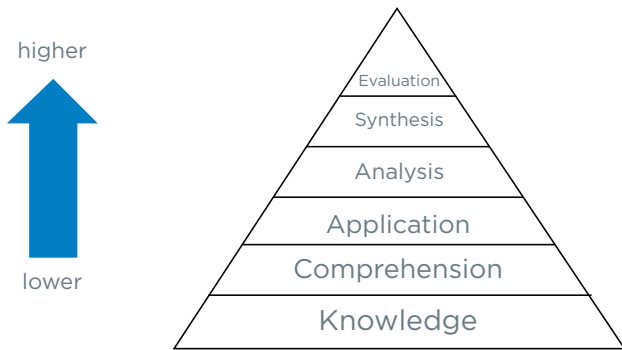
Unacceptable objectives often begin with weak verbs such as:

- |                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| • Know             | • Improve     |
| • Gain Insight     | • Grow        |
| • Learn            | • Increase    |
| • Think critically | • Really know |
| • Understand       | • Appreciate  |
| • Expand horizons  | • Learn how   |

The action of these verbs cannot easily be measured and their use should be avoided.

### Cognitive Pyramid

The action verbs used to create learning objectives can be grouped on the type of cognitive change you are aiming for in your activity. These changes can be thought of at different levels, as shown in this figure.



### Examples of Effective Learning Objectives

Here are some additional examples of effective learning objectives.

At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be better able to:

- Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of early vs late initiation of therapies
- Analyze HIV regimens for appropriateness and completeness of key components for treatment-naïve and treatment-experienced patients
- Prepare appropriate treatment regimens for occupational exposure of HIV in healthcare professionals

At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be better able to:

- Outline the prevalence and economic consequences of diabetes among older adults
- Investigate the potential complications of diabetes in older adults
- Explain the diagnosis and treatment goals of diabetes in older adults and identify factors that may compromise glycemic control
- Describe optimum management strategies for diabetes in older adults

### Summary “Do’s and Don’ts”

DO	DON'T
Describe the <b>observable action</b> that you would expect to see the learner “doing” upon completion of the activity	Describe the <b>instruction</b> that the faculty member(s) will perform to teach the learner
Use <b>measurable terms</b> to describe the actions of the learner	Use <b>unmeasurable terms</b> such as understand, know, be familiar with, comprehend, learn, or appreciate

### Suggested “Action Verbs” for Learning Objectives

The table below provides some “measurable” action verbs to use for learning objectives, grouped by level of learning.

Level of Learning	Cognitive Learning (the participant should be better able to ...)
Knowledge (remember information)	arrange, characterize, cite, count, define, describe, duplicate, identify, indicate, label, list, match, name, outline, recall, recognize, relate, reproduce, select, state, write
Comprehension (understand and organize stored info)	associate, classify, compare, compute, contrast, define, describe, differentiate, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, outline, recognize, report, restate, review, select, summarize, translate
Application (use info to solve problems)	apply, choose, classify, demonstrate, dramatize, illustrate, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write
Analysis (consider evidence to reach conclusion)	analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, distinguish, illustrate, interpret, investigate, question, research, test
Synthesis (break down info to understand components)	arrange, assemble, categorize, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, modify, organize, plan, prepare, propose, reconstruct, summarize, synthesize, write
Evaluation (judge merit)	appraise, argue, assess, choose, compare, defend, determine, estimate, evaluate, grade, interpret, judge, justify, predict, rate, select, support

Krathwohl DR, Bloom BS, Masia BB. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, the Classification of Educational Goals. Handbook II: Affective Domain.* New York: David McKay Co., Inc; 1973.