A Clear Guide to Writing Objective Statements

A well-written objective statement provides a clear picture of the outcome or performance you expect as a result of the lesson. It should be specific, concise, and, most importantly, observable or measurable.

Objective statements contain three parts: behavior, conditions, and criteria.

The following table shows how these parts interact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>What students will be able to do</td>
<td>Students will create a time line of the main events at Gettysburg, after generating a graphic organizer on Chapter 5: A Decisive Battle,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>How they will be able to do it</td>
<td>with a rubric rating of 3 (out of 5) or better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion</td>
<td>Degree of accuracy observed</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In this example, the lesson plan would call for the students to first generate a graphic organizer about a chapter titled “A Decisive Battle.” Then, the students will create a time line of the main events at Gettysburg. The teacher will assess each time line using a rubric. Any students who do not earn a rubric rating of a 3 or better will require additional instruction or reinforcement.

Additional Examples:
- Given four works of short fiction of contrasting genres, the student will analyze and match each work with its correct genre.
- Using the washingtonpost.com Web site, the student will correctly identify and print out two examples each of a news article and an editorial regarding a topical new item.
- Given twenty examples of incorrect verb tense usage, the student will identify and correct a minimum of sixteen instances.

When writing objective statements, ask yourself these questions:
- Does the objective focus on student performance?
- Is the task measurable or observable?
- What criteria will I use to establish that the objective has been reached?

Note:
- Avoid words like understand, learn, and know. They are not measurable because there is no product involved.
- Sometimes the degree of accuracy is implied by words such as correctly and successfully.
- Not all lessons result in a tangible product. Therefore, when students verbally demonstrate their learning, the measurable action involves telling, explaining, or discussing.