

Tips for Writing **Goals AND Objectives**

- Goals AND Objectives should be student-centered rather than course-centered
- Goals AND Objectives should reflect successful student performance

Tips for Writing **Course Goals**:

- Use broad language like “know” or “understand”
- Goals should reflect essential questions for your course and/or discipline

Tips for Writing **Learning Objectives**:

- Each learning objective should be connected to or stem from a course goal
- Learning objectives reflect what you want your students to be able to **DO**
- Make sure each learning objective is measurable
- Make sure each learning objective is observable
- Each learning objective should target one specific aspect of student performance

	Course Goals	Learning Objectives
measurable and observable		X
student-centered rather than course-centered	X	X
reflect what you want your students to be able to DO		X
connected to or stem from a course goal		X
reflect successful student performance	X	X
use broad language like “know” or “understand”	X	
reflect essential questions for your course and/or discipline	X	
targets one specific aspect of student performance		X

Examples of Course Goals and Learning Objectives

Goal: Upon successful completion of this course, students will understand the importance of consistently and skillfully using critical thinking to comprehend situations, issues, and problems they confront.

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Identify the elements of reasoning when thinking about personal, professional, and civic situations, issues, and problems: its purpose(s), the question(s) to be answered or problem(s) to be solved, the requisite information or evidence required, inferences made and assumptions they are based on, concepts and principles being used, implications or consequences of the reasoning, and points of view or frames of reference being used;
2. Skillfully use the universal intellectual standards of clarity, accuracy, relevance, precision, logic, breadth, depth, completeness, significance, and fairness to assess and evaluate the quality of reasoning used when considering each the elements of reasoning in Objective One;
3. Reliably and consistently engage in rational thinking by recognizing and avoiding their own and others' egocentric and sociocentric biases; and
4. Exhibit the intellectual traits or dispositions of intellectual humility, intellectual autonomy, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, intellectual courage, confidence in reason, intellectual empathy, and fair-mindedness.

Goal: Upon successful completion of this course, students will understand how to reason and act in a consistently ethical fashion with respect to other people, animals, and the natural environment.

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Distinguish among examples of complex reasoning based on ethical principle, religious dogma, legal prescription, and social conditioning, including traditional customs and political propaganda;
2. Identify the elements of reasoning (purpose of the reasoning, question to be answered, information needed, concepts and principles required, assumptions being made, points of view that should be considered, inferences made and conclusions drawn, and implications for self and others of these and other possible conclusions);
3. Analyze reasoning about complex ethical dilemmas, using the above identified elements of reasoning;
4. Analyze reasoning about complex moral dilemmas in terms of their clarity, accuracy, precision, depth, breadth, logic, and significance;
5. Discern moral content and determine a principled ethical course of action, using the analyses in Objectives 2, 3, and 4;
6. Exhibit respectful behavior toward other people, animals, and the natural environment that is consistently characterized by the traits of humanity, empathy, fair-mindedness, integrity, ethical perseverance, and ethical courage.

Goal: Upon successful completion of this course, students will know how to become involved and act responsibly and with informed awareness of contemporary issues in a community and to develop leadership abilities.

Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Assess their own knowledge and skills in thinking about and acting on local issues;
2. Analyze community issues and develop strategies for informed response;
3. Evaluate personal and organizational characteristics, skills, and strategies that facilitate accomplishment of mutual goals; and
4. Apply their developing citizenship skills in a community setting.

Goal: Students will understand how to use concepts and principles of ecology, together with plausible evidence, to describe the interactions of organisms with their environments and with each other.

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate that organisms are both interdependent and dependent on their environments, using specific examples from various major taxa as well as from marine, freshwater, and terrestrial environments;
2. Illustrate how ecosystems consist of populations of organisms, together with abiotic inputs, nutrient cycles, energy cycles, and limiting factors;
3. Explain how species and populations interact in a dynamic fashion in communities;
4. Propose one or more hypotheses that plausibly suggest how different species can occupy the same ecological niche, and support the hypothesis or hypotheses with convincing evidence;
5. Illustrate how the various world biomes reflect global physical and biotic diversity;
6. Use the concept of ecological succession to explain temporal changes in communities and ecosystems; and
7. Demonstrate the range of human impacts on the natural environment, together with their specific causes.

Goal: Upon successful completion of this course, students will know the skills needed to locate, gather, and use information intellectually and responsibly.

Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to locate and gather information through libraries, the world wide web, and "field" research methods, such as interviews and surveys;
2. Evaluate the sources of information;
3. Analyze, summarize, and synthesize information from diverse sources;
4. Apply information gained through research to a given situation;
5. Communicate to others information, conclusions, and arguments through writing and the use of tables, graphs, and other visual rhetoric; and
6. Appropriately cite sources of information.

Goal: By the end of this course, the successful student will understand the scientific method.

Learning Objectives: : By the end of this course, the successful student will be able to:

1. Distinguish between a hypothesis, a theory, and a law;
2. Define each of the above from a scientific experiment;
3. Outline the steps of the scientific method for each lab experiment;
4. Generate predictions, based on the outcomes of each lab experiment; and
5. Maintain the distinction between predicted and observed results, even if the lab experiment fails to produce the expected results.

Goal: The successful student in this course will know how to argue as a professional historian does.

Learning Objectives: : The successful student in this course will be able to:

1. Take a position on a debatable historical issue;
2. Use historical data as evidence for the position;
3. Raise and answer counterarguments;
4. Appropriately summarize, synthesize, and cite sources of historical data in making historical arguments.

Example of table that aligns Course Goals (left column) with Learning Objectives (center column) and with assignments and class activities (right column):

Upon successful completion of this course, students will (know/understand):	Upon successful completion of this course, students <u>will be able to</u> :	How the student will be measured on these learning objectives?
Know to argue as a professional historian does.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take a position on a debatable historical issue 2. Use historical data as evidence for the position 3. Raise and answer counterarguments 4. Appropriately summarize, synthesize, and cite sources of historical data in making historical arguments 	Reading journal, in-class writing prompts, final research paper project, group presentation
Develop a better understanding of the writing process.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a thesis statement 2. Explain the concept of a thesis 3. Demonstrate the ability to integrate a thesis statement into brainstorming and an outline for a persuasive paper 4. Critique their own draft of a persuasive paper 	In-class writing prompts, two reflection papers, final research paper project
Understand the importance of teamwork skills.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify, attract and “close the deal” with an appropriate partner 2. Negotiate fair sharing of the work load 3. Appropriately address problems in the partnership 4. Fairly grade own and partner’s contributions 	Group presentation, in-class small group work
Understand the importance of working across difference.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the ways their experiences and views influence their evaluations of interactions between people and the operation of institutions 2. Express when difference matters and when it does not 3. Articulate a definition of social justice based on a historical context or situation 	Final research paper project, reading journal, two reflection papers

Revision Checklist

Course Goals:

- _____ Does the course goal have at least one learning objective?
- _____ Does the course goal use broad language and verbs like “know” or “understand”?
- _____ Is the course goal student-centered?
- _____ Does the course goal reflect successful student performance?
- _____ Are there an appropriate amount of course goals?
- _____ Do your course goals reflect your essential questions and the enduring understandings for your course?
- _____ Do the course goals encompass a range of educational outcomes?

Learning Objectives:

- _____ Does the learning objective stem from a course goal?
- _____ Is the learning objective measurable?
- _____ Does the learning objective target one specific aspect of expected performance?
- _____ Is the learning objective student-centered?
- _____ Does the learning objective utilize an effective, action verb that targets the desired level of performance?
- _____ Do learning objectives measure a range of educational outcomes?
- _____ Does the learning objective match instructional activities and assessments?
- _____ Does the learning objective specify appropriate conditions for performance?
- _____ Is the learning objective written in terms of observable, behavioral outcomes?

Adapted from:

Mandernach, B. J. (2003). *Writing Quality Learning Objectives*. Retrieved 28 March 2011, from *Park University Faculty Development Quick Tips*.