

## Writing Behavioral Objectives

*Behavioral objectives* state what the learner might be able to do differently (behavioral change) as a result of what has been learned.

### ***How Should Behavioral Learning Objectives Be Written?***

Start with the phrase: “At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be able to:” and then state the things participants will be able to do. Be sure to use specific action verbs (behavioral terms) in these statements – verbs such as “identify,” “cite,” “describe,” or “assess.” A list of the verbs is provided at below. If you follow this simple format and keep the list of verbs by your side, it is almost impossible to write a bad set of objectives!

### ***Common Mistakes***

Verbs such as “know” and “understand” are vague. Avoid these words and use action verbs from the list provided. “Understanding” can have a myriad of meanings and it can be difficult to evaluate whether a learner “understands” a concept. However, a learning objective that states that a physician “will be able to cite the risk factors for breast cancer” can be evaluated consistently by both the CME Committee and the participants as to whether it has been achieved.

**When writing learning objectives, focus on the learner!**

### **List of Verbs for Formulating Behavioral Objectives**

1. **These verbs communicate knowledge**

#### ***Information***

Cite	Identify	Quote	Relate	Tell
Count	Indicate	Read	Repeat	Trace
Define	List	Recite	Select	Write
Describe	Name	Recognize	State	
Draw	Point	Record	Tabulate	

#### ***Comprehension***

Associate	Describe	Explain	Locate	Translate
Classify	Differentiate	Express	Predict	
Compare	Discuss	Extrapolate	Report	
Compute	Distinguish	Interpolate	Restate	
Contrast	Estimate	Interpret	Review	

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**Application**

Apply	Employ	Locate	Relate	Sketch
Calculate	Examine	Operate	Report	Solve
Complete	Illustrate	Order	Restate	Translate
Demonstrate	Interpolate	Practice	Review	Use
Dramatize	Interpret	Predict	Schedule	Utilize

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**Analysis**

Analyze	Debate	Distinguish	Inventory
Appraise	Detect	Experiment	Question
Contract	Diagram	Infer	Separate
Criticize	Differentiate	Inspect	Summarize

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**Synthesis**

Arrange	Construct	Formulate	Organize	Produce
Assemble	Create	Generalize	Plan	Propose
Collect	Design	Integrate	Prepare	Specify
Compose	Detect	Manage	Prescribe	

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**Evaluation**

Appraise	Determine	Judge	Recommend	Test
Assess	Estimate	Measure	Revise	
Choose	Evaluate	Rank	Score	
Critique	Grade	Rate	Select	

**2. These verbs impact skills**

Diagnose	Integrate	Measure	Project
Empathize	Internalize	Palpate	Visualize
Hold	Massage	Pass	

**3. These verbs convey attitudes**

Acquire	Exemplify	Realize	Reflect
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**These verbs are better avoided:****1. Those that are often used but are open to many interpretations**

Appreciate	Have faith in	Know	Learn	Understand
Believe	Gain			