

## Instructional Objective Defined, Examples, Practice Writing

### Definition

An *instructional objective* is a definition of a working task that a worker must be competent to do after completing a course of instruction.

The definition includes these critical parts:

- *who* performs the task,
- task *output* resulting from worker's expected behaviors,
- *observable behaviors* while worker is performing the task, *and*
- task *input* that the worker requires to perform the task, including –
  - incentive to perform the task,
  - standards for customer acceptance of task output,
  - data and information beyond procedural actions,
  - material resources besides data and information,
  - equipment, machines, and tools,
  - timeframe, *and*
  - work site.

### Enabling vs. terminal objectives

Instructional designers distinguish between enabling objectives and terminal objectives. This table defines and lists examples for both enabling objectives and terminal objectives.

Definition	Examples
<p>An <i>enabling objective</i> defines a task that the learner must master during training.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> The task is usually one of a set of tasks which, when the learner puts them all together, <i>enables</i> the learner to perform a working task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To pass the driver's exam, the learner must correctly tag six of eight basic road signs within five minutes.</li> <li>• Given tags for 10 hazardous materials, the learner must match them correctly to the products listed in the lab manual, within five minutes.</li> </ul>
<p>A <i>terminal objective</i> defines what the learner must be competent to do back at work after training terminates.</p>	<p>All the examples on the next page are terminal objectives, <i>not</i> enabling objectives.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> A terminal objective may require the learner to master several enabling objectives.</p>

## Examples of Terminal Objectives

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- Example 1**      Given a car with a flat tire, information on safe tire replacement, a jack, tire iron, lug wrench, and the desire to use the car soon, the learner will remove the flat tire and put on the good tire —
- without endangering self or passersby.
  - so that the wheel is securely mounted.
  - within 15 minutes.
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**Note**              Informally, Example 1 would read as follows:

We will provide you with a jack, tire iron, lug wrench, and car with flat tire. You must safely change the tire in 15 minutes, so that the wheel is securely mounted.

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- Example 2**      Given standards for writing a compilable computer program, and shown a set of written “programs,” some of which do not satisfy standards, the learner will list in writing within 45 minutes –
- all acceptable and unacceptable “programs.”
  - standards that have not been satisfied for each “program” in the unacceptable group.
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- Example 3**      Given two hours, a printout listing 20 pairs of chemical compounds and/or elements, procedural information for balancing chemical equations, and a pencil, the learner will write complete chemical reactions for 90 percent of the pairs, using Petrochemical Test Standards Manual symbols.
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**Non-examples**      Why are the following statements not examples of an instructional objective?

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- By taking this course, you will enhance your word processing skills.
  - Graduates of this course will know how to implement a successful quality improvement program.
  - By applying what you learn in this course, you will reduce your departmental budget by 15% within the first quarter.
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## Practice Writing Objectives

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**Directions** Follow these steps to practice applying the conceptual information about instructional objectives. Please work with a partner.

Step	Action
1	Read the two instructional objectives tagged, "Practice items."
2	Circle the words that express the behaviors that are observable while someone performs the task.
3	Underline the words that express the task's input.
4	Bracket the words that express the task's output.
5	Write two instructional objectives about working tasks you observed during recent learning events.

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**Model answer** Given five incomplete data-entry forms, enter the missing information without any errors, and print out [complete forms] in 20 minutes or less.

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**Practice items** Mark these practice items as directed.

- Using the tools and materials provided, design and fabricate within 10 minutes three towers that can stand alone for a minimum of 60 seconds.
- Given a conventional company memo and a job aid for writing a structured memo, write in 10 minutes or less a final draft that is free of all format errors.

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**Your own objectives** Write two of your own instructional objectives here:

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More...

## More... Practice Writing Objectives

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### Answers to practice items

These practice items are correctly marked:

1. Using the tools and materials provided,  
design and fabricate within 10 minutes [three towers]  
which can stand alone for a minimum of 60 seconds.
  2. Given a conventional company memo and a job aid  
for writing a structured memo,  
write in 10 minutes or less [a final draft]  
which is free of all format errors.
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### Adequate and complete

Write here your ideas about what makes an instructional objective

- adequate:
  
  - complete:
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