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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An <em>enabling objective</em> defines a task that the learner must master during training. Note: The task is usually one of a set of tasks which, when the learner puts them all together, enables the learner to perform a working task.</td>
<td>• To pass the driver’s exam, the learner must correctly tag six of eight basic road signs within five minutes.</td>
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<td>A <em>terminal objective</em> defines what the learner must be competent to do back at work after training terminates. Note: A terminal objective may require the learner to master several enabling objectives.</td>
<td>• Given tags for 10 hazardous materials, the learner must match them correctly to the products listed in the lab manual, within five minutes. All the examples on the next page are terminal objectives, not enabling objectives.</td>
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Examples of Terminal Objectives

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Non-examples**
Why are the following statements not examples of an instructional objective?

- 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.
Practice Writing Objectives

Directions

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Read the two instructional objectives tagged, “Practice items.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Circle the words that express the behaviors that are observable while someone performs the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Underline the words that express the task’s input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bracket the words that express the task’s output.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Write two instructional objectives about working tasks you observed during recent learning events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Practice items

Mark these practice items as directed.

1. Using the tools and materials provided, design and fabricate within 10 minutes three towers that 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 that is free of all format errors.

Your own objectives

Write two of your own instructional objectives here:

1.

2.

More…
More... Practice Writing Objectives

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.

Adequate and complete

Write here your ideas about what makes an instructional objective

- adequate:

- complete: