

Writing Objectives: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly ANSWER KEY

Read each context and learning objective. Then, put a check in the box that best describes each learning objective: Good, Bad or Ugly. Remember to consider Audience, Behavior, Condition, and Degree.

Next, fix the objective, as necessary. Make sure that behaviors are measurable and observable. Behaviors must contain strong, active verbs.

Note: Your revised objective may look a bit different from the ones here.

Audience = **red CAPITAL LETTERS**

Behavior = **orange**

Condition = **green bold**

Degree = **blue italics**

Other elements = light grey

Objective	Good <i>(has all ABCD components; uses active verbs)</i>	Bad <i>(is missing 1 component; few active verbs)</i>	Ugly <i>(is missing 2 or more components; no active verbs)</i>
1. Before exiting this level, STUDENTS will be able to give directions to and from specified locations on a map with a score of 32 points or higher on the task rubric.	X		
COMMENT:	The condition is fine, but it could be stated as After studying the information in this level		
2. After giving students 10 vocabulary words, THE TEACHER will quiz the students to check that they can spell all the words correctly and understand the definitions.			X
COMMENT:	I'd call this ugly because it's not about the students but rather about the teacher. It needs to be restated with the student as the audience, such as in the following:		
Sample revision:	After being introduced to 10 vocabulary words, STUDENTS will spell the words and will match the words with their definitions correctly <i>at least 90% of the time.</i>		
3. To pass this course, YOU must be able to know how to correctly use the grammar tenses covered in class with an average of 73%, or higher, on all tests.		X	
COMMENT:	This should not use "know," but it's not ugly.		
Sample revision:	STUDENTS will use the grammar tenses covered in class with at least 73% accuracy on all tests. [This implies that the student may fail if s/he received less than 73% on any test. Otherwise, it could be stated as with an average of at least 73% on all tests.]		

Objective	Good (has all ABCD components; uses active verbs)	Bad (is missing 1 component; few active verbs)	Ugly (is missing 2 or more components; no active verbs)
4. Upon successful completion of the required coursework, THE STUDENT will be able to spell 500 of the most commonly used words in English.		X	
COMMENT: Revised objective, as necessary:	The degree is incomplete. Upon successful completion of the required coursework, THE STUDENT will be able to spell 500 of the most commonly used words in English with 90% accuracy.		
5. Will complete an activity that will make learning the parts of speech more concrete within the context of long-term memory goals.			X
COMMENT: Sample revision:	Very ugly as an objective. It's difficult to understand and missing most of the necessary pieces. You could revise this in many different ways by being more specific about just what students will do and how well they need to do it. [One of many possibilities] After studying the parts of speech, STUDENTS will color-code the parts of speech at least 80% accurately the first time and at least 90% accurately when re-doing the exercise two weeks later.		
6. STUDENTS will accurately use discourse markers such as first, then, next, after that, etc., when describing to their classmates the steps they used in their experiments so that others can repeat their process with 100% accuracy.		X	
COMMENT: Sample revision:	This is almost where it needs to be. The condition could be more clearly stated. The assessment will be performance-based.. After studying discourse markers and performing an experiment, STUDENTS will accurately use discourse markers such as first, then, next, after that, etc., when describing to their classmates the steps they used in their experiments so that others can repeat their process with 100% accuracy.		
7. Demonstrate understanding of more advanced discourse such as comparison-contrast and cause-effect.			X
COMMENT: Sample revision:	Definitely ugly as an objective, but it might be all right as a goal. [One of many possibilities] After studying the elements of comparison-contrast and cause-effect essays, STUDENTS will label the parts of their comparison-contrast and cause-effect essays correctly at least 80% of the time.		

Objective	Good (has all ABCD components; uses active verbs)	Bad (is missing 1 component; few active verbs)	Ugly (is missing 2 or more components; no active verbs)
8. Upon successful completion of the required coursework, THE STUDENTS should be able to make a presentation.		X	
<p style="text-align: right;">COMMENT:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sample revision:</p>	<p>This is pretty weak – somewhere between bad and ugly because of the lack of a degree and the weak behavior.</p> <p>Upon successful completion of the required coursework, STUDENTS will make a presentation about a course project and receive at least 80% on a rubric for the presentation.</p>		