Writing Effective Learning Objectives

A clear and effective learning objective states what the learner will be able to do upon completion of a lesson, unit, or module, in terms of behavioral change. A clear objective identifies the terminal behavior or desired outcome of the educational offering.

Questions to Ask Yourself
- What do you want students to be able to do/know at the end of your lesson, unit, module…etc as a direct result of this lesson, unit, or module?
- What do your students need to know or be able to do to bridge the gap between where they are today and where you want them to be afterward?
- If students could learn only three things in this lesson, unit, module…etc, what would those three things be? What would be your three take-home messages?

Steps for Writing an Objective
1. **Sentence stem**: Write each objective beginning with the phrase "At the end of this (lesson, module, unite…etc), students will be able to…" "Upon successful completion of this unit, the learner will be able to…" "At the conclusion of the first module, students should be able to…"
2. **Action verb**: Choose a verb that matches the desired level of knowledge or skill from Bloom's Taxonomy. Verbs should indicate specific, measurable, and observable behaviors.
3. **What**: Write the specifics of what the learner will be doing when demonstrating achievement or mastery of the objectives. Your objectives should describe what students will or should be able to know or do as a result of a learning experience.

The formal
At the end of this unit, students will be able to (action verb) + (what knowledge or skill)

Examples:
Well-defined learning objectives
At the end of this module, students will be able to identify reservoirs.

Poorly defined learning objectives
At the end of this lesson, students will understand the variables for hydraulic fracturing

Common mistakes:
Don't create a list of learning activity descriptions or agenda items (for example, "Students should complete a simulation on how to perform XYZ procedure").

Words to be avoided:
Appreciate, believe, know, learn, understand, improve, approach, grasp the significance of, increase, thinks critically, become, grow

Sample verb list

Remembering	Understanding	Applying	Analyzing	Evaluating	Creating
Name	Add	Acquire	Analyze	Appraise	Abstract
Define	Approximate	Adapt	Audit	Assess	Animate
Describe	Articulate	Allocate	Blueprint	Compare	Arrange
Draw	Associate	Alphabetize	Breadboard	Conclude	Assemble
Outline	Characterize	Apply	Break down	Contrast	Budget
Identify	Clarify	Ascertain	Characterize	Counsel	Categorize
Index	Classify	Assign	Classify	Criticize	Code
Indicate	Compare	Attain	Compare	Critique	Combine
Label	Compute	Avoid	Confirm	Defend	Compile
List	Contrast	Back up	Contrast	Determine	Compose
Match	Convert	Calculate	Correlate	Discriminate	Construct
Meet	Defend	Capture	Detect	Estimate	Cope
Point	Describe	Change	Diagnose	Evaluate	Correspond

Bloom's Taxonomy

Creating: Can students create a new product or point of view? They would be able to assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write, or invent.

Evaluating: Can the student justify a stand or decision? To evaluate information, a student might: appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, and evaluate.

Analyzing: Can the student distinguish between the different parts? They would be able to compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, or test.

Applying: Can the student use the information in a new way? They would be able to choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, sketch, solve, use, or write.

Understanding: Can the student explain ideas or concepts? They would be able to classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, or paraphrase.

Remembering: Can the student recall or remember the information? They would be able to define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, reproduce, or state.