

How to Write Language Objectives

Language objectives help teachers identify the language skills needed so English Language Learners (ELLs) can engage in the learning. You can use the following how-to sheet to help you in writing language objectives:

Step 1 — Decide the domain(s) students will be using based on the activity:

- Speak — students are using their voices to communicate
- Listen — students are receiving and processing spoken language
- Read — students are making meaning from the written text
- Write — students are producing written language

Step 2 — Identify the language function (what students are *doing* with the language).

Examples: narrate, chart, organize, compare

Step 3 — Select a language strategy that supports students' comprehension or production of language. Choose one that scaffolds the task.

Examples: asking questions for clarification, making a connection to something they already know, using a sentence stem to complete a written or oral assignment

Step 4 — Identify 2–4 key content-specific or academic words students must understand and use to complete the task.

Step 5 — Combine your choices into one clear sentence:

Students will [domain] + [function]+[strategy] + [vocabulary].

(OPTIONAL) Depending on the lesson and the content, you can also include a specific structure, if relevant, to give students a language pattern to practice. If you choose to do this, you can add it at any point in the format in Step 5.

Examples: using cause-and-effect language, using sequence words, using active voice

Examples Across Grade Levels and Content Areas

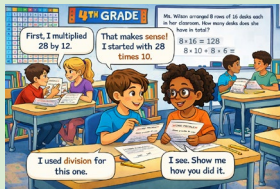
A second-grade class listens to a read-aloud and retells what happened in order.

- Domain: Listening & Speaking
- Function: Narrate
- Strategy: Use sequence words
- Vocabulary: first, next, then, last



Objective: Students will listen to a story and orally retell (narrate) the events in order using sequence words (first, next, then, last).

A fourth-grade class is solving word problems and explaining their reasoning.



- Domain: Speaking
- Function: Explain
- Strategy: Paraphrasing
- Vocabulary: operation, solution, equal

Objective: Students will orally explain their problem-solving steps to a partner using math vocabulary such as operation and solution.

A seventh-grade class studies the water cycle and writes a short explanation of how it works.

- Domain: Writing
- Function: Explain
- Strategy: Cause-and-effect sentence stems
- Vocabulary: evaporation, condensation, precipitation, cycle



Objective: Students will write a short explanation of the water cycle using cause-and-effect sentence stems and academic vocabulary such as evaporation, condensation, and precipitation.

A tenth-grade class examines primary sources on the civil rights movement and discusses its importance.



- Domain: Speaking & Listening
- Function: Express an opinion
- Strategy: Making connections
- Vocabulary: inequality, legislation, protest

Objective: Students will discuss primary sources about the civil rights movement, making connections between historical events and present-day issues while using academic vocabulary such as inequality and legislation.