

## Writing Learning Outcomes and Course Descriptions

### Writing Course Learning Outcomes

When you create or revise the course learning outcomes (CLOs) for a course, think about the 4-9 most important things that students should learn in the course. Focus on high-level, broad framing outcomes for CLOs instead of specific, discreet things that students will learn. The CLOs should be the big-picture knowledge and skills that students should have when they successfully complete a course.

CLOs are best understood if they are:

- Clear
- Observable (measurable)
- Attainable
- At course level

#### Exercise

Identify verbs that are observable/measurable.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### Action Verbs and CLOs

Action verbs are the most suitable type of verb to use when writing learning outcomes. Action verbs are observable and explain how the student will show their knowledge upon completion of the course.

In contrast, non-action verbs are not observable, making it difficult to accurately measure the student's new knowledge, skill, or ability.

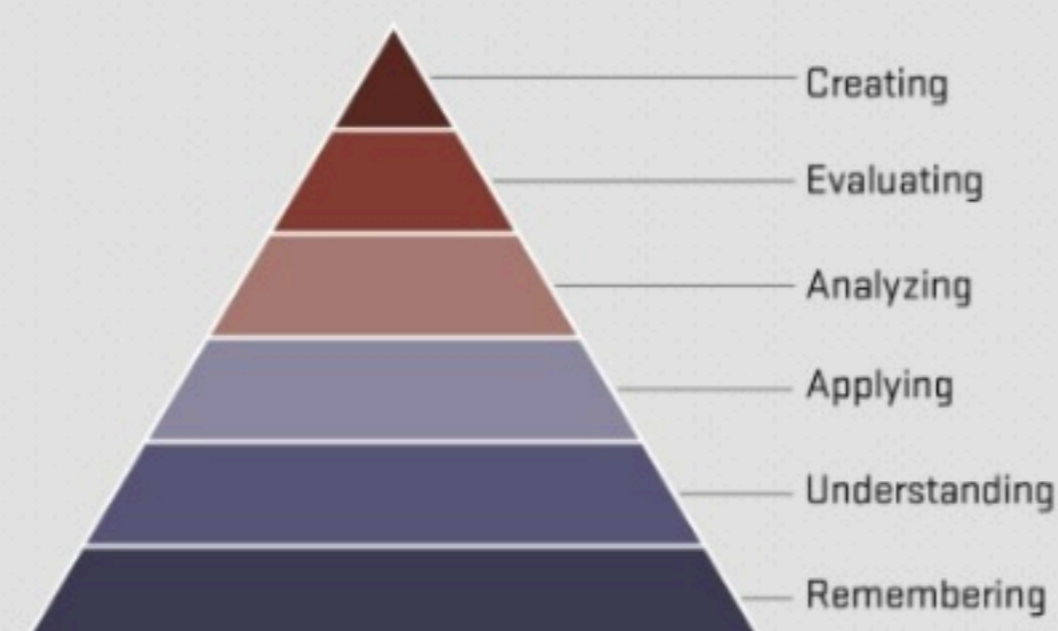
Each CLO must only have one action verb. A statement with more than one verb is difficult to measure.

#### Examples

ACTION VERBS	NON-ACTION VERBS
Define	Understand
Categorize	Learn
Calculate	Appreciate
Critique	Become familiar with
Interpret	Observe
Create	Read
Summarize	Consider
Hypothesize	Demonstrate
Defend	Know

## Measurable Verbs and Bloom's Taxonomy

### Revised Bloom's Taxonomy



Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (2001) is a categorization of cognition levels based on Benjamin Bloom's initial Bloom's Taxonomy, published in 1956. The authors generated a list of action or measurable verbs associated with each level. Educators use these action verbs to write observable learning outcomes.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## Course Level and Bloom's Taxonomy

### Use Bloom's Taxonomy to Meet Course Level

Another key aspect of well-written learning outcomes are verbs at the appropriate course level. Use Bloom's Revised Taxonomy to identify verbs that best align with your course level. Often a course utilizes more than one cognitive level. When writing your course learning outcomes, aim for the highest cognitive level the student will be assessed at.

Lower division courses most often utilize verbs on Bloom's Remembering and/or Understanding levels. In contrast, upper division courses will utilize higher Bloom's Taxonomy levels.

#### Exercise

Based on the scenarios, select the correct course level for the verbs.

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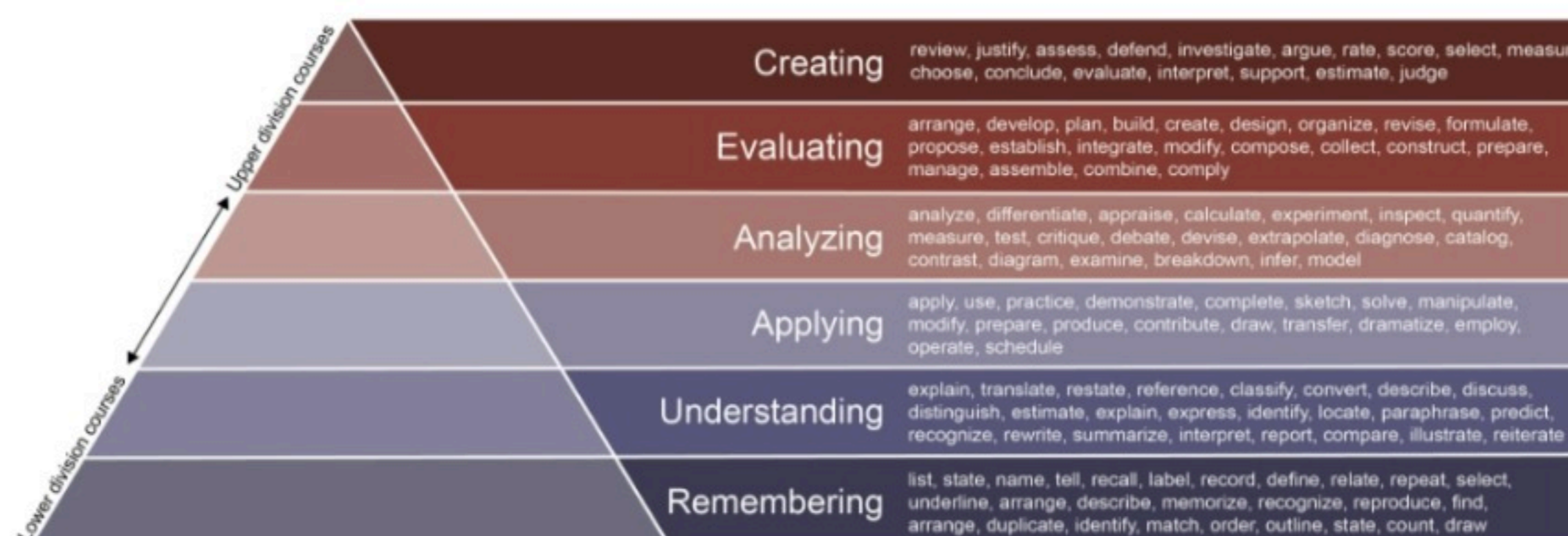
### Examples

#### Lower Division Courses

- Describe cell structure and function, energetics, and genetics.
- Identify the syntax and semantics of procedural programming.

#### Upper Division Courses

- Analyze the nature of images and multimodal texts (i.e., films, webtexts, texts with video and audio and other components) in terms of their rhetorical nature.
- Evaluate the key concepts of situational leadership.



Use ASU's Objectives Builder to construct learning outcomes for your courses. **Note:** you may need to download the most current version of Flash to access this tool. Your web browser may prompt you to do so.

## Course Descriptions

### Writing Course Descriptions

Course descriptions explain what the course does and are printed in the course catalog. The general public reads them, including students, parents, other universities, businesses, and accrediting bodies.

#### Examples

##### Secondary Education Science

**Examines** objectives, instructional methods and curriculum for teaching science in the secondary school. **Includes** developing, adapting, evaluating, and using strategies and materials for teaching biological and physical sciences. **Explores** special needs of the learners and characteristics specific to the science discipline.

##### Theater Fundraising for the Arts

**Introduces** the fundraising development process, cultivating donors, and raising money through donations, sponsorships, and grants to support nonprofit arts organizations.

##### Public Speaking

**Provides** an introduction to basic concepts, theories, principles of oral communication as applied to a variety of speaking situations. **Develops** competence in oral communication through performance, the development of critical thinking skills, arrangement of ideas, and use of evidence and reasoning to support claims. **Explains** how culture influences what is considered effective public speaking.

### Steps

Do:

1. Begin each statement with a verb.
2. Explain course content.
3. Consider your audience.
4. Include the following statement for repeatable courses: May be repeated for a maximum of \_\_\_ credits toward graduation.

Do not:

1. Include, 'This course' in the sentence.
2. Use 'Students will...'
3. Include items that may change (e.g. specific software programs or texts, or section specific information).
4. Include, remove, or modify lab fees.\*
5. Include additional information at the beginning. If needed, add at the end of the description.

\*Note: Fees will be placed in the catalog based on the determination of the fee committee.

For assistance in writing course outcomes, contact the Office of Teaching and Learning. For all other questions, contact the Curriculum Office.

#### STUDENT

- ADMISSIONS
- ACADEMICS
- CAMPUS LIFE
- LOOKING TO ATTEND UVU
- CURRENT STUDENT
- ACCREDITATION

#### EMPLOYEES

- CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
- EMPLOYEE RESOURCES
- DIRECTORY
- PEOPLE & CULTURE

#### COMMUNITY

- ATHLETICS
- VISITORS & COMMUNITY
- OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
- ABOUT UVU / HISTORY
- ALUMNI
- INCLUSION & DIVERSITY
- ESPAÑOL
- GIVE TO UVU
- CONTACT US

#### UTILITY

- COVID-19 INFO
- MAPS / PARKING
- SERVICE DESK
- EMERGENCY
- POLICE
- GET HELP
- SEARCH
- ACCESSIBILITY
- TITLE IX / EQUAL OPPORTUNITY