

# How to Create Actionable Learning Outcomes

The key to effective teaching practice is to design your class with the end goal in mind. Ask yourself this: What, exactly, do I want my students to be able to do with the ideas I'm discussing in this lecture?

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In order to achieve your end goal, start with a plan. Use this resource to create actionable, specific and appropriate learning outcomes that bridge the gap from students' existing knowledge to what you hope they'll understand by the end of the class. There are two things that must be considered when creating an effective learning outcome:

## 1 What do I want my students to be able to do after this class?

**PRO-TIP:** When thinking through your goals, stick to actionable and measurable verbs—see some examples when you download the template.

## 2 How do I know that my students have achieved it?

**PRO-TIP:** Think about how you will be assessing students once they have performed the task.

## Learning Outcomes: What Works

### NON-ACTIONABLE

Students will understand the importance of homeostasis in the human body.

**WHY THIS DOESN'T WORK:** “Understand” is not an actionable word. This not only makes it harder for you to formulate a standard assessment for your students, it also makes it hard for your students to know what to do in order to “understand.”

What is also not clear is to what extent students should be “understanding.” How do the students know that they have understood the importance of homeostasis to the degree that they have met your expectations?

### ACTIONABLE

Students will be able to explain the importance of homeostasis in the human body including its effects on the body's physiological systems.

**WHY THIS WORKS:** We have replaced “understand” with a verb that students can assign an action to—“explain.” We also made sure the verb was chosen with the assessment in mind. In other words, you want to focus on building the student's analytical skills. We've chosen an action that demonstrates an individual's ability to analyze. Since there are so many possible degrees of correctness, we also made sure to specify to what degree students must “explain” homeostasis.