

# Stanford Online

## Learning Outcome Scope Examples

<i>Too Big</i>	<i>Too Small</i>
<p><b><i>Do your objectives sound generic, as though they could appear on a syllabus in almost any course or discipline?</i></b></p> <p>Try to make your objectives specific to your course and discipline. For example, the objective:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Apply the principles and concepts from this course to solve real-world problems.</p> <p>This could apply to numerous disciplines, think what it means for yours. Changing the objective to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Apply the principles of optimization and elasticity to solve basic economics problems.</p> <p>This makes it specific and unambiguous.</p>	<p><b><i>Do your objectives contain repetition and overlap?</i></b></p> <p>If so, you may be able to combine some of these objectives. For example,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Describe the tenets of functionalism</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Describe the tenets of structuralism</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Describe the tenets of postmodernism</p> <p>These three objectives could be collapsed to become “Describe the tenets of major theoretical orientations in anthropology.”</p>
<p><b><i>Could your objectives describe an entire curriculum?</i></b></p> <p>It is a worthy goal for students to be able to “think like a research biologist,” but that is too ambitious an objective for a single course. If your objectives are similarly broad, break them down into component skills, and ask yourself what students will learn in this <i>one</i> course that will contribute to this broader goal.</p>	<p><b><i>Do your objectives read like the task specifications for an assignment?</i></b></p> <p>Try identifying the larger skill you want students to attain. For example, the objective</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Students should be able to write a 4- to 5-page paper that explains the relationship between theory X and theory Y.</p> <p>might become</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Explain the relationships among theories of child development.</p>