

Writing a Good Lesson Plan

- Writing a good lesson plan can be tricky the first few times. However, like anything else, proper preparation is the key to success. Read on to learn how to write a lesson plan that lays out clear learning objectives and meets state curriculum guidelines.
 - **Lesson Plan Writing Tips**
 1. You may need to modify your lesson plan format to fit the lesson.
 2. A good lesson plan should provide enough information that another teacher could follow it.
 3. Lesson objectives should be specific and measurable.
 4. Objectives should align with state curriculum guidelines.
 - **Introduction**
 - Writing a good lesson plan is essential for every teacher. Lesson plans are often submitted as part of your annual evaluations. They can also be your lifeline if you have to call in sick suddenly. Although there are many different methods of writing a lesson plan, such as the [Herbartian method](#) or [Madeline Hunter's method](#), the only "right" way is the method that works best for you. [Lee University: The Herbartian Method](#)¹ [Lee University: Madeline Hunter's 7 Steps](#)² The following guide covers most of the different sections you may want to include on your lesson plans. However, you will find that you rarely need all the following sections on every lesson plan you write.
 - **Basic Information**
 - At the top of any lesson plan should be an overview of the lesson as well as any basic logistical information or requirements related to it. This section should include the following:
 2. **Unit Name:** The name of the unit the lesson is a part of.
 3. **Lesson Title:** The title of this specific lesson.
 4. **Grade Level:** The grade level for which the lesson is designed.
 5. **Subject Area:** The subject matter the lesson covers.
 6. **Lesson Description:** The lesson description should be a [brief overview of what the lesson is about](#) including the topic focus, activities and purpose. [University of Tennessee: Lesson Plan](#)³ However, you can also use this section to [provide thoughts, experiences and suggestions for other teachers or future use](#). [The Educator's Reference Desk: Write a Lesson Plan Guide](#)⁴
 7. **Required Materials:** Listing what materials you or your students will need for the lesson will help you when preparing the lesson. Ask yourself, "[What materials, resources and technology do I need for the lesson?](#)" [University of Tennessee: Lesson Plan](#)³ This includes textbooks, handouts, calculators, computers, printers, [Internet](#) connection, etc.
 8. **Time Estimates/Time Allotted:** How many [class meetings or hours do you think will be needed to complete this lesson?](#) [University of Tennessee: Lesson Plan](#)³
 9. **Safety Precautions:** Describe any special concerns for safety or welfare that might arise during this lesson. [UNC Wilmington: North Carolina's Six Part Lesson Plan Format](#)⁵
 10. **Student Products:** Are there any things that the students will be creating during the lesson? Examples of products include [reports, newsletters, diagrams, drawing, database, media presentation, etc.](#) [University of Tennessee: Lesson Plan](#)³
- Prerequisites Skills**

- The prerequisite skills or "present level of performance" section is where you list the **skills the students must have in order to succeed with the lesson**. University of Tennessee: Lesson Plan³ This should include any technological skills they will need. You should also list what concepts the students should have mastered before beginning this lesson. The Educator's Reference Desk: Write a Lesson Plan Guide⁴ For example, a student should master multiplying one-digit numbers before beginning multiplication of two-digit numbers.

Objectives, Goals and Standards

- Objectives, or goals, are arguably the most important part of any lesson plan. The objectives will help **determine the aim and rationale** for what your students are doing in class that day. The Educator's Reference Desk: Write a Lesson Plan Guide⁴ Typically, these will be **guided by your state's curriculum standards**. The Educator's Reference Desk: Write a Lesson Plan Guide⁴ Your objectives should be broken down into two major types: long-range and short-range. The long-range objective will give the overall goal of the lesson plan </ref>
- Here are some guidelines for writing good objectives:
- 2. Objectives should contain the **type of activity or skill**, the **criteria or standards** by which competence will be assessed, **conditions required** to meet the objective and **the competence level students will reach**. Eastern Michigan University: How to Write a Lesson Plan⁶ Oklahoma Baptist University: Tips for Writing Objectives⁷ About.com: Lesson Plan Objectives and Goals⁸
- 3. Objectives should be **measurable, specific and observable**. Eastern Michigan University: How to Write a Lesson Plan⁶ Oklahoma Baptist University: Tips for Writing Objectives⁷
- 4. **Ask yourself the following questions** when writing your objectives:
 1. What is the overall purpose of the unit plan or curriculum goal? The Educator's Reference Desk: Write a Lesson Plan Guide⁴
 2. What should the students be able to do by the end of the unit? The Educator's Reference Desk: Write a Lesson Plan Guide⁴
 3. What should the students be able to do by the end of the lesson? University of Tennessee: Lesson Plan³
 4. To what degree should the students be able to do the task successfully? Oklahoma Baptist University: Tips for Writing Objectives⁷
 5. How will you know or be able to prove that the students have achieved the objective? Oklahoma Baptist University: Tips for Writing Objectives⁷

Bloom's Taxonomy

- One of the best tools a teacher can use to write goals is **Bloom's Taxonomy**. Bloom's Taxonomy divides learning into three different domains: **cognitive (knowledge or mental skills)**, **affective (feelings, emotions or attitude)** and **psychomotor (physical skills)**. Performance, Learning, Leadership, & Knowledge: Learning Domains or Bloom's Taxonomy⁹ Each category is then broken down into six levels of difficulty. Most teachers will focus on the cognitive section of the taxonomy. For more information on Bloom's Taxonomy, check out one of the following links:
 1. About.com: Use Bloom's Taxonomy to Move Your Students Through The Learning Process
 2. Lee University: Bloom's Taxonomy
 3. CalState TEACH: Verb Wheel Based on Bloom's Taxonomy
 4. Teachers on the Web: Applying Bloom's Taxonomy
 5. Performance, Learning, Leadership, & Knowledge: Learning Domains or Bloom's Taxonomy

- **Lesson Procedure**

- The major part of the lesson can be broken down into three major parts: introduction or anticipatory set, instruction and conclusion or closure.

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• Introduction or Anticipatory Set

- The introduction, or anticipatory set, can make or break your lesson. It is the moment where you capture the students' attention and **motivate** them. Some of the best examples of great anticipatory sets are done by **Robin Williams** in *Dead Poets Society*. However, you don't need to be a comedian with a great script to provide your students with terrific anticipatory sets. Instead, simply do the following:
 2. Use an attention-getting story or action to help **focus the students' attention**. Oklahoma Baptist University: [Tips for Writing Objectives](#)⁷
 3. **Review what has already been learned** to provide scope and structure while connecting previous lessons together. The Educator's Reference Desk: [Write a Lesson Plan Guide](#)⁴
 4. **Inform students of the objective or objectives of the lesson**. Eastern Michigan University: [How to Write a Lesson Plan](#)⁶
 5. **Explain what is expected of the students**.
 6. **Give students any background information they might need to know about a topic**. About.com: [Anticipatory Sets to Activate Students' Background Knowledge](#)¹¹

• Instructional Methods

- Your instructional procedure and methods should be a **detailed, step-by-step description** of everything that you will do during the lesson. Much of how you write this section will depend on the type of instruction that you plan on using.
- **Types of Instruction**
- When most people think of instruction, they think "lecture." In a good lesson plan, this will not always be the case. Here are a few of the different instructional methods you can use:
 4. **Direct Instruction:** Direct instruction is a term used for the **majority of teacher-centered instructional approaches**. Instructional Strategies Online: [What is Direct Instruction?](#)¹² It is good for **teaching basic facts and skills**. Adprima: [Instructional Methods Information](#)¹³ Almost all methods of direct instruction include four steps: **introduction and review, presentation of new information, guided practice and independent practice**. University of Tennessee: [What are Instructional Methods?](#)¹⁴ Examples of direct instruction include:
 1. **Lecture:** Although it is **frequently criticized**, lecture is still the **most common method of teaching**. University of Tennessee: [What are Instructional Methods?](#)¹⁴
 2. **Demonstration:** Demonstrations are used most commonly to **teach science, computer skills and similar procedures**. University of Tennessee: [What are Instructional Methods?](#)¹⁴
 3. **Lecture-Discussions:** Lecture-discussions start with a lecture **followed by discussion about the topic by the teacher and the students**. University of Tennessee: [What are Instructional Methods?](#)¹⁴
 5. **Case Studies:** Case studies are not **appropriate for elementary students**, but is a great way to help older students develop **analytic and problem-solving skills**. It involves having students work

together in groups to analyze or solve a case presented to them. Adprima: Instructional Methods Information¹³ University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?¹⁴

6. **Cooperative Learning:** Cooperative learning not only helps students learn an academic skill, but promotes social skills. Adprima: Instructional Methods Information¹³ The trick is to make sure that each student in the group actively participates as a member of his or her group. University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?¹⁴
7. **Discussion:** Discussions are excellent for use after a lecture or video, but can be difficult to manage with larger groups. Adprima: Instructional Methods Information¹³
8. **Discovery Learning:** Discovery learning requires students to use prior knowledge and experiences to discover new information. It requires the students to have some prior knowledge and needs to be well structured. University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?¹⁴
9. **Inquiry Learning:** Inquiry learning requires the students to solve a problem that the teacher has given them. One of the most commonly used examples of inquiry learning are WebQuests. University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?¹⁴ Inquiry learning requires a high amount of participation by the students. Instructional Strategies Online: What is Inquiry?¹⁵
10. **Jigsaw:** Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy in which each student is a member of two groups: a home group and a learning group. Students meet with their learning group to master a skill or idea. They then report back to their home group where they teach the other members of their group about what they learned. Instructional Strategies Online: What is Jigsaw?¹⁶
11. **K-W-L:** K-W-L stands for a three column chart labeled Know, Want to Know and Learned. University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?¹⁴ The students fill out the first column before the lesson begins. Then, they fill in the middle column with things that they would like to learn during the lesson. Once the lesson is over, they fill out the final column with what they learned. This chart can be done individually or by the class as a whole. Instructional Strategies Online: What is K-W-L?¹⁷
12. **Learning Centers:** Learning centers involve self-contained areas where students work alone or in groups to complete a task. University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?¹⁴
13. **Role Play:** Role playing is when students try to solve problems by acting them out. Instructional Strategies Online: What is Role Playing?¹⁸ It is usually followed by a discussion where students can explore their feelings and gain insight about their attitudes. University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?¹⁴
14. **Scaffolding:** Scaffolding is when a teacher begins the lesson by modeling the skill and then slowly withdraws his or her assistance allowing the students to take responsibility for their own learning. Instructional Strategies Online: What is Scaffolding?¹⁹
15. **Simulations:** Simulations are frequently used in social studies and science classrooms. In today's technological society, this usually involves use of the computer. University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?¹⁴ Using simulations promotes the use of critical and evaluative thinking by the students. Instructional Strategies Online: What is Simulation?²⁰
16. **Think, Pair, Share:** In think, pair, share, students are divided into groups of four. The teacher presents them with an issue or question and gives each student time to think about it. They are then paired up with another member of their group and each shares their answer. Students are then paired up with a different member of the group and shares the answers that the first pair had come up with. Instructional Strategies Online: What is Think, Pair, Share?²¹

Conclusion or Closure

- The closure, or conclusion, is the summary of the lesson. It is when you should review key points and summarize the main ideas. [UNC Wilmington: North Carolina's Six Part Lesson Plan Format](#)⁵ This is also a time when you can preview future lessons and allow students to show off their work. [Eastern Michigan University: How to Write a Lesson Plan](#)⁶

Follow-Up Activities

- Once the instruction is completed, you will need to provide ways for students to practice their new skills or use their knowledge either as part of or before assessing how well they have learned the lesson. This falls under one of five categories: guided practice, independent practice, assessment, supplemental activities and remediation.

Guided Practice

- Guided practice is done after the lesson, but before students are required to do things independently. It gives the students an opportunity to practice what they have learned while you monitor them. This helps prevent students from practicing errors. [UNC Wilmington: North Carolina's Six Part Lesson Plan Format](#)⁵ You will need to closely monitor this session and give students feedback on their progress. </ref>

Independent Practice

- When you think of independent practice, the word "homework" usually comes to mind, and this will be the case for most of the "independent practices" a student does. Independent practice allows a student to practice and internalize new skills or information. [UNC Wilmington: North Carolina's Six Part Lesson Plan Format](#)⁵ Some of the different ways you can provide a student with independent practice include:

1. [Assigned questions](#) [Instructional Strategies Online: What are Assigned Questions?](#)²²
2. Worksheets
3. [Cloze procedure](#) [Instructional Strategies Online: What is Cloze Procedure?](#)²³
4. [Graphic organizers](#) [Instructional Strategies Online: What are Graphic Organizers ?](#)²⁴
5. [Journals](#) [University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?](#)¹⁴
6. [Learning Logs](#) [Instructional Strategies Online: What are Learning Logs?](#)²⁵
7. [Response Journal](#) [Instructional Strategies Online: What is a Response Journal?](#)²⁶
8. [Storytelling](#) [University of Tennessee: What are Instructional Methods?](#)¹⁴
9. [Research projects](#) [Instructional Strategies Online: What is Researching?](#)²⁷

Assessment and Evaluation

- Students love to ask, and teacher hate to hear, the question, "Will there be a test on this?" Testing is not the only method of evaluating if a student has mastered a skill. Sometimes assessment comes by evaluating the independent work that they did. Whatever method for assessment you use, make sure that it aligns with your objectives and instructional method. [University of Tennessee: Lesson Plan](#)³ You will also need to state what is needed for you to determine if the student has mastered the lesson's objectives. </ref>

Supplemental Activities

- You should list any supplemental work that can be used to extend learning. [University of Tennessee: Lesson Plan](#)³ These are often great things to use as extra credit work.

Remediation

- Remediation activities are ways you can reteach the learning to students who require additional instruction or practice. University of Tennessee: Lesson Plan³ Remediation is usually done after the assessment.

Modifications

- Being able to modify a lesson to accommodate students with disabilities or limited proficiency in English is a skill every teacher needs to have. Learn NC: What Makes a Lesson Plan a Lesson Plan?²⁸ In the beginning, it can be helpful to communicate with a special education teacher or the student's parents to find what methods have worked well in the past. You can find examples of ways to modify lesson plans at any of the sites listed below:

1. Chicago Public Schools: Curriculum Accommodations/Modifications
2. Suite101.com : Math | Writing | Reading | Homework | Testing
3. About.com Accommodations, Modifications & Interventions
4. SchwabLearning.org: General Education Accommodations
5. Special Education for Inclusive Classrooms: Accommodation Strategies

Additional Resources

- After all this explanation, you may find it helpful to see how other people have written their lesson plans. There are two ways you can do this: by checking out some of the lesson plan templates available online or by looking at actual lesson plans.

Lesson Plan Templates

- Although there is no wrong way to write a lesson plan, you may find one of these online templates helpful:

1. Tennessee State University: Lesson Plan Word File | PDF File
2. Calhoun County Schools: Lesson Plan Templates
3. Going to a Museum?: Field Trip Lesson Plan
4. North Dakota State Library: Lesson Plan Template
5. Lee University: TIM Lesson Plan
6. Internet4Classrooms: Template for Writing a "WebGuide" Lesson Plan
7. University of North Carolina-Wilmington: Lesson Plan Format
8. About.com: Blank 8-Step Lesson Plan Template

Free Lesson Plans

- Here are a few of the better sites that offer free lesson plans for teachers:

1. Thinkfinity
2. ReadWriteThink
3. Merlot
4. Gateway to 21st Century Skills
5. The Lesson Plans Page
6. Discovery Education: Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators | The Lesson Plan Library
7. PBS Teachers: Resources For The Classroom
8. Scholastic.com: Lesson Plans
9. Smithsonian Education: Educators
10. Sites for Teachers: Math | Language Arts | Science | Social Studies

How to Write a Lesson Plan. (2007-2010). Mahalo.com Incorporated. Retrieved August 4, 2010 from <http://www.mahalo.com/how-to-write-a-lesson-plan>