Linguistic Scaffolds for Writing Language Objectives

Effectively written language objectives:

- Are linked to standards-based content objectives
- Use active verbs to explain a specific student task
- Specify target language necessary to complete the task
- Emphasize development of expressive language skills: speaking and writing

Sample language objectives:

Students will **articulate** main idea and details using **target vocabulary: main idea, detail**.
Students will **describe** a character's emotions using **precise adjectives**.
Students will **revise** a persuasive paragraph using correct **present and conditional verbs.**
Students will **report** a group consensus using **citation verbs: determined, concluded**.

Language Objective Frame:

Students will _(active verb phrase)_ using _(language target)_ .

Active Verb Bank for Expressive Language Tasks

articulate	defend	express	narrate	share
ask	define	identify	predict	state
compose	describe	justify	react to	summarize
compare	discuss	label	read	rephrase
contrast	elaborate	list	recite	revise
debate	explain	name	respond	write

Language objectives are most effectively communicated with verb phrases such as the following:

Students will **point out similarities between**..   Students will **express agreement**…
Students will **articulate events in sequence…**   Students will **state opinions about**….

Sample Noun Phrases Specifying Language Targets

academic vocabulary	complete sentences	subject verb agreement
target vocabulary	complex sentences	personal pronouns
precise adjectives	questions	past-tense verbs
strong verbs	clarifying questions	gerunds (verb + ing)
noun phrases	prepositional phrases	adjective clauses

Sample Expressive Language Objectives

Related to Reading Standards:

Students will…
- make predictions using future tense, and text feature vocabulary (e.g. headings, captions).
- formulate pre-reading questions using appropriate question structure.
- articulate main idea and details using key vocabulary: main idea, detail.
- prioritize arguments in a text using target adjectives: essential, significant.
- identify bias in a text by identifying adjectives and opinions.
- articulate cause and effect relationships within a thinking map using subordinating conjunctions: since, because, when.
- describe a character's emotions using precise adjectives.
- retell a narrative story using past tense verbs and adverbs of time (e.g. first, the next day, later that week, afterward).
- ask and answer how questions about main events using the past-tense.
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Related to Writing Standards:

Students will…
- express an opinion in a topic sentence for a persuasive paragraph using strong verbs.
- write a persuasive paragraph using correct present and conditional verb tenses.
- justify a position using relevant details and complete sentences.
- write a personal narrative using regular and irregular past-tense verbs.
- summarize a non-fiction text using general present tense and citation verbs.
- revise sentence fragments into complex sentences.
- write present tense sentences about a classmate using correct pronouns and subject verb agreement.

Related to Classroom Discussion:

Students will…
- restate a partner's response using paraphrasing expressions (e.g. so what you are saying is, if I understand you correctly).
- point out similarities in a discussion using target language: similar to, builds upon.
- report a group consensus using past-tense citation verbs: determined, concluded.
- define the unit concept stereotype using complete sentences and target vocabulary.