

Developing ELA Unit Objectives

(examples from a unit developed for an ABE program in Ware, MA)

Unit objectives are statements about what learners will know and be able to do *by the end of a unit*. Unit objectives are aligned with learning standards but are not the same thing; instead, unit objectives articulate **what part or aspect** of each relevant standard—or **to what extent** each relevant standard—will be developed in the unit in a way that relates to the topic and context of the unit.

In the following example, the **Unit Goal/Culminating Assessment** provides the context for a unit on food security:

Students will gather and read diverse digital and print sources in order to understand the factors affecting food access in their own communities and the solutions to improve it. Students will demonstrate their knowledge by working in groups to produce brochures that share what they learned about local and national food systems. Each group’s brochure will relate to one of the main topics: Environment, Economy, and Nutrition. The brochure will be shared with fellow community members. The teacher will use a rubric to give feedback.

To select the relevant ELA Standards, the teacher asked herself: *What skills are needed in order to accomplish this Unit Goal/Culminating Assessment?* She identified the following:

- Research skills to gather relevant information
- Reading skills to get information out of the sources and make sense of it
- Writing and technology skills to produce the brochures
- Collaboration skills, including listening and speaking, to work in groups

The author then identified CCRSAE-ELA Standards (all at level C) that hone in on those skills and wrote a context-specific unit objective to match each standard, using accessible language. Following are three examples; the full chart of the selected standards with matching unit objectives is on the next page. (You may also build a unit with specific learning standards in mind from the beginning, crafting the culminating assessment to highlight those standards, going back and forth between standards and the culminating assessment, with each informing the other, before finalizing the set of target learning standards and the culminating project.)

ELA Standard	Unit Objective
R8C Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which points(s).	Use a graphic organizer to map with accuracy the reasons and evidence presented by an author to support specific points being made about food security.
W6C With some guidance and support, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.	Type a paragraph of the final version of a group brochure into a Word document and edit until there are zero errors.
W8C Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.	Make and effectively organize notes from at least 3 resources related to food security, listing resources.

Full chart of eleven standards translated into nine unit objectives

ELA Standards	Unit Objectives
Priority	
<p>W2C Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.</p> <p>a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</p> <p>b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.</p> <p>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</p> <p>e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.</p>	<p>1. Write a short informative text of 1 paragraph on a section of the brochure, that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear heading • A clear introductory sentence that states the main idea • At least 3 facts that support the main idea • At least 2 vocabulary words from this unit and 2 vocabulary words from previous units • A sound conclusion
<p>R4C Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a topic or subject area.</p>	<p>2. Determine the meanings of specific Tier 2 and Tier 3 words in texts related to food security.</p>
<p>R8C Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which points(s).</p>	<p>3. Use a graphic organizer to map with accuracy the reasons and evidence presented by an author to specific points being made about food security.</p>
<p>W6C With some guidance and support, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.</p>	<p>4. Type a paragraph of the final version of a group section of a brochure into a Word document and edit until there are zero errors.</p>
<p>W8C Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.</p>	<p>5. Make and effectively organize notes from at least 3 resources related to food security, listing resources.</p>
Secondary Standards	
<p>R1C Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.</p>	<p>6. Cite specific parts of texts during class discussions about food security.</p>
<p>SL1C Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p> <p>a. Come to discussion prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.</p> <p>b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussion and carry out assigned roles.</p>	<p>7. Collaborate effectively with others to discuss food security topics, create a project plan, and complete tasks.</p>
<p>L1C Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <p>k. Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.</p>	<p>8. Draft, revise, and edit sentences in the brochure for adherence to English conventions, clarity, interest, and style.</p>
<p>L2C Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p>	
<p>L3C Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.</p>	
<p>W5C With guidance and support from peers and others, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.</p>	<p>9. Use the writing process to develop a well-constructed paragraph about food security for the group brochure; incorporate student and teacher feedback into own writing.</p>