

Characteristics of a Strong Learning Target

The following characteristics are markers of a strong learning target.

- **Each learning target has a verb and specific content:** The verb is the *do* and the content is the *know* that the students will show within that lesson's main formative assessment.
- **Learning targets have verbs that you can visualize and measure:** Examples of verbs include *synthesize*, *analyze*, *determine*, *compare* and *contrast*, and *explain*. Vague verbs such as *understand*, *learn*, *know*, *comprehend*, *appreciate*, and *realize* are hard to visualize and measure. The verbs focus on the type of thinking students will engage in versus the activities they will do.
- **Learning targets have the positive, student-friendly, goal-oriented statement / *can*:** All brains are different, and students will reach the learning target in different ways on different days, but most should be able to accomplish the learning target within a one- or two-day lesson plan. If the majority of students cannot master the learning target within a few days, then you may need to break down your learning target further or provide interventions.
- **The phrase at the end of this lesson appears in the learning target:** For example, *At the end of this lesson, I can distinguish between main idea and details*. This helps students understand the precise expectation for that lesson.
- **Students can self-assess where they are with that learning target:** Self-assessment asks student to identify their own academic strengths and growth areas. Additionally, it allows them to set realistic goals, revise their own work, and track their own growth process. To do this, students need clear expectations and time to practice developing these skills.