

HOW TO WRITE GOOD MCQs

Tips for writing clear, effective MCQs.

“The most important thing to keep in mind when you develop test questions is that your job as an educator is to teach people so that they can learn and be successful. The idea is not to trick the learner, or fail them, or dazzle them with your brilliance.”

(Writing Effective Questions. The Learning Management Corporation)

01 WRITE THE STEM

Use complete sentences that end in a question mark

✓ What is a dermatome?

✗ A dermatome is _____.

Make the question as short as possible

✓ Where is cerebrospinal fluid made?

✗ Where is cerebrospinal fluid, which helps protect and support the brain, made?

Avoid using true/false questions

✓ How many layers comprise the meninges?

✗ Meninges have three layers. Is this statement true or false?

02 WRITE CORRECT ANSWER



The answer should be clear and concise

03 WRITE THE DISTRACTORS



Have 3-4 plausible answer choices (including the right answer)



Ensure your distractors are grammatically correct and are about the same length as the correct answer



DO NOT use absolutes (always, never, all, etc.) or “all of the above” in your answer choices

04 REVIEW AND REVISE

Be aware of giving away the correct answer! (include a check against other MCQs)

Order answer choices alphabetically/numerically



Check the stems and answer choices are grammatically correct

Check the stems and answer choices are written clearly

Ensure each MCQ only asks one question

05 SEEK FEEDBACK

It's invaluable to have a second pair of eyes look over your questions!

- Can the reviewer easily guess the correct answer without first seeing the question?
- Does the reviewer think a question is irrelevant?
- Do they understand what the question is asking?



Acknowledgements

Developing and Validating Multiple-Choice Test Items - T. M. Haladyna

Writing Effective Questions - The Learning Management Corporation

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ADINSTRUMENTS