

Mastering Multiple Choice Questions

Checklist for Reviewing Multiple-Choice Items

- 1) Has the item been constructed to assess a single written objective?
- 2) Is the item based on a specific problem stated clearly in the stem?
- 3) Does the stem include as much of the item as possible, without including irrelevant material?
- 4) Is the stem stated in a positive form?
- 5) Are the alternatives worded clearly and concisely?
- 6) Are the alternatives mutually exclusive?
- 7) Are the alternatives homogeneous in content?
- 8) Are the alternatives free from clues as to which response is correct?
- 9) Have the alternatives “all of the above” and “none of the above” been avoided?
- 10) Does the item include as many functional distractors as are feasible?
- 11) Does the item include one and only one correct or clearly best answer?
- 12) Has the answer been randomly assigned to one of the alternative positions?
- 13) Is the item laid out in a clear and consistent manner?
- 14) Are the grammar, punctuation, and spelling correct?
- 15) Has unnecessarily difficult vocabulary been avoided?
- 16) If the item has been administered before, has its effectiveness been analyzed?

Taken from: *How to Prepare Better Multiple-Choice Test Items: Guidelines for University Faculty* by Burton, Sudweeks, Merrill, & Wood, © 1991 BYU Testing Services

Can you improve these questions?

How long does an annual plant generally live?

- A) It dies during the first year.
- B) It lives for no more than one year.
- C) It lives for more than one year.
- D) It needs to be replanted each year.

Florida is known as

- A) the nation's top producer of citrus fruit.
- B) the sunshine state.
- C) the state where the War Between the States ended.
- D) the birthplace of five presidents.

A word that takes the place of a noun (or a noun phrase) is called a

- A) adjective.
- B) pronoun.
- C) antecedent.
- D) adverb.

Which artist is known for painting the Mona Lisa?

- A) Norman Rockwell
- B) Leonardo da Vinci
- C) Leonardo DeCaprio
- D) None of the above