

## Multiple Choice Questions

### What are Multiple Choice Questions?

Multiple choice items have a stem, in the form of a question or incomplete statement, and three or more alternative answers, one of which is correct, while the others are distracters.

### Educational Value

- They are effective tools for assessing the first three levels of Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain (knowledge, comprehension, application).
- Provide an efficient assessment of mastery of a large number of objectives and broad sampling of knowledge.
- Multiple choice answers are quick to score, and measure the learner's knowledge without being influenced by writing or verbal ability.
- Some authors argue that a cleverly constructed multiple choice item can assess any level of cognitive learning; however, the requirement of the task is the selection of an alternative, and the instructor cannot observe the process by which that selection is made.

### Examples of Classroom Application

**Poor Example:**

Validity refers to

- a) the consistency of the test scores
- b) the inference made on the basis of the test scores
- c) measurement error determined by standard deviation
- d) the stability of test scores

**Improved:**

The inference made on the basis of test scores refers to

- a) reliability
- b) stability
- c) validity
- d) measurement of error

In this example, the stem clearly describes the question or task.

### Getting Started

- Guidelines for Writing Effective Multiple choice Items.  
CID Development Guide: <http://cid.vcc.ca/p4-id/GuidelinesMultiple-Choice.pdf>
- How to write a good multiple choice question tutorial.  
<http://hotpot.uvic.ca/howto/mcquestion.htm>

Contact the CID at [cid@vcc.ca](mailto:cid@vcc.ca). An IA can help you determine if multiple choice questions are right for your class and explain how to plan a lesson or test using them.

### More Information

*Educational:*

- Multiple Choice, Wikipedia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiple\\_choice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiple_choice)