

Assessment Item Writing Tips

Below are some best practices when it comes to assessments:

- The assessment component should cover at least 70% of the content
- Rationales must be provided for the correct answer
Rationales have no word number minimum. They only need to be sufficient to explain why the answer is correct and why the other choices are wrong.
- Additional feedback to the users is highly recommended

The tool we have implemented to capture this is our Assessment Map, which is designed to ensure we have aligned the above items into our curriculum.

Additionally, below are the requirements for item writing:

Each item must have a stem, a key and distractors. Below are descriptions and tips for each:

STEM:

- Contains the statement or question
- Should be simple and plainly written; no trick questions
- Should focus on ONE behavior, task or learning objective
- Case-based questions should include gender, age, and site of care for all patient subjects
- Cannot have terms of degree such as rarely, commonly, frequently, etc.
- Cannot have technical jargon that may not be known to by all examinees
- All drugs must be referred to by their generic names

KEY:

- The key is the *best or most appropriate* of the available responses.
- **Always include a rationale for the correct answer.**

DISTRACTORS:

- Comparatively worse choice than the key but need not be absolutely incorrect.
- Do not use “All of the above” or “none of the above”.
- All distractors should be written in the same way with similar length, detail and grammatically consistent.
- Do not create obvious or nonsense distractors.
- Do not make the distractors substantially shorter or less detailed than the correct answer.
- Do not use patient scenarios as responses.

ADDITIONAL TIPS:

- Write questions in standard multiple-choice question (MCQ) format.
- Include only THREE or FOUR (4) options, labeled A – C/D.
- No True and False
- No “All of the following are true, except”. Learners should choose the correct answer rather than the incorrect or wrong answer.