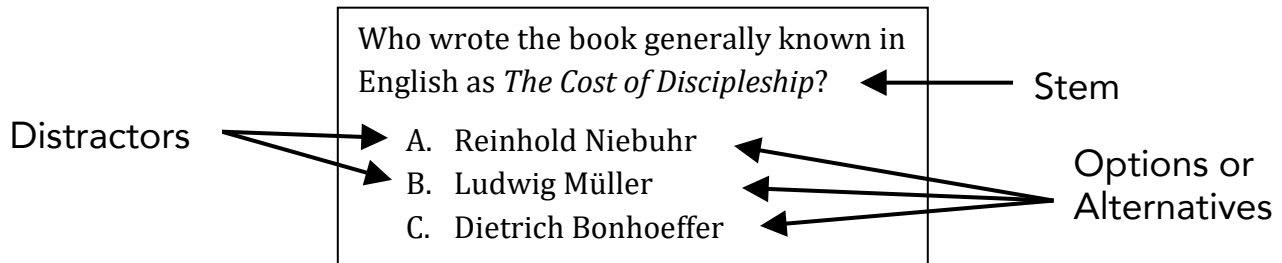


Tips for Multiple Choice & Other Selected-Response Assessments



- Identify course objectives for which selected-response assessment is appropriate and those for which another means of assessment is warranted
 - Write questions to measure course objectives, not trivia
 - Avoid trick items
- Create a plan or blueprint...
 - for distributing questions across content areas and cognitive skills being assessed
 - for preparing questions of various levels of thinking
- State the question's central idea in the stem
 - Test one thing per question
 - Use positive stems
 - Say it as simply as possible
 - Place most of the content in the stem (not the alternatives)
- Use appropriate level of vocabulary (jargon)
- Use three (maybe four) answer options – the correct answer and 2 or 3 distractors
- Make all answer options consistent
 - Length
 - Grammatical form
 - Homogeneous
- Place alternatives in logical order
- Make sure one alternative is clearly the best answer
 - Never use “All of the above”
 - Rarely, if ever, use “None of the above”
 - “Always” and “never” indicate that the answer is likely incorrect
 - “Maybe”, “usually”, “typically” or “sometimes” indicate that the answer is likely correct
 - Eliminate overlapping alternatives
- Incorporate common student misunderstandings or errors in the distractors

Some questions can be answered correctly *for the wrong reason* – for example, something that points to the correct answer. Other questions have problems that introduce ambiguity.

All poorly constructed questions have the disadvantage that they do not measure whether a learner truly knows the correct answer.

Homogeneous Options

Who was the primary 16th-century religious reformer of Zurich?

- A. Martin Luther
- B. John Calvin
- C. Huldrych Zwingli

Which of the following borders upon Mexico?

- A. Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- B. El Paso, Texas
- C. Rancho Cucamonga, California

Non-homogeneous Options

Who was the primary 16th-century religious reformer of Zurich?

- A. Martin Luther
- B. Taylor Swift
- C. Vladimir Putin

Which of the following borders upon Mexico?

- A. El Paso, Texas
 - B. Subaru WRX
 - C. Amtrak
-

Overlapping Alternatives

What is the average life expectancy of the common house fly?

- A. 5-10 days
- B. 10- 20 days
- C. 15-30 days

Where is the Basque Country?

- A. Iberian Peninsula
 - B. Northern Spain
 - C. Southern France
-

Specific Designator

The Rice University animal mascot is an...

- A. Bear
- B. Panther
- C. Owl

Grammar Specific

In medical terminology, the bones of the fingers and toes are:

- A. Anvil
- B. Cranium
- C. Phalanges