



MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST ITEMS

Dr.Nurgun Akar

MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST ITEMS

- **1 Introduction to Testing**
- **2 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**
- **3 MCQs for Testing Vocabulary**
- **4 MCQs for Testing Reading**
- **5 Measuring Higher-Level Language with MCQs**
- **References**

1 Introduction to Testing

Importance of Testing
Present State of Testing
Test Classification

Importance of Testing

1 How testing helps Ss Learning English

- a. Tests can help create positive attitudes toward your class.
 - create a sense of accomplishment
 - demonstrate your spirit of fair play and consistency with course objectives
- b. Tests can benefit Ss by helping them master the language.
 - They study for exams.
 - They learn through test corrections and discussions.
 - They become aware of their personal needs and adjust their personal goals.
 - They become aware of your objectives and the areas of emphasis in the courses.

How testing helps Ts of English

- a. We diagnose our efforts as well as those of our Ss.
- b. Tests provide insights into ways we can improve the evaluation process.
- c. Good tests enhance class morale and aid learning.

The Present State of Testing

Recent Historical Trends

- (Early tests): Intuitive Stage: Subjective
(memorize, label, write, etc.)
- (Later tests): Scientific Stage: Objective, by linguists (m/c or correction, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation)
- (Present tests): Communicative Stage.
Statistical evaluation, evaluation of language use, not usage / form; combine various subskills as in real communication (e.g. Cloze) (i.e. there is context); we measure language use/skill without linguistic terminology; translation and summary are out; dictation, essay, cloze are in.

Test Classification

- Knowledge Tests (how well Ss know facts about the language) **vs** Performance (Skills) Tests (how well Ss can use the language)
-

vs

Subjective Tests (e.g. essay, translation) (can't be scored consistently and easily) **vs**

Productive Tests (e.g. speaking) (creative answers, active) **vs**

Language Subskills Tests (vocabulary, grammar, pronun.) **vs**

Norm-referenced Tests (Ss are compared with their classmates.) **vs**

Objective Tests (e.g. matching, m/c) (can be scored quickly and consistently)

Receptive Tests (e.g. m/c reading tests) (recognition type items)

Communication Skills Tests (Use of language of exchange ideas or info.)

Criterion-referenced Tests (Ss are rated against certain standards; not how other Ss do.)

Discreet-point Tests
(specific points tested,
e.g. prepositions,
vocabulary) vs

Proficiency Tests
(measure overall
mastery of English, or
how well-prepared e.g. is
to use Eng. In a
particular setting,
e.g.in mechanics, at
university **VS**

Integrative Tests
(combine various
subskills like in real
communication, s.o.
Dictation,Cloze, essay)

- Achievement Tests
(measure progress,
e.g. in mastery of
count-uncount nouns,
or mastery of the
skills)

2 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

Selection: Teachers should initially distinguish between issues which can be appropriately tested and evaluated by MCQs and X those which would be better assessed by some other means such as short/answers or matching items, and the like.

Form

Every MCQ has

- a stem or base,
- two to five options
- and usually this number is four.
- One of the options is the correct option;
- the others are distractors, which are incorrect.

Evaluation

The weighting of points to be allocated to the items depends on

- the number of the items,
- the time and effort to be spent on them during the test,
- and the time and effort which were spent on them during class work.
- It is a good idea to adjust the points and number of items to each other so that mathematical calculations turn out easy to do.

Strengths and Limitations

Below are some strengths of MCQs selected from Jacobsen (), () and Burton et al (1991),

Items can be more efficiently and reliably scored than supply items.

- **Different response alternatives can provide diagnostic feedback (item analysis).**
- **Items can be constructed to address various levels of cognitive complexity.**
- **They can assess a diversity of content.**
- **They can be used with all subject areas.**
- **Student success does not depend on his or her writing skills.**
- **They are easy to be administered both by the students and the teacher.**

Strengths continued.

- The results can be compiled and analysed to determine learning outcomes the difficulty level and usefulness of questions and the follow-up action required.
- They test students' ability to comprehend concepts and principles discriminate between fact and opinion, interpret cause-and-effect relationships, judge the relevance of information, make inferences from given data, all of which are problem solving strategies.

LIMITATIONS of MC QUESTIONS (same references)

- It is difficult and time consuming to construct good items.
- MCQs can lead the instructor to favour simple recall of facts.
- There is a high degree of dependence on the student's reading and instructor's writing ability.
- Measuring synthesis and evaluation can be difficult.
- They are inappropriate for measuring outcomes that require skilled performance.
- They inhibit students from expressing creativity or demonstrating original and imaginative thinking.

- Contd...
- They force the students to fit their understanding into the tester's way of understanding a concept.

 - The success of a question depends on the suitability of the distracters.
 - Longer reading time is required and students with poor reading skills are disadvantaged, especially under the time limit.
 - Some students may guess at the answers without understanding them.
 - They **cannot** measure students' ability
 - **to verbally explain,**
 - **to organize and display their thoughts,**
 - **to perform a specific task,**
 - **to produce original ideas and**
 - **to provide examples.**

Types of MCQs

According to Form

- As stems, these may take the form of;
 - statements,
 - questions,
 - dialogues or
 - short texts.
- As options, they may take the form of
 - statements,
 - questions or
 - dialogue exchanges. (See 3.1 and 4.1).

According to Requirement

- 1. Correct answer.** A question is asked and options are offered, with one as the correct answer.
- 2. Best answer.** A question is asked with options containing more than one correct answer, and the best has to be chosen (which one of the substances listed below is the poorest conductor of heat?
a. Air (✓) b. Glass c. Brickd. Water
a, b and c are all correct.
- 3. Combined response.** A question is asked with a few answers supplied to it (1, 2, 3). Then come the options, and the learners give answers such as (The correct answers are)
a. Only 1 b. 2 and 3 c. 1 and 3 d. 1, 2 and 3

Cont..

4. Blank fillers. Options are supplied to fill in the blanks in the stem. These blanks may require one word, an expression or even complete sentences.

e.g.a. an /the OR a. an ... the

5. Underlined phrases. Synonyms or antonyms. The stem contains underlined words which can either be substituted for or are the opposite of one of the options.

6. Definitions. A definition is given in the stem with words in the options, or a word is given as the stem or is underlined in the stem and some definitions are given as options.

Contd..

7. Multiple options. A question is asked in the stem, which has two or three correct answers in the options, so the Ls tick or circle all the correct ones.
8. Cloze (Standard or Modified). The blanks in the cloze passage are numbered. Beneath the passage are 3-4 options for each blank.

e.g. (1) _____ (2)
_____

1- a. car b. taxi c) bus d) train

2- a. used b. broke c) mixed d) watched


According to the Content

1. Dialogue completion. A dialogue is presented with a missing exchange, and some exchanges are provided as the options to be chosen from.
2. Irrelevant sentence. A short text is given, One sentence spoils the unity of the text. The learners indicate the number of the irrelevant sentence. The options may take this form:
a. I b. II c. III d. IV

-
3. Missing sentence. A short text is supplied, where there is a sentence missing. Below as options are various alternatives, and the learners choose the best one.
 4. Answer-cued questions. The answer is supplied as the stem. Options contain questions, one of which is the question which has got the stem as the answer.
 5. Paraphrases. Paraphrases of a section of the question text are given in the options

Contd.

-
- 6. Literal questions. Based on verbal or picture cues, the answers can be directly and easily found in the text.
- 7. Inference / Integretation. The learner draws upon implied but unstated information such as;
 - the purpose of the writer,
 - the function of the text,
 - the character of the hero and so on.



8. Organisation. The thesis statement, topic sentences of paragraphs, the supporters in the body, the quality of the conclusion and the sequence of certain sentences or paragraphs can make up the essence of organisation questions.


e.g. The following sentences (usually paraphrased) are numbered but in scrambled order. State the order in which they should be ordered logically.

a. 1-4-3-2-5

b. 1-3-2-4-5

c. 1-4-3-2-5

d. 1-2-4-3-5



9. Synthesis. The answer depends on awareness drawn upon the whole of the text.

e.g. 1. Which of the following summarise the text best?

e.g. 2. Which of the following can be a good title for this article?

3 MCQ for Testing Vocabulary -types

1. m/c (multiple choice)
2. completion (including modified cloze)
3. cloze (standard cloze)
4. paraphrase
5. definition
6. concept forming
7. matching
8. labelling
9. Synonyms
10. antonyms
11. scales/clines
12. semantic fields (break, smash, shatter, crack)
13. series (first, second; Monday, Tuesday)
14. drawing or interpreting (pictures, graphs, maps, shapes, diagrams, charts, etc.)
15. true and false cognates / borrowed words
16. word formation/word families or classes/parts of speech
17. pictures, flashcards, puppets
18. contextual guesswork/educated guessing
19. examples (sentences of hyponyms of a superordinate)
20. odd one out
21. open-ended questions
22. short answers

samples

4. MCQs for Testing Reading -Types

1. Yes/No (picture, phrase, sentence cues)
 2. Matching
 3. T/F (or Tick or Put a Cross)
 4. Paraphrase
 5. Completion
 6. Synthesis
 7. Inference / Interpretation
 8. Cloze
 9. Error correction
 10. Short answer questions
 11. Following instructions or directions
 12. Summary questions
 13. Unity and coherence questions
(Scrambled sentences or paragraphs)
- samples**

5 Measuring Higher-Level Language with MCQs

MCQs may be exploited for measuring higher-level objectives in comprehension, application and analysis (and even critical thinking, but then it is strived).

Comprehension: “Test reliability is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of test validity” means that

- a. a reliable test will have a certain degree of validity.
- b. a valid test will have a certain degree of reliability.*
- c. a reliable test may be completely invalid.
- d. a valid test may be completely unreliable.

Application. Which one of the following types of learning outcomes is the most difficult to evaluate objectively?

- a. A concept
- b. An application
- c. An appreciation
- d. An interpretation*

Analysis. There is a poem included, followed by some MCQs.

The chief purpose of stanza 9 is to

- a. delay the ending to make the poem symmetrical.
- b. give the reader a realistic picture of the return of the cavalry.
- c. provide material for extending the simile of the bridge to a final point.
- d. return the reader to the scene established in stanza 1.



○ Task???

REFERENCES

- Burton, Steven, J. et al., 1991. **How to Prepare Better Multiple Choice Test Items: Guidelines for University Faculty.** www.testing.byu.edu/info/.../betteritems.pdf.
- Commbe. C. et al., 2007. **Assessing English Language Learners.** Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Gethin, Amorey, **Multiple Choice Tests.** <http://www.lingua.org.uk/mult.htm#c1>.
- Heaton, J.B., 1975. **Writing English Language Tests,** London: Longman.
- Jacobson, D. Michele, **Multiple Choice Item Construction.** dmjacobs@acs.ucalgar.ca.
- Madsen, H. S., 1983. **Techniques in Testing.** Oxford: OUP.
- **Constructing Quality Multiple Choice Questions for Student Assessment.** WWW...