

— JUNE DEMO OF THE MONTH

Writing Effective Assessment Questions

Thursday, June 25, 2026

Education & Training | Defense | Government | Commercial | Healthcare



Poll Question

When writing assessment questions, what do you find to be the biggest challenge?

- A. Writing questions that accurately measure the learning objective
- B. Creating plausible distractors (incorrect answer choices)
- C. Balancing question difficulty
- D. Writing questions that assess application instead of memorization
- E. Other



Agenda

- General Principles
- Fairness and Accessibility
- Applying Bloom's Taxonomy
- Breakout Room Activity #1
- Assessment Questions (Best Practices)
- Breakout Room Activity #2
- Pre-Tests
- Post-Tests
- Debrief & Q&A



General Principles

- Align questions with learning objectives
- Ensure clarity and precision
- Use a variety of question types
- Balance difficulty levels
- Incorporate Bloom's Taxonomy
- Use consistent language and formatting
- Prioritize fairness and accessibility
- Review, test, and refine questions



Accessibility & Fairness



Chatbox Question: Accessibility

What's an example of an assessment question (or question type) that is not accessible or fair? In a sentence or two, explain why.

Enter your response in the chat.



Questions with Accessibility Issues

Relying solely on color or visual cues

“Select the red circle to indicate the correct process step...”

Image-based question without alt text or descriptions

“Study the diagram below and identify the correct answer.”

Questions with Accessibility Issues

Complex, text-heavy questions with unnecessary wording

Example: a paragraph-long scenario filled with jargon when only one sentence is needed.

Questions with double negatives or confusing wording

“Which of the following is NOT an example of a situation that would NOT require documentation?”

Questions with Accessibility Issues

**Drag-and-drop or timed
interaction questions
without accessible
alternatives**

**Questions that depend
on cultural, generational,
or specialized
background knowledge
unrelated to the learning
objective**

Bloom's Taxonomy



Question Stems for Bloom's Taxonomy

Knowledge:

Recognizing and recalling information, including dates, events, persons, places, terms, definitions; facts, principles, theories; methods and procedures.

Sample Stems:

- Who invented the...?
- What is meant by...?
- Where is the....?

Question Stems for Bloom's Taxonomy

Comprehension:

Understanding the meaning of information, including restating (in own words); translating from one form to another; or interpreting, explaining, and summarizing.

Sample Stems:

- Restate in your own words...
- Convert fractions into...
- List three reasons for...

Question Stems for Bloom's Taxonomy

Application:

Applying general rules, methods, or principles to a new situation, including classifying something as a specific example of a general principle or using a formula to solve a problem.

Sample Stems:

- How is... an example of...?
- How is...related to...?
- Why is...significant?

Question Stems for Bloom's Taxonomy

Analysis:

Identifying the organization and patterns within a system by identifying its component parts and the relationships among the components

Sample Stems:

- What are the parts of... and how do they function?
- Classify...according to...
- Outline/diagram...

Question Stems for Bloom's Taxonomy

Evaluation:

Using evidence and reasoned argument to judge how well a proposal would accomplish a particular purpose; resolving controversies or differences of opinion

Sample Stems:

- Do you agree...? Why?
- How would you decide about...? Why?
- What priority would you give...? Why?

Question Stems for Bloom's Taxonomy

Synthesis:

Producing something new by combining ideas, concepts, or information.

Designing, developing, proposing, or generating a product, solution, plan, or perspective.

Sample Stems:

- Design a ___ that would address or solve _____. Explain why your design would be effective.
- Develop a plan, strategy, or proposal for ___ using the concepts you have learned.
- Create an original example, product, or solution that demonstrates your understanding of _____.

BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY #1: DESIGNING ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS ACROSS BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

Instructions: Your group has been assigned a learning topic. Create **six assessment questions**—one for each level of Bloom's Taxonomy.

1. Recall
2. Understand
3. Apply
4. Analyze
5. Evaluate
6. Create

You may use any question format (multiple choice, true/false, short answer, scenario-based, matching, etc.).



Assessment Questions: Best Practices



Assessment Questions: Best Practices



- Have at least four answer choices for multiple choice.
- Present alternatives in some logical order(chronological, most to least, alphabetical).
- Indicate how many options are correct.
- Use short sentences.
- Use familiar prompts (who, what, where, when, why, and how).

Assessment Questions: Be Direct

When possible, state the stem as a direct question rather than as an incomplete answer.



“Alloys are ordinarily produced by...”



“How are alloys ordinarily produced?”



Assessment Questions: Stem Wording

Include in the stem any word(s) that might otherwise be repeated in each alternative.



In national elections in the U.S., the president is officially

- a) chosen by the people
- b) chosen by Congress
- c) chosen by the House of Representatives
- d) chosen by the Electoral College.



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Assessment Questions: True-False Questions

Best for factual knowledge and simple information, not complex concepts.

Avoid extreme modifiers words such as “always,” “never,” “all,” and “none.”

Write one clear idea per statement.

Assessment Questions: True-False Questions

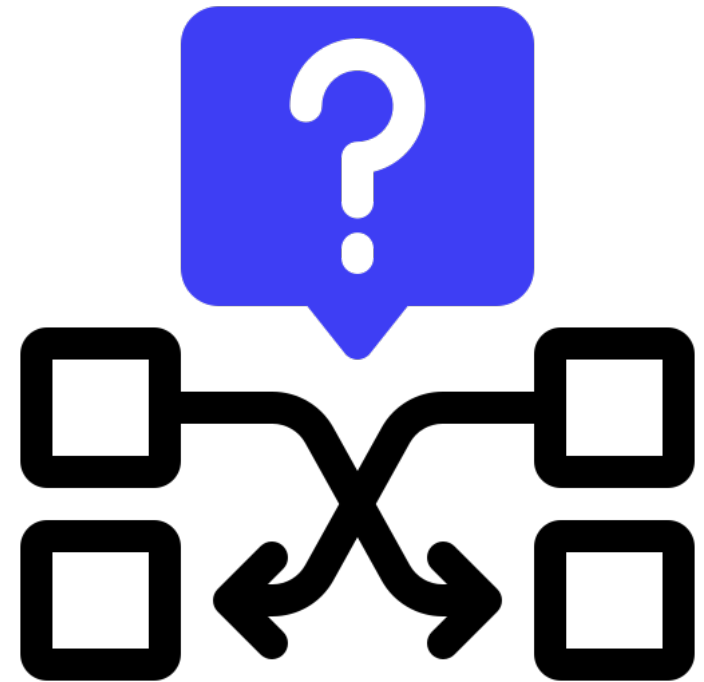
Avoid using negatively worded statements.

Avoid qualifiers such as
“usually,”
“some,”
“many,”
“probably,”
“apt to,”
“might”

Don't overuse True/False.

Assessment Questions: Matching

- Ensure matching is appropriate for learning objectives.
- Limit the list of stimuli to 4-5.
- Reduce reading time by including only short phrases or single words in the response list.
- Arrange the list of responses in some systematic order (chronological, alphabetical).



Assessment Questions: Matching

Use only items that share the same foundation of information.



Undesirable:

Directions: Match the following.

1. Water

2. Discovered Radium

3. Salt

4. Ammonia

5. Year of the first
Nuclear Fission

A. NaCl

B. Fermi

C. NH₃

D. 1942

E. H₂O

F. Curie

G. 1957

Assessment Questions: Matching

Use only items that share the same foundation of information.



Directions: On the line to the left of each compound in Column I, write the letter of the compound's formula presented in Column II. Use each formula only once.

Column I

- ___ 1. Water
- ___ 2. Salt
- ___ 3. Ammonia
- ___ 4. Sulfuric Acid

Column II

- A. H_2SO_4
- B. HCl
- C. NaCl
- D. H_2O
- E. H_2HCl

Assessment Questions: Avoid These Answer Choices

All of the above

None of the above

Both A & B are correct

Why?

- Encourages guessing
- Rewards test-taking strategies
- Obscures knowledge gaps
- Increases cognitive load
- Reduces assessment validity

BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY #2: REVISING YOUR QUESTIONS

Instructions: Use the allotted time to, if necessary, revise any of the six questions you came up with previously.

If your group believes no revisions are necessary, select one or two of your six questions and discuss:

- 1) How could you make the question more authentic or scenario—based?
- 2) How could you make the question more accessible to a broader range of learners?
- 3) How could you strengthen the question so it measures deeper thinking without being unnecessarily difficult?



Be prepared to share **one revised question** or **one enhancement idea** with the full group.

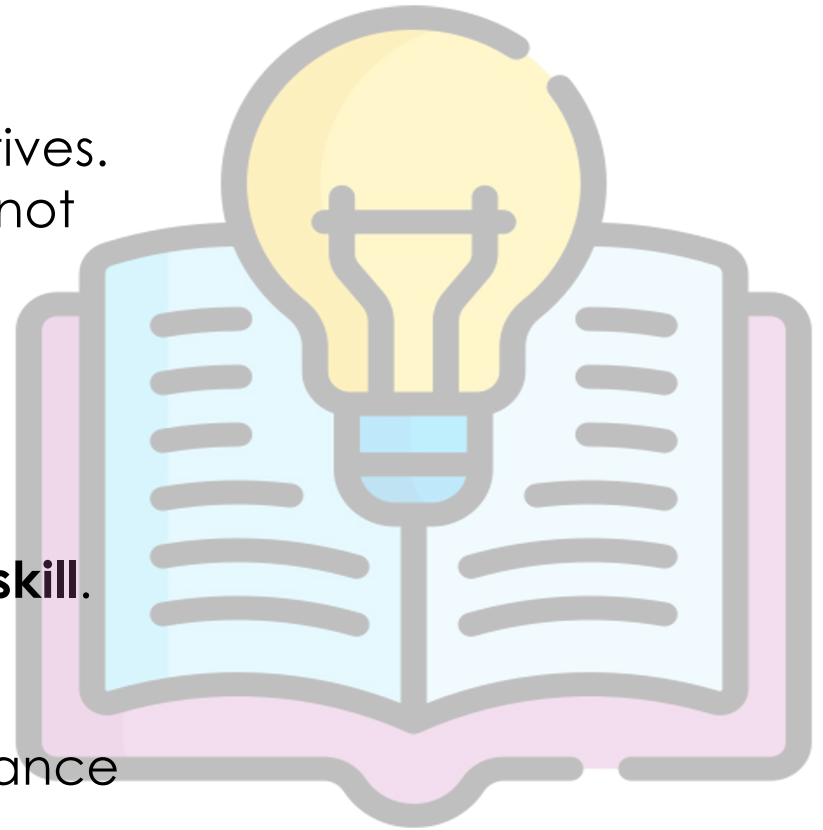
Pre-Test Questions



- Align questions with the **most important learning objectives**.
- Measure **prior knowledge**, not **mastery**.
- Keep the assessment **brief**.
- Use a **range of difficulty levels**.
- Avoid introducing new information within the questions.
- Clearly communicate the **purpose of the pre-test**.
- Use the results to inform instruction.
- Include **confidence** or self-assessment questions

Post-Test Questions

- Align questions with the learning objectives.
- **Measure application & understanding**, not just memorization.
- Include a range of difficulty levels.
- Use **authentic, real-world scenarios**
- Write clear, concise, unambiguous questions.
- Per question, **assesses one concept or skill**.
- Provide **plausible, balanced answer choices**.
- **Use results** to evaluate learner performance and instructional effectiveness.



Questions?
Thoughts?





Thank you!