



Test Item Writing Handout – Ann D. Miller, BSRT, R.T.(R)(M)(ARRT)

Test Items Should:

- Assess discipline-related knowledge, cognitive skills, and concepts.
- Be concise while providing enough information for candidates to answer accurately.
- Be written at an appropriate reading level using terminology commonly encountered in professional practice.
- Be grammatically correct and clearly written.
- Incorporate images when they enhance assessment of the intended knowledge or skill.

Test Items Should NOT:

- Be answerable by individuals who have not received appropriate education or training in the discipline.
- Focus on content that would be known only by highly experienced technologists.
- Assess trivial or insignificant facts.
- Require mathematical skills beyond those needed for entry-level practice in the discipline.

Student-Proofing Your Test Items

To improve item quality and reduce unintended clues:

- Avoid implausible or unrelated answer options.
- Avoid using only one obvious logical pair among the answer choices unless it is serving as a distractor.
- Review items to ensure one question does not provide clues to another.
- Present numerical answer choices in logical order.
- Verify that numerical ranges do not overlap.

Using Images Effectively

Images can be valuable tools for assessing student knowledge and decision-making. Consider using images to:

- Assist in evaluating critical-thinking skills.
- Assess a student's ability to work through procedural steps.
- Increase the complexity and depth of a test item.

Key Takeaway

Well-written test items assess meaningful, entry-level knowledge and skills while minimizing unintended clues and sources of bias. Thoughtful item construction, careful review, and appropriate use of images help create fair, valid, and effective assessments.