

Guidelines for Preparing Multiple-Choice Test Questions for CE Activities

Some simple guidelines for writing effective test questions.

- Tailor the questions to the audience's level of expertise. . .
- Focus your questions on the most important take-away points from your presentation.
- Include a mix of questions that:
 - Assess knowledge of the concepts presented.
 - Move beyond knowledge to the ability of the provider to incorporate the new knowledge into practice. .
- Multiple choice questions with one single best answer are best.
- Avoid negative question constructions such as “Which of the following shouldn't you do.”
- Avoid trick questions.
- Focus each question on one clear point.

- Review the learner objectives for the educational intervention and be sure the questions cover the concepts communicated in the learner objectives and the content of the presentation.

- Use the following to get started.

CONCEPT OR TASK	Sample questions for lecture type activity	These are appropriate for a case based approach
Clinical features	Which set of symptoms is suggestive of XXXYYYdisease?	Which of the following symptoms is characteristic of the patient's XXXYYY?
Pathophysiology/ Disease mechanisms	Which one of the following increases the risk of ? Which of the following factors best explains the	How can you best explain this patient's SPECIFIC DISEASE ?
Diagnosis	Which of the following strategies represents the best approach to diagnosis of XXXYYY	Which of the following is the most likely diagnosis for this patient?
Diagnostic testing	Which of the following tests would be most useful in diagnosing XXX	Which one of the following laboratory studies would you order next to distinguish XXX from YYY?
Treatment/ Management	According to XXXYYY practice guidelines, which treatment combination is recommended for XXXX patients with ???	Which one of the following treatments would you recommend to further lower low density lipoprotein levels?
Epidemiology	What is the incidence of XXX disease in the United States?	This patient is at increased risk for which of the following?

THE ANSWERS :

- Provide 4 – 5 answer options for each question with one correct answer. .
- The right answer should not be too obvious, but, avoid “trick” questions and answers
- The wrong answers should be plausible. Please do not use nonsense answers. .
 - A test is a very valuable part of the learning experience and the wrong answers and the “annotated answer key “ are very effective learning tools for reinforcing learning. In writing the “wrong answers” for your test questions – please draw from outdated treatments; myths and misconceptions; confusing concepts.
- Make answer options similar in terms of grammar, length, and complexity.
- **Avoid “all of the above” or similar answer combinations**
- **Avoid “none of the above”.**