

WRITING ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Writing assessment questions is a challenge but one that should be embraced with complete and consistent evaluation mechanisms. Well-written evaluation questions confirm the transfer of learning while also pinpointing areas for remediation. Assessment questions can be used to evaluate tasks or skills in performance-based training.

NOTE

Assessment questions can be either an oral, written, demonstration (skill/task performance) or performance test, and will most likely be executed throughout the course. Participants rely on feedback from each of these evaluation forms to further their learning.

While the goal of an assessment is to assess the participant's understanding of the content, questions should be straightforward, clear, and concise. Questions should represent course objectives and adequately cover the important critical training objectives. Participants should know exactly what the assessment question is asking.

MUSTS

- Understand the Goal – provide a means for the participant to demonstrate what they have learned during the training session.
- Review the written questions to ensure the assessment relates to the learning outcomes of the course.
- Elicit responses that reveal the participants' understanding and intellectual progress.
- Each question should address one important "concept" that is aligned with an objective of the training.
- Keep the questions simple and concise – assessing the achieved learning with clear and direct language that is precise to the subject matter.
- Select the right type of question for the assessment.
- Written assessments can vary from True-False, Multiple-Choice, Matching, Fill-in-the-Blank, Short Answer/Completion, and Definition/Essay questioning.
 - True-False – often have a tendency to assess recall of random facts; should not have negatively stated item statements or use unfamiliar vocabulary.
 - Multiple-Choice – should be written to assess various levels of learning outcomes – application, analysis, and evaluation; often do not assess a participants' ability to organize thoughts or articulate definitions or creative ideas. Avoid using "absolute" terminology. For example, "only," "none," or "always." "All of the Above" answer questions are often viewed as "trick" questions or as the obvious answer. It is best to avoid these.
 - Matching - often time consuming for participants; must be valuable to the content area, especially with numerous facts or applications/solutions.
 - Fill-in-the Blank – difficult to assess learning due to answers (responses) limited to a few words; hard to construct to obtain desired response; questions might have more than one correct answer.
 - Short/Answer/Completion – often hard to evaluate; completion as it is usually limited to a few words and short-answer may require a sentence or more.
 - Definition/Essay – time consuming to evaluate/score; subjective leading to bias evaluation; can limit the amount of material being evaluated.



- Scenario-based or Problem-Solving questions – require an extensive amount of instructor time to evaluate for participant understanding and retention. These questions are often subject to bias evaluation when partial credit is given for the response.