

## Item Writing Guidelines

CONTENT	Should be clearly aligned to the identified indicator
	Should not reference material or information presented in another item
	Should focus on one idea or concept
	Should test meaningful content
STYLE	Spell out acronyms
	Minimize the use of “NOT” and “EXCEPT”
	Avoid absolutes (e.g., always, never) and vague modifiers (e.g., best, worst)
	Use appropriate vocabulary
	Ensure correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling
	Use active voice and present tense
ITEM STEMS	State clearly and concisely
	Use complete sentences with ending punctuation in context
	Question mark appears at the end of the stem
	Use <i>which</i> before a noun and <i>what</i> before a verb
	Avoid negatives (capitalize if used)
	Do NOT use “Which of the following . . . . .”
ITEM RESPONSES	Homogeneous in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and text length
	Logically consistent with the stem
	Mutually exclusive (independent)
	Phrase choices positively (avoid NOT)
	Do NOT use “All (or none) of the above”
	Avoid cues to correct choice
	Ordered purposefully (by length, alphabetically, etc.)
	Are all plausible