

There are many reasons to create exam items. We want to verify student knowledge, evaluate our instruction and prepare our students for the national certification exam. With all this in mind, the following guide can be used to help create effective exam items.

PLANNING: BEFORE WRITING THE EXAM

1

What is the purpose/use of the question?

- ▶ A quiz question tests basic knowledge
- ▶ A unit exam tests knowledge plus integration of material within and between topics.
- ▶ A practice exam to prepare for the NREMT.

What cognitive level (objective) are you looking to meet?

- ▶ Match your intended level to the question.

CREATION OF THE STEM

Does the question meet my objective/cognitive intent?

2

Is the stem concise and readable?

- ▶ Excess verbiage makes the question difficult to read.
- ▶ Too much information makes the question too easy.
- ▶ Too little information makes the question impossible and causes discouragement.

CORRECT ANSWERS AND DISTRACTORS

3

The distractors are often underestimated as a critical part of a successful question. It is a one of the best ways to adjust difficulty levels in your questions. Consider these while creating/reviewing your distractors:

- ▶ Is there a single correct/best answer?
- ▶ Is there any ambiguity?
- ▶ Are they grammatically accurate? Are the distractors homogeneous to the answer?

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

4

Have other educators reviewed your question/assigned a difficulty level?

- ▶ Review from other educators helps prevent ambiguity.
- ▶ Other educators can assign a difficulty level or provide information to help create an accurate cut score.