

**1. Determine the scope of the test.**

What should be tested or measured? The assessment’s scope will be different based on the purpose of the test and the material taught. Is it a pop quiz, a hands-on exercise, an end-of-unit assessment, an end-of-course assessment? For MC tests, the scope also depends on factors such as preferred length. Most tests in a classroom environment need to be short enough to be administered within one classroom period.

Remember to always ask more than one MC question on a topic. Using only

one question won’t provide enough detail about what the students know. Asking a few questions on each topic helps to ensure you’re getting a good reading on what they understand.

Where does the largest value lie? What are the most important things learners should understand? This is where the focus belongs.

Another important aspect when determining the scope of the assessment is identifying the modality that is best suited to the content. Is the knowledge being

measured suitable for a multiple-choice test? Or would a set of work samples or lab exercises be a better measure of student performance?

**2. Write a test that is fair.**

CTE student populations are usually from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, and these characteristics should be accounted for in the test design. Consider disability or language access, for example. Figure 1 offers some suggestions for writing better test questions.

**FIGURE 1**

**By following these writing tips, it is possible to reduce confusion and more accurately measure what the students know rather than how well they test.**

TIP	EXAMPLE
<p><b>Identify one correct answer:</b> Avoid questions that have “all of the above,” “none of the above,” “both A and B,” etc., as possible options</p>	<p><b>BAD:</b> Types of landscaping materials include a) sand b) silt c) gravel d) all of the above <b>BETTER:</b> The finest landscaping material listed is a) sand b) silt c) gravel d) clay</p>
<p><b>Be concise:</b> Avoid extraneous wording and lengthy questions.</p>	<p><b>BAD:</b> To minimize extraneous particulates resulting from fungus, infections, or soiled hands, prior to assisting the patient, the dental assistant should perform the mandatory process of washing hands using... (antimicrobial soap) <b>BETTER:</b> Before helping the patient, the dental assistant should wash their hands with... (antimicrobial soap)</p>
<p><b>Use incorrect but reasonable wrong answers:</b> Avoid using wrong answers that are very easy for just about anyone to eliminate.</p>	<p><b>BAD:</b> Which U.S. Supreme Court case established the test to determine civil liability in excessive use of force cases? A) Cat v. Mouse b) Graham v. Connor c) Alpha v. Omega d) Nation v. State <b>BETTER:</b> Which U.S. Supreme Court case established the test to determine civil liability in excessive use of force cases? A)Bell v. Sampson b)Graham v. Connor c)Tennessee v. Garner d)Terry v. California</p>
<p><b>Use positive phrasing:</b> Avoid questions such as, “Which of the following is NOT correct?”</p>	<p><b>BAD:</b> What is not a poor insulation value? <b>BETTER:</b> What is a high insulation value?</p>
<p><b>Keep answer options of close to equal length:</b> Or, if that’s not possible, have two answers that are longer but a similar length to each other, and two answers that are shorter.</p>	<p><b>BAD:</b> Cookies can get hard and stale quickly due to a) baking the cookies longer than the recipe calls for b) excess sugar c) underbaking d) undermixing <b>BETTER:</b> Cookies can get hard and stale quickly due to a) overbaking b) excess sugar c) underbaking d) undermixing</p>
<p><b>List numerals in a logical order:</b> Ascending order will make the items easier to read.</p>	<p><b>BAD:</b> How many square feet are in an acre of land? a) 47,270 b) 58,520, c) 43,650 d) 65,530 <b>BETTER:</b> How many square feet are in an acre of land? a) 43,650 b) 47,270 c) 58,520 d) 65,530</p>
<p><b>Reduce bias:</b> Avoid using slang terms and distinctions related to gender, race, religion or culture, for example.</p>	<p><b>BAD:</b> How is the area of a Pop-tart calculated? <b>BETTER:</b> How is the area of a rectangle calculated?</p>