

Assessments

Writing Test Questions

1. Make the “stem” of the question the long part
2. Keep the answers and distractors short
3. All possible answers must be parallel
4. Avoid double negatives. If you can, avoid ANY negatives.
5. Don't bother with humorous distractors
6. Using “none of the above” or “all of the above”
7. Use Bloom's Taxonomy (verbs) to help you write questions of all levels.
8. Use Bloom to “divide up” the test into different question types
9. Many teachers default to “c” as the right answer. Be conscious not to overuse one letter.
10. Write questions AFTER each lecture? (or do it before?)
11. Using (or avoiding) publisher question sets

Writing Essay Prompts

12. Make your prompts specific, to thwart paper mills
13. Make your prompts unique to your class, so a ‘ringer’ hired from the outside wouldn't know how to connect the assigned themes
14. Change your topics every year; students share with each other

Grading

15. Cycle the first few tests to the back of the pile and re-grade them at the end
16. Grade one page at a time, down the whole pile, rather than by student
17. If there's a cover page, ask students to not put names elsewhere, to keep your grading anonymous
18. Create mini-rubrics, or at least notes to self, on what earns points (or loses points) for each short answer question, to keep your grading consistent

Rubrics

19. Choose the criteria first (the things which will earn points)
20. Select sub-criteria; this will give you individual bullet points in the boxes
21. Add adjectives to the sub-criteria (best and worst scores are easiest)
22. Assign points. Consider the ramifications of a 10-pt scale versus a 5-point one. Should the “middle” grade be a C? Some rubrics intentionally make the middle grade a B.
23. Note that rubrics are not truly objective – they just look that way.
24. Use of a rubric: print out one for each student paper. Circle the relevant boxes (or underline sub-criteria) and it will assign points

25. See <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>

Other Topics

26. Assessment can be formative (informal, feedback-oriented) or summative (earns a grade)
27. Aim to keep assessments AUTHENTIC. If the skill is fixing refrigerators, a multiple choice test isn't authentic.
28. Practice should match assessment. Don't assign HW and quizzes that are knowledge-oriented, but then give a test that is application-oriented.
29. Consider spreading out assessments intentionally so that specific skills are practiced again later in the semester, in a DISTRIBUTED manner (rather than all at once, and then move on to the next thing).
30. Practice testing, second-chance tests, and quizzes are demonstrated high-impact practices.