Types of Test Questions

True/False

Good for:
- Knowledge level content
- Evaluating student understanding of popular misconceptions
- Concepts with two logical responses

Advantages:
- Can test large amounts of content
- Students can answer 3-4 questions per minute

Disadvantages:
- They are easy
- It is difficult to discriminate between students that know the material and students who don't
- Students have a 50-50 chance of getting the right answer by guessing
- Need a large number of items for high reliability

Tips for Writing Good True/False items:
- Avoid double negatives.
- Avoid long/complex sentences.
- Use specific determinants with caution: never, only, all, none, always, could, might, can, may, sometimes, generally, some, few.
- Use only one central idea in each item.
- Don't emphasize the trivial.
- Use exact quantitative language
- Don't lift items straight from the book.
- Make more false than true (60/40). (Students are more likely to answer true.)

Matching

Good for:
- Knowledge level
- Some comprehension level, if appropriately constructed

Types:
- Terms with definitions
- Phrases with other phrases
- Causes with effects
- Parts with larger units
- Problems with solutions

Advantages:
- Maximum coverage at knowledge level in a minimum amount of space/preptime
- Valuable in content areas that have a lot of facts

Disadvantages:
- Time consuming for students
- Not good for higher levels of learning

Tips for Writing Good Matching items:
- Need 15 items or less.
- Give good directions on basis for matching.
- Use items in response column more than once (reduces the effects of guessing).
- Use homogenous material in each exercise.
- Make all responses plausible.
- Put all items on a single page.
- Put response in some logical order (chronological, alphabetical, etc.).
- Responses should be short.

Multiple Choice

Good for:
- Application, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation levels

Types:
- Question/Right answer
- Incomplete statement
- Best answer

Advantages:
- Very effective
- Versatile at all levels
- Minimum of writing for student
- Guessing reduced
- Can cover broad range of content

Disadvantages:
- Difficult to construct good test items.
- Difficult to come up with plausible distractors/alternative responses.

Tips for Writing Good Multiple Choice items:
- Stem should present single, clearly formulated problem.
- Stem should be in simple, understood language; delete extraneous words.
- Avoid "all of the above"--can answer based on partial knowledge (if one is incorrect or two are correct, but unsure of the third...).
- Avoid "none of the above."
- Make all distractors plausible/homoegenous.
- Don't overlap response alternatives (decreases discrimination between students who know the material and those who don't).
- Don't use double negatives.
- Present alternatives in logical or numerical order.
- Place correct answer at random (A answer is most often).
- Make each item independent of others on test.
- Way to judge a good stem: student's who know the content should be able to answer before reading the alternatives
- List alternatives on separate lines, indent, separate by blank line, use letters vs. numbers for alternative answers.
- Need more than 3 alternatives, 4 is best.

Short Answer

Good for:
- Application, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation levels

Advantages:
- Easy to construct
- Good for "who," what," where," "when" content
- Minimizes guessing
- Encourages more intensive study-student must know the answer vs. recognizing the answer.

Disadvantages:
- May overemphasize memorization of facts
- Take care - questions may have more than one correct answer
- Scoring is laborious

Tips for Writing Good Short Answer Items:
- When using with definitions: supply term, not the definition-for a better judge of student knowledge.
- For numbers, indicate the degree of precision/units expected.
- Use direct questions, not an incomplete statement.
- If you do use incomplete statements, don't use more than 2 blanks within an item.
- Arrange blanks to make scoring easy.
- Try to phrase question so there is only one answer possible.

Essay

Good for:
- Application, synthesis and evaluation levels

Types:
- Extended response: synthesis and evaluation levels; a lot of freedom in answers
- Restricted response: more consistent scoring, outlines parameters of responses

Advantages:
- Students less likely to guess
- Easy to construct
- Stimulates more study
- Allows students to demonstrate ability to organize knowledge, express opinions, show originality.

Disadvantages:
- Can limit amount of material tested, therefore has decreased validity.
- Subjective, potentially unreliable scoring.
- Time consuming to score.

Tips for Writing Good Essay Items:
- Provide reasonable time limits for thinking and writing.
- Avoid letting them to answer a choice of questions (You won't get a good idea of the broadness of student achievement when they only answer a set of questions.)
- Give definitive task to student-compare, analyze, evaluate, etc.
- Use checklist point system to score with a model answer: write outline, determine how many points to assign to each part

- Score one question at a time-all at the same time.

Oral Exams

Good for:
- Knowledge, synthesis, evaluation levels

Advantages:
- Useful as an instructional tool-allows students to learn at the same time as testing.
- Allows teacher to give clues to facilitate learning.
- Useful to test speech and foreign language competencies.

Disadvantages:
- Time consuming to give and take.
- Could have poor student performance because they haven't had much practice with it.
- Provides no written record without checklists.

Student Portfolios

Good for:
- *Knowledge, application, synthesis, evaluation levels*

Advantages:
- Can assess compatible skills: writing, documentation, critical thinking, problem solving
- Can allow student to present totality of learning.
- Students become active participants in the evaluation process.

Disadvantages:
- Can be difficult and time consuming to grade.

Performance

Good for:
- Application of knowledge, skills, abilities

Advantages:
- Measures some skills and abilities not possible to measure in other ways

Disadvantages:
- Can not be used in some fields of study
- Difficult to construct
- Difficult to grade
- Time-consuming to give and take

Taken from : http://www.utc.edu/Administration/WalkerTeachingResourceCenter/FacultyDevelopment/Assessment/test-questions.html