

# Guidelines for question setters and markers: Subject-English

## 1. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ)

MCQ can be set for testing a number of strategies and skills related to reading such as scanning, skimming, reading for gist, inferencing (guessing the meaning from the context) comprehension check etc. Each MCQ item will carry ½ mark. However, depending on the level of difficulty some items may have 1 mark as well.

In preparing MCQ questions, question setters will make sure that learners have to apply certain skills or strategies of reading in order to be able to choose the right options. Depending on the level of the learners, items will be set to test learners' lower order thinking skills (knowing and understanding) as well as higher order and more critical thinking (analyzing, evaluating or producing information). Use synonyms in the questions to avoid quoting directly from the original passage. Make the questions round about so that learners think.

For example:

**Text:** The Great Wall of China, one of the greatest wonders of the world, was first built between 220-206 BC.

**Question:** When was the Great Wall first built? (Don't make this type of question. Student will just get the answer from the question paper as 'was born' is common in both the text in the question paper and the answer.)

**Question:** What is the initial construction period of the Great Wall? (This question is Okay as learners has to understand that 'was built' and 'construction period' are same.)

Students will write the question number and then write only a/b/c/d that refers to the correct answer. No need to copy the whole sentence from the question paper to answer the questions.

The same text can be used for guessing the meaning from the context and Question Answer (open ended and close ended). However, the same text **cannot** be used for Question-Answer and True/False. Depending on the level of difficulty and length of the text, information transfer and True/False questions can be set from the same text. Alternatively two different texts can be used for two different tests. The latter is more encouraged.

Please note the following points while setting MCQ test items:

- Phrase stems as clearly as possible. Confusing questions can generate wrong answers from students who do understand the material.
- Avoid extra language in the stem. Some think extraneous details make a question more complex. Moreover, they most often just add to the students' reading time. This reduces the number of questions you can put on a test reducing the reliability of the test.
- Include any language in the stem that you would have to repeat in each answer option.
- Answer options should be about the same length and parallel in grammatical structure. Too much detail or different grammatical structure can give the answer away.
- Limit the number of answer options to four.
- Distracters must be incorrect, but plausible. Try to include among the distracters options that contain common errors.
- To make distracters more plausible, use words that should be familiar to students.
- If a recognizable key word appears in the correct answer, it should appear in some or all of the distracters as well. Don't let a verbal clue decrease the accuracy of your exam.