

Module 1 - Objective 1

To successfully complete this Learning Outcome Guide, you should be able to recognize the different components of a multiple choice question and the difference in the format of a multiple choice item as compared to other formats.

Lesson Presentation

There are a variety of formats for items on a test. Some of you have experienced short answer questions, true/false questions, essay questions, multiple choice questions and practical tests during your respiratory therapy education. As the CBRC examination is a multiple choice test, the focus of this course will be the multiple choice format that is similar to the CBRC exams.

The multiple choice item is the entire unit, which consists of a stem and four options. The item is designed to measure a competency from the National Competency profile. The stem asks the question. The four options contain the answer and three distractors.

The stem poses a problem or states a question. The stem should contain the necessary information so that you can respond to the question without looking at the options. The stem could contain key words that will help to eliminate some of the options. Also, the stem may contain a qualifier that will also direct you in selecting the correct response. If the question is a negative, it is emphasized with capital letters (for example NOT).

The answer will be the best response and not necessarily an absolute. The three distractors may contain information that is true or correct but does NOT answer the question.

Now, let's explore the components of a sample item.

The Request for Consultation indicates a clinical history of asthma.
What would be the clinical manifestations of this condition?

1. Shortness of breath
2. Wheezing
3. Coughing
4. All of the above

The NCP competency that this item is measuring is:

Understand the pathology and anomalies related to Respiratory Diseases

The stem "The Request for Consultation indicates a clinical history of asthma.

The key word in this stem is "asthma", as you must know what this condition is to respond to the question. The phrase "clinical manifestations" is a qualifier that directs you to think of the symptoms of the pathological condition. It does not ask you to contemplate the cause of the condition.

Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 are the options. Number 4 is the best answer and numbers 1, 2 and 3 are distractors or are also correct which is the case with this question. Here is another example:

Upon auscultation, what would you most expect to hear on a patient during an exacerbation of an asthma attack?

1. inspiratory crackles
2. normal breath sounds
3. end expiratory wheezes
4. pleural rub

The NCP competency that this item is measuring is: Patient Evaluation.

The stem “Upon auscultation, what would you most expect to hear on a patient during an exacerbation of an asthma attack?” of this item includes all of the information to respond to the question.

Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 are the options. Number 3 is the best answer and numbers 1, 2 and 4 are distractors. Number 3 is correct because wheezing is the most common symptom during an asthma exacerbation.