



ITEM REVIEW

Checklist for reviewing your own and colleagues' items

A	Texts (passages)	Yes	No	N/A
1.	Is the target language correct and authentic?			
2.	Is the content contemporary and varied?			
3.	Does the text avoid very specialized technical vocabulary, slang expressions and regionalisms?			
4.	Is the text length and difficulty appropriate for the level you want to test?			
5.	Is the text unambiguous? If not, can this be corrected?			
6.	Is the content of the text such that it will not be outdated soon? If not, can editing correct the problem?			
7.	Is it unlikely that test takers have prior knowledge about the topic from sources in their native language?			

B	The Stem	Yes	No	N/A
1.	Does the stem clearly state the task for the test taker? Will test takers know what is expected?			
2.	Is the stem succinct – free of any unnecessary information?			
3.	Is the stem stated so that it does not give away the correct answer?			
4.	Is the language uncomplicated, grammatically correct and idiomatic? Is it free of unnecessarily high-level vocabulary and grammar?			
5.	Is the stem stated so that one and only one correct answer can be selected from the options?			
6.	Is the stem stated positively? If not, are such words as “NOT”, “NEVER”, “EXCEPT”, printed in capital or bolded letters to highlight the negative statement?			
7.	Is the stem free of general qualifiers that may reveal or distort the key (e.g., “usually”, “sometimes”, “possibly”, etc.)?			
8.	In an item dealing with judgment or controversy, does the stem cite the authority for determining the correct answer (e. g., “The author of this article believes ...”)?			

C	Multiple-Choice Options	Yes	No	N/A
1.	Do all options measure a task suitable for the item type and level?			
2.	Are all options clearly distinct from one another and not overlapping?			
3.	Are all options similar in terms of length, form, grammar and style? If not, is there balance?			
4.	Are all options equally general or equally specific? If not, is there balance?			
5.	Do the options grammatically fit the stem?			
6.	Do the options fit the text in terms of proficiency level and style?			
7.	Are options constructed without obvious patterns that inadvertently reveal the key? E.g. consistent use of paraphrase for keys while distractors repeat significant words from the text, or vice versa.			



D	The Key	Yes	No	N/A
1.	Is there one and only one correct answer?			
2.	If there is more than one possible answer (<i>for CR-items</i>), have all possibilities been included in the key?			
3.	Is there a sufficiently small number of possible answers (<i>for CR-items</i>)?			
4.	Are any unintended clues to the correct answer avoided? (e.g., longer/shorter/more detailed than the other options)			
5.	Is it impossible for test takers to determine the key without understanding the text?			
6.	Is the key different from other options in more than minor or unimportant details?			
E	Distractors	Yes	No	N/A
1.	Is each distractor as carefully planned as are all other parts of the item?			
2.	Are all of the distractors plausible, but clearly incorrect?			
3.	Is each distractor written to appear attractive to test takers who cannot fully understand the text or perform the task?			
4.	Is each distractor based on a specific problem or misconception that a test taker might have with regard to the text?			
5.	Does each distractor have plausible form, meaning, sociolinguistic context?			
6.	Does each distractor differ from the key and from each other in more than trivial or minor details?			
7.	Are distractors not too close in meaning to the key (at the lower levels)?			
8.	Do distractors avoid tricky or misleading language?			
9.	Do distractors clearly convey their meaning?			
10.	Are distractors approximately equal to each other in over-all difficulty?			
F	The Complete Item	Yes	No	N/A
1.	Is the item representative of the targeted proficiency level?			
2.	Does the item measure a language task or a feature of the text that test takers at the targeted proficiency level should control?			
3.	Are the text and the task aligned, i.e., at the same proficiency level?			
4.	Are the central idea and most of the phrasing included in the stem, rather than in the options?			
5.	Does the item avoid testing trivial points?			
6.	Is the item constructed so that there is nothing ambiguous or contradictory about it?			
7.	Does the item test only understanding of the authentic text? Does it avoid testing commonly known facts or cultural knowledge outside the scope of the text?			
8.	Is the item constructed in a way that it does not contain sensitive or offensive material about age, gender, race, ethnic characteristics, etc.?			
9.	Is the language correct and idiomatic? Is the item free of typos and other errors?			