

Techniques for Testing Reading Comprehension: .

2- Short – Answer Questions./ completion

They are questions that require the testees to write down **specific answers** in spaces provided on the question paper. This technique is very useful for testing both reading and listening comprehension. In this type the testees are asked to answer in **a few words , phrases or sentence .**

There are **two principles** that the teacher should bear in mind when writing short answer/ completion items :

1- There should be only **one short, concise answer**. Responses that are short and concise are easier to score . Teachers should specify the number of words if there is a limit .

2- Allow for **partial credit** . Teachers should consider the issue of partial credit for answers that have varying degrees of correctness.

3- Cloze

In the cloze procedure, words are deleted from a text after allowing a few sentences of introduction. The deletion rate is mechanically set , usually between every fifth and eleven word. Testees have to fill each gap by supplying the word they think has been deleted. Cloze tests can test a wide variety of language area. They are easy to construct and easily scored . There are **certain principles** that the teacher should bear in mind when writing effective Cloze tests :

- 1- Ensure that answers are **concise** . The responses that goes in the blank **should not be long** . Make sure there is enough room in the blank to comfortably write the response.
- 2- Provide enough context for students to guess what goes in the blank .
- 3- Blanks should be of **equal length** .
- 4- Develop and allow for a list of acceptable responses and when scoring Cloze , the teacher should be sure to allow for the possibility of **more than one answer**.
- 5- Don't put a gap in the **first sentence** of a paragraph or text because the initial sentence in a paragraph is usually used to set the context for the reading to follow.

4-C -Tests

The C-test is an adaptation of the cloze technique based on the same theoretical rationale as cloze .i.e. testing the ability to cope with reduced redundancy and predict from context . In this technique, **every second word** in a text is partially deleted . Testees are sometimes given the **first half** of a deleted word in order to ensure solutions.

5-Cloze Elide .

It is a technique that is generating interest recently where the words that **do not belong** are inserted into a reading passage and the testees have to indicate **where these insertions** have been made. This technique is also known as the Intrusive Word Technique.

6- Information Transfer .

In an attempt to avoid the contamination of scores being muddled by having to employ writing to record answers , tasks where **the information transmitted verbally are transferred** to a **non-verbal form** e. g . by labeling a diagram, completing a chart or numbering a sequence of events .

7-True / False Format

T/F questions are one of the most **popular formats** for teacher- produced tests .They are typically written as **statements** and the testee s task is to decide whether they are true or false .They are **attractive** to many test developers because they offer several advantages. They can test large amounts of content and they require less time for testees to respond to them .The scoring of T/F questions is quick and reliable and can be accomplished efficiently and accurately.To write effective T/F questions, the teacher should follow the following points:

1-Write items that test **meaning** rather than **trivial** details.

2-Questions should be written at a **lower level of** language difficulty than the text.

3- Consider the effect of background knowledge.Successful completion of T/F items should depend on the students reaoof the text,not on the background knowledge.

4- Questions should appear in **the same order** as the answers appear in the text .

5- Make sure you paraphrase questions in **simple, clear language**. It is better to paraphrase questions rather than take them **verbatim** from the text .

6-Avoid absoluteness clues .Do not use specific determiners like ((**all , always, none and never**)) because the questions with these determines are **easy** as the answer is always false .

7- Focus each item on a single idea from the text.

8- Avoid answer patterns.Dont be tempted to write questions with a specific answer pattern like **TTFFTFFTT**.

9- Include enough questions. It is recommended that teachers include a minimum of **seven to ten** questions on their tests when using this format .

10- Add a third option to **decrease the guessing factor** , such as ((**not given , not enough information**)) . These two options are appropriate for students at the intermediate and higher levels and should not be used for testing **listening comprehension** because the students hear the source text only one or twice and such options would **tax students memory**.

11- Have testees circle T ,F or Non the test paper or answer sheet . By doing so , you will avoid getting those Ts that **suspiciously** look like Fs .

8- Matching Format

It is another common objective format .It is **an extended** form of MCQ that draws on the students ability to make **connections** among ideas , vocabulary, and structure. It presents the students with two columns of information and the testees must find the matches between the two columns. Items in the **left -hand column** are called ((premises)) or ((stems)) and the items in the **right- hand column** are called ((options)). The main **merits** of matching format **over MCQ** is that the testee has more **distractors** per item . It can also measure a large amount of **related factual material** in a relatively short time for example: pictures and words , questions and answers, parts and functions, terms and definitions.....ect .The main demerit of this format is when the options and premises have an **equal** number of choices and the testees miss one , they miss at least **two** automatically .

To write effective matching questions , options should be **more** than premises to function as distractors .