



EDPS 340: Shorter Answer Questions
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Short Answer Items

- Response: a word, phrase, name, or sentence, rather than a more extended
 - Direct Questions / Short Answer
 - Who is the current Prime Minister of Canada?
 - Incomplete Sentences / Fill In the Blanks
 - The current Prime Minister of Canada is _____?
- Easy to construct & mark
- Can assess: knowledge, comprehension, & some application


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Guidelines for Writing Short Answer Items 1

- Word the item so that the required answer is both brief & specific.
 - Poor: Wellington defeated Napoleon in _____ ?
 - **Better:** In what battle fought in 1815 did Wellington defeat Napoleon?
OR
In what year did Wellington defeat Napoleon at Waterloo?


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Guidelines for Writing Short Answer Items 2

- Missing information near the end of the sentence... makes reading & responding easier
 - Poor: In the year _____ , Canada turned 100 years old.
 - **Better:** Canada turned 100 years old in the year _____ .
- Indicate whether
 - each blank of equal length represents one word or several words
 - long blanks require sentences or phrases
 - synonymous terms are accepted or not


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Guidelines for Writing Short Answer Items 3

- If the answer is to be expressed in numerical units, indicate the type of answer wanted
 - Poor: If a room measures 7 meters by 4 meters, the perimeter is _____ .
 - **Better:** If a room measures 7 meters by 4 meters, the perimeter is _____ meters (or m).

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Guidelines for Writing Short Answer Items 4

- Do not use too many blanks.
 - The emphasis should be on knowledge & comprehension, not mind reading.
 - Consider:
In the year _____ , Prime Minister _____ signed the _____ , which led to a _____ which was _____ .

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Guidelines for Writing Short Answer Items 5

- A direct question is generally more desirable than an incomplete statement

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Guidelines for Writing Short Answer Items 6

- Do not take statements directly from textbooks to use as a basis for short-answer items

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Advantages of Short Answer

- Easy to construct
- Reduces guessing correctly (Supply-type items)

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Disadvantages of Short Answer

- Unsuitable for measuring most complex learning outcomes
- Correct answers may vary depending on how clearly the questions are written

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