



Nursing:

PreTest[®] Self-Assessment and Review

2,000 board-type, multiple-choice questions with
answers, explanations, and current references

Nursing:

PreTest® Self-Assessment and Review

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Introduction

PreTest® Self-Assessment and Review

Nursing: PreTest Self-Assessment and Review has been primarily designed to provide nursing students in baccalaureate, diploma, and associate-degree programs with a comprehensive and convenient instrument for self-assessment and review, in preparation for the State Board Test Pool Examinations for registered nurse licensure. This book, which is intended to confirm areas of expertise and to identify areas of relative weakness, also should prove useful to nursing students who are preparing for school achievement or challenge examinations, to practicing nurses who are participating in continuing education programs, and to inactive nurses who wish to return to practice.

The 2,000 questions contained in the book are divided among four major subject areas—medical-surgical nursing, maternal-newborn nursing, nursing care of children, and psychiatric nursing. Each subject area contains 500 questions carefully selected to **match the level of difficulty** of the questions on the State Board examinations.

Every question is accompanied by an answer, a paragraph explanation, and a **specific page reference** to either a current journal article, a textbook, or both. The rationales explain not only why the correct answers are correct, but why the wrong answers are wrong, thus providing an excellent review of the topic presented. The complete bibliography at the end of the volume, which lists all the sources used, serves as a convenient reference if further study is needed.

To use this review book effectively, allow yourself one minute in which to answer each question. By adhering to this time constraint, you will be approximating the time limit imposed by the State Board examinations. As you proceed, indicate your answer beside each question or on a separate piece of paper. When you have completed all the questions in a chapter, spend as much time as necessary verifying your answers and reading the explanations. Although it is important to pay special attention to the explanations for the questions that you have answered incorrectly, **read every explanation** because

each explanation has been constructed **to reinforce and supplement the information tested** in the question. If after reading an explanation you feel the need for even more information, the specific reference that accompanies a question should be consulted and studied.

The State Board Test Pool Examinations for Registered Nurse Licensure

History and Development

All states require a nurse to pass a licensing examination before practicing, and each individual state board of nursing has the legal responsibility to determine whether or not a specific individual is competent to practice within its jurisdiction. The State Board Test Pool Examinations for registered nurse licensure were devised to help state boards reach a valid decision.

Administered for the first time in 1944, the examinations currently are regulated by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. (a newly formed autonomous organization composed of representatives from state boards of nursing), with the Department of Test Development of the National League for Nursing (NLN) acting as the test service agency. Today, the examinations are used in all 50 states, as well as in Guam and the Virgin Islands. They are specifically designed to ensure that a basic level of nursing competency compatible with providing for the public safety is met, i.e., their goal is to ascertain whether nurses possess the **entry-level** skills prerequisite for effective and safe practice.

General Information

The State Board examinations are given twice a year, in February and July. They are given over a two-day period, which includes nine to ten hours of actual testing time. The examinations are divided into six separate sections: the first day usually is devoted to medical nursing, psychiatric nursing and obstetric nursing; the second day usually includes surgical nursing, nursing of children, and "test 6." Test 6 is composed of experimental questions and is used to measure the validity

ty of the test for licensure purposes; this section is not counted in the total score.

The State Boards test candidates' knowledge of nursing within clinical settings. Rather than containing sections devoted to the basic sciences, the State Boards test underlying basic science principles as they apply to specific clinical situations. Therefore, all six sections will include some questions on pathophysiology, anatomy, nutrition, pharmacology, rehabilitation, nursing fundamentals, and ethical and legal aspects of nursing, as well as other topics in the basic natural and social sciences.

The sections covering medical nursing, surgical nursing, and nursing of children each contain 110 to 125 questions, and there is a two-hour time limit for each section. The sections covering obstetric and psychiatric nursing are slightly shorter; they contain approximately 90 questions and require one and one-half hours apiece.

The only item type used on the State Boards is the single-choice completion type in which a question or incomplete statement is followed by four suggested answers indicated by numbers 1 through 4. You will be told to select the single best choice. Just as in the actual practice of nursing, sometimes no single answer will be an obvious best choice. Therefore, although several choices may appear appealing, the less applicable ones must be rejected in favor of the single best answer. *Nursing: PreTest Self-Assessment and Review* uses the same basic item type, although in our format we have chosen to use five choices labeled (A) through (E) rather than four numbered choices.

For each question on the State Boards, you will be told to fill in no more than one space on your answer sheet next to the appropriate question number. It is very important that you follow this rule and that you mark your answer sheets carefully with a No. 2 pencil. Be sure your marks fill the space between the guidelines but do not stray outside the lines. If you erase, be sure that you make a clean erasure. If your answer sheets are not filled out according to these rules, your answers will not be recorded accurately, and as a result, you may fail the examination.

Scoring

While there is no penalty for blank spaces on the State Boards, there is a penalty for guessing. **You will be penalized one-third of a point for each wrong answer you fill in on the examination.** Therefore, if you cannot eliminate at least two of the suggested answers to a question, leave a blank space. Your raw score on the State Boards is adjusted to account for guessing and is calculated by taking the number of questions answered correctly and subtracting from it the number of questions answered incorrectly divided by three. For example, if you answer 414 questions correctly, 126 questions incorrectly, and leave no questions unanswered, you will have an adjusted raw score of 372 ($414 - \frac{126}{3}$). On the other hand, a nursing student who answers 414 questions correctly, answers no questions incorrectly, and leaves 126 questions unanswered will have an adjusted raw score of 414.

The results of the State Boards are **not** reported, however, in terms of the adjusted raw scores we have just discussed, because the raw scores—while adequately measuring a candidate's absolute performance—do not define a candidate's performance in relation to other candidates taking the examination. Therefore, the State Boards convert adjusted raw scores to “standard” scores.

Examinees are ranked in the exact same order by standard scores as by adjusted raw scores—only the numbers have been changed. In the standard score system, the mean (or average) score of the total number of candidates taking a test is arbitrarily assigned a standard score of 500. Therefore, if you have a standard score of 500, you will know that 50 percent of the people taking the same test had a higher score than you, and 50 percent had a lower score.

Each standard deviation away from the average standard score of 500 then adds or subtracts 100 standard score points. Because of the nature of the normal statistical curve, if you receive a standard score of 400, it means that approximately 86 percent of the people taking the same test had a higher score than you; a standard score of 300 means approximately 97 percent of candidates achieved higher scores. A standard score of 600 means approximately 15 or 16 percent of candidates had a higher score; a standard score of 700

means less than 3 percent of candidates had higher scores; and a standard score of 800 means that you achieved a higher score than 99.9 percent of candidates.

While each individual state board of nursing has the privilege of determining its own passing scores, in most states a standard score below 350 (1.5 standard deviations from the mean) on **any of the five sections** of the State Boards constitutes a failure. In general, the nationwide failure rate for the State Boards seems to be between 7 and 12 percent. In most states if a candidate fails only one or two sections, only the subjects failed need to be retaken, provided this is accomplished within a specified period of time. While each state again has the right to set its own rules, a general rule is that a candidate must achieve a passing score on all five sections, in not more than three attempts, all within an 18-month period; after which time, the **entire** exam must be repeated. Many states also limit the number of times the entire examination can be retaken within a three-year period and demand evidence of remedial work after a certain number of failures.

General Guidelines for Study

In anticipation of the State Boards, it is a good idea to plan a schedule for study and review. Perhaps the most efficient way to begin is to analyze your strengths and weaknesses through the use of this book and through a quick review of your past performance on class tests and NLN achievement tests.

Start your actual studying as early as possible, giving yourself a minimum of three to four weeks. Do not cram or try to memorize many new, random facts during this period. Rather, after refreshing your memory by a quick review of the major areas to be tested, devote your remaining time to an in-depth study of the areas with which you are less familiar.

Familiarize yourself with the multiple-choice question format and test-taking under time pressure. These are two of the major benefits that can be derived from studying a review book such as this one. There are many nurses who walk into examinations with a

great deal of knowledge and experience only to do poorly because they are not “test-wise.”

Finish your review a day or two before the test. Do **not** stay up the night before trying to learn new material. A good night’s sleep before the exam is imperative simply because performance on any test is always better if you are refreshed rather than fatigued.

Effective Test-Taking

Knowing what to expect of any examination is almost as important as having the basic knowledge and information to answer the questions correctly. Familiarity with test-taking techniques and strategies allows for the productive utilization of the basic knowledge that your nursing education already has provided. Therefore, in addition to the information already provided, we offer the following suggestions for taking the State Boards:

1. Read the directions carefully.
2. Read each question carefully. Be sure you understand the question before looking at the choices.
3. If necessary, rephrase a question in your own words to help you understand its meaning. Do not read extra meaning into a question, but be alert for qualifying words such as best, least, usually, rarely, highest, lowest, primarily, and contraindicated; these words can change the meaning of a question or a choice.
4. Read all choices before selecting your answer. More than one choice can be correct, and in fact all choices should be feasible. Remember, you must select the **best** choice.
5. Use the process of elimination to help discover the correct answer. Look for the choices you know are incorrect.
6. Judge each choice against the question not against the other suggested answers. Always go back to the question when reviewing the validity of an answer. For example, try answering true or false with each possible answer; this forces you to keep looking back to the question.

7. Use information gleaned from previously answered questions to help answer others.
8. Determine the number of questions in each section and the approximate time allowed to answer each (usually about a minute).
9. Use time wisely; do not spend too much time on a question for which you do not know the answer. In other words, answer easy questions first and come back to questions for which you are uncertain of the answer.
10. Because you are penalized for guessing, it is better to skip questions for which you cannot eliminate at least two answers. (Be careful not to overreact and skip too many questions or you may not accumulate enough points to pass the exam.)
11. Use care and caution filling in your answer sheets. If you erase, be sure to erase completely. If you skip a question be **sure** to leave a space on the answer sheet, Continuously check the numbering of questions against the answer sheet.
12. Do not expect a pattern to the answers; the answer key is totally random.
13. If you complete a section early, go back and check your answers.

Summary

We hope that the questions in this book will help you to confirm areas of expertise and identify areas of weakness. We hope that the explanations will help you to reinforce and supplement the knowledge of nursing practice that you have gained over years of study. We trust that when you have finished this book, you will be familiar with the format, content, and time constraints of the State Board examinations and that any anxiety you may now be feeling as you begin your review will be only a memory.


Nursing

Contents

List of Contributors	xi
Introduction	xiii

Section I—Medical-Surgical Nursing

General Nursing Care of Surgical Patients	
Questions	3
Answers, Explanations, and References	6
Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Neoplastic Disorders	
Questions	9
Answers, Explanations, and References	14
) Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Fluid and Electrolyte Imbalance	
Questions	20
Answers, Explanations, and References	27
✓ Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Cardiovascular Disorders	
Questions	36
Answers, Explanations, and References	48
✓ Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Hematopoietic Disorders	
Questions	62
Answers, Explanations, and References	69
Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Pulmonary Disorders	
Questions	77
Answers, Explanations, and References	85
Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Gastrointestinal Disorders	
Questions	94
Answers, Explanations, and References	104
⊕ Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Renal and Urinary Tract Disorders	
Questions	113
Answers, Explanations, and References	121

Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Reproductive Disorders	
Questions	131
Answers, Explanations, and References	136
 Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Endocrine Disorders	
Questions	141
Answers, Explanations, and References	148
Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Musculoskeletal and Neuromuscular Disorders	
Questions	157
Answers, Explanations, and References	167
Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Disorders of the Eye	
Questions	180
Answers, Explanations, and References	184
 Section II—Maternal-Newborn Nursing	
The Developing Fetus	
Questions	191
Answers, Explanations, and References	198
Dynamics of Pregnancy and Prenatal Care	
Questions	208
Answers, Explanations, and References	222
The At-Risk Woman During Pregnancy	
Questions	240
Answers, Explanations, and References	249
Dynamics of Normal Labor and Delivery	
Questions	259
Answers, Explanations, and References	273
The At-Risk Woman During Labor and Delivery	
Questions	290
Answers, Explanations, and References	299
The Neonate	
Questions	311
Answers, Explanations, and References	319

✓ The At-Risk Neonate	
Questions	328
Answers, Explanations, and References	337
Dynamics of the Postpartum Period	
Questions	348
Answers, Explanations, and References	358
The At-Risk Woman During the Postpartum Period	
Questions	370
Answers, Explanations, and References	379
Dynamics of Human Reproduction	
Questions	390
Answers, Explanations, and References	395
 Section III—Nursing Care of Children	
Growth and Development	
Questions	405
Answers, Explanations, and References	418
Health Maintenance	
Questions	435
Answers, Explanations, and References	449
General Pediatric Care	
Questions	463
Answers, Explanations, and References	472
Health Problems of the Newborn Infant	
Questions	483
Answers, Explanations, and References	489
Health Problems of the Infant	
Questions	496
Answers, Explanations, and References	508
Health Problems of the Toddler	
Questions	521
Answers, Explanations, and References	530

Health Problems of the Preschool Child	
Questions	542
Answers, Explanations, and References	552
Health Problems of the School-Age Child	
Questions	563
Answers, Explanations, and References	575
Health Problems of the Adolescent	
Questions	589
Answers, Explanations, and References	595
 Section IV – Psychiatric Nursing	
Basic Concepts of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing	
Questions	603
Answers, Explanations, and References	613
Theories of Personality and Development	
Questions	626
Answers, Explanations, and References	634
Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Schizophrenia	
Questions	645
Answers, Explanations, and References	655
Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Affective Disorders	
Questions	667
Answers, Explanations, and References	675
Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Neurotic, Psycho- physiologic, or Other Nonpsychotic Disorders	
Questions	684
Answers, Explanations, and References	691
Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Personality Disorders or Associated Problems	
Questions	700
Answers, Explanations, and References	710

Nursing Care of Patients Who Have Organic Brain Syndromes	
Questions	722
Answers, Explanations, and References	726
Nursing Care of Children Who Have Emotional or Mental Disorders	
Questions	732
Answers, Explanations, and References	742
Forms of Therapy	
Questions	755
Answers, Explanations, and References	766
Community Mental Health Nursing	
Questions	781
Answers, Explanations, and References	787
Bibliography	795