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**MOSBY'S**

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR

**NCLEX-RN**

third edition

FREE DISKS INCLUDED FOR  
THE NCLEX-CAT EXAM

SAXTON • PELIKAN • NUGENT

# **MOSBY'S**

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR**

# **NCLEX-RN**

**third edition**

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### THIRD EDITION

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Printed in the United States of America  
Composition by Mosby Electronic Production  
Printing/binding by Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group

Mosby-Year Book, Inc.  
11830 Westline Industrial Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri 63146

#### Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Mosby's review questions for NCLEX-RN/editor, Dolores F. Saxton;  
associate editors, Phyllis K. Pelikan, Patricia M. Nugent.—3rd ed.  
p. cm.  
ISBN 0-8151-2836-3  
I. Nursing—Examinations, questions, etc. I. Saxton, Dolores F.  
II. Pelikan, Phyllis K. III. Nugent, Patricia Mary, 1944-  
[DNLM: 1. Nursing—examination questions. WY 18.2 M894 1997]  
RT55.M65 1998  
610.73'076—dc21  
DNLM/DLC  
for Library of Congress

97-1041  
CIP

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## PREFACE

This text was developed to meet the requests of students for “still more questions—with answers and rationales.” We believe that, along with our other publications, *Mosby's Comprehensive Review of Nursing* and *Mosby's AssessTest*, this text completes the third leg of a strong tripod of study, self-evaluation, and review material on which students can base their study and review for both coursework and the NCLEX-RN. This third edition has been increased to more than 3000 single-item questions reflecting the NCLEX-RN format. The questions have been grouped by related content (categories of concern). There are integrated quizzes after each clinical chapter, and two comprehensive examinations that parallel the NCLEX-RN test plan. To enhance learning and preparation for NCLEX-RN CAT, two computer disks (one IBM-compatible and one Macintosh) are included, with new, single-item questions that are not duplicated in the text.

To meet the needs of students who have different study styles and learning needs, the questions are presented in four distinct formats:

- The questions in the clinical chapters are grouped according to categories of concern for a specific clinical area. The categories of concern reflect specific content areas within a broad clinical area from which the material in the question has been drawn. We have presented these questions in the traditional clinical groupings because we believe that, even when preparing for an integrated examination like the NCLEX-RN, most students will need to study all the distinct parts before attempting to put them together.
- Four 50-question quizzes are included at the end of the medical-surgical nursing review questions and answers and rationales, and two 50-question quizzes are included at the end of the childbearing and women's health nursing review questions and answers and rationales, the pediatric nursing review questions and answers and rationales, and the mental health nursing review questions and answers and rationales. The quizzes integrate the content from the various categories of concern within a specific clinical area. These quizzes provide a bridge for moving from the clinical chapters to the comprehensive examinations.

- Two comprehensive examinations, consisting of 265 questions each, are provided to approximate the NCLEX-RN test plan. To parallel the NCLEX-RN, the first 75 questions reflect the minimal testing experience for students taking the NCLEX-RN CAT. The total test of 265 questions reflects the maximum number of questions that a student will be asked on NCLEX-RN. Although NCLEX-RN is computerized, the substance of the test remains constant. It is our belief that if students study the material and develop a strong knowledge base, the method of testing should not have a major influence on their performance.
- Two computer disks (one IBM-compatible and one Macintosh), each containing 150 identical test items, which can be used in both a study and test format, are included with the textbook. These questions are *not* repeated in the text. To reinforce learned information and build confidence, we suggest that students practice answering questions on a computer to simulate the NCLEX-RN CAT.

For each question in the textbook and on disk, the reason why the correct answer is correct, as well as why each of the other options is incorrect, is included. In addition, each question has been analyzed as to the level of difficulty, the clinical area, the step in the nursing process, the area of client needs, and the category of concern (specific area of content). Questions incorporate material from the basic sciences, nutrition, and pharmacology, as well as current information relative to topics such as gerontology, rehabilitation, the *DSM-IV*, and the delivery of health care.

All the questions in this textbook were developed by outstanding and experienced nursing educators and practitioners. The editorial panel reviewed all questions initially submitted, selecting and editing the most pertinent for inclusion in a mass field-testing project. Students graduating from baccalaureate, associate degree, and diploma nursing programs in various locations in the United States and Canada provided a diverse testing group. The results were statistically analyzed, and this analysis was used to select only the highest quality questions for inclusion in this text and to determine each question's level of difficulty.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to our many colleagues for their contributions: to Edith Augustson for her careful processing of the manuscript; to Susan Epstein, our editor, and Beverly Copland and Jerry Schwartz, our developmental editors, for their assistance and support; to Billi Carcheri, developmental editor, for her planning and supervision of field testing; and most of all to our families for their love, understanding, and encouragement.

We would be remiss if we failed to note that this is our first edition without our dear friend and co-author, Selma R. Needleman. Her untimely death has left a void that is difficult, if not impossible, to fill. She is missed as an educator, a friend, and a confidant.

*Dolores F. Saxton*  
*Phyllis K. Pelikan*  
*Patricia M. Nugent*



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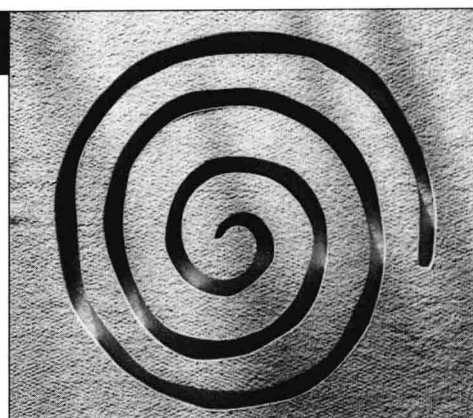
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# Preparing for the Licensure Examination



c h a p t e r

o n e

## INTRODUCTION

Licensure examinations in the United States and Canada have been integrated and comprehensive for many years. Nursing candidates in both countries are required to answer questions that necessitate a recognition and understanding of the physiologic, biologic, and social sciences, as well as the specific nursing skills and abilities involved in any given client situation.

Both the U.S. and Canadian tests contain objective multiple-choice questions based on the steps of the nursing process and recognition of client needs. To answer the questions appropriately, a candidate needs to understand and correlate certain aspects of anatomy and physiology, the behavioral sciences, basic nursing, the effects of medications administered, the client's attitude toward illness, and other pertinent factors (e.g., legal responsibilities). Most questions are based on nursing situations similar to those with which candidates have had experience, because both the United States and Canada emphasize the nursing care of clients with representative common national health problems. Some questions, however, require candidates to apply basic principles and techniques to clinical situations with which they have had little if any actual experience.

To adequately prepare for an integrated comprehensive examination, it is necessary to understand the discrete parts that compose the universe under consideration. This is one of the major principles of learning on which our review and study materials have been developed.

Using this concept, this text first presents questions for each major clinical area that test the student's knowledge of principles and theories under-

lying nursing care in a variety of situations (acute, critical, and long term); in a variety of settings (acute-care hospitals, nursing homes, and the community); and with a variety of nursing approaches to promote health and prevent illness (including primary, secondary, and tertiary care). The text concludes with two integrated comprehensive tests reflecting the licensure examinations. In other words, the questions in the integrated comprehensive tests require the student to cross clinical disciplines and respond to individual and specific needs associated with given health problems.

Answers to all of the questions and rationales supporting the correct answers are provided. Explanations also are presented to document why each of the other choices are inappropriate. Reviewing the rationales enables the student to verify information and reinforce knowledge.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK IN STUDYING

- A. Start in one clinical area. Answer all of the questions in the area. Do not worry if you select the same numbered answer repeatedly; there usually is no pattern to the answers.
- B. As you answer each question, write a few words about why you think that answer was correct; in other words, justify why you selected the answer.
- C. If you guess at an answer in this text, you should make a special mark to identify it as a guess. This will permit you to recognize areas that need further review. It also will help you to see how correct your guessing can be.
- D. Tear out the sheets with answers and rationales for the area you are reviewing and compare your

answers with those provided. If you answered the item correctly, check your reason for selecting the answer with the rationale presented. If you answered the item incorrectly, read the rationale to determine why the answer you selected was incorrect. In addition, you should review the correct answer and rationale for each item answered incorrectly. If you still do not understand your mistake, look up the theory pertaining to these questions. You should carefully review all questions and rationales for items you identified as guesses since you did not have mastery of the material being questioned.

E. After the rationale for the correct answer you will find a number—1, 2, or 3—in parentheses. These numbers indicate the level of difficulty of the question and reflect the percentage of tested students answering the question correctly. These can serve as a guide in your studying. (See the sample questions on pp. 3-4.)

1. The number 1 signifies that 75% or more—but less than 89%—of the students in the testing group answered the question correctly. Sample question 3 is a level 1 question (see page 3).
2. The number 2 signifies that 50% or more—but less than 75%—of the students in the testing group answered the question correctly. Sample questions 1 and 2 are level 2 questions (see page 3).
3. The number 3 signifies that 25% or more—but less than 50%—of the students in the testing group answered the question correctly. Sample questions 4 and 5 are level 3 questions (see page 4).
4. All the questions in this text were answered correctly by 25% to 89% of the students in the testing group. Any questions falling outside these parameters were not included.

F. In addition to the level of difficulty of the question, you also will find a grouping of letters that classify the question according to four categories: Clinical Area; Phases of the Nursing Process; Client Need; and Category of Concern. This series of letters will always appear in the same order for each question in the book. The following descriptions and the five sample questions on pp. 3-4 are presented to assist the reader in understanding and reviewing these classifications.

**Clinical Area** (*reflects the specialized area of nursing knowledge*)

1. **Medicine-Surgery (MS).** These questions include the care of adult clients who have health problems that may or may not require surgical intervention or invasive techniques. Sample questions 1 and 5 are *medical-surgery nursing* questions.

## 2. **Childbearing and Women's Health (CW).**

These questions include the care of clients preparing for or experiencing childbirth, involved in family planning, and health problems associated with women. Sample question 2 is a *childbearing and women's health nursing* question.

3. **Pediatric (PE).** These questions include health problems and the care of clients from birth to young adulthood. Sample question 4 is a *pediatric nursing* question.

4. **Mental Health (MH).** These questions include the care of clients experiencing emotional stress with or without overt psychiatric behavior in all settings. Sample question 3 is a *mental health nursing* question.

**Phases of the Nursing Process** (*reflects types of behaviors of the nurse*)

1. **Assessment (AS).** The assessment phase requires the nurse to obtain objective and subjective data from primary and secondary sources, to identify and group significant data, and to communicate this information to other members of the health team. The information necessary for making nursing decisions is obtained through assessment. Sample question 1 is an *assessment* question.

2. **Analysis (AN).** This phase requires the nurse to interpret data gathered during the assessment phase. A nursing diagnosis must be made, client and family needs identified, and both short-term and long-term goals set to meet the identified needs. Sample question 2 is an *analysis* question.

3. **Planning (PL).** The planning phase requires the nurse to design a regimen with the client and family to achieve goals set during the analysis phase. It also requires setting priorities for nursing intervention. Sample question 3 is a *planning* question.

4. **Implementation (IM).** The implementation phase requires the nurse to provide care designed during the planning phase. The client may be given total care or may be assisted and encouraged to perform activities of daily living or follow the regimen prescribed by the physician. Implementation also includes activities such as counseling, teaching, and supervising. Sample question 4 is an *implementation* question.

5. **Evaluation (EV).** This phase requires the nurse to determine the effectiveness of nursing care. The goals of care are reviewed, the client's response to intervention identified, and a consideration made as to whether the client has achieved the predetermined goals. Evaluation also includes appraisal of the client's compliance with the health plan. Sample question 5 is an *evaluation* question.

**Client Need** (*reflects the health care need of the client that must be addressed by the nurse*)

- 1. Support and promotion of physiologic and anatomic equilibrium (PA).** Meeting this need includes reducing risks that interfere with physiologic or anatomic integrity, promoting comfort and mobility, and providing basic care to assist, modify, or limit physiologic and anatomic adaptations. Sample questions 1 and 5 reflect this client need.
- 2. An environment that is safe and conducive to effective therapeutic care (TC).** The nurse must provide quality, goal-directed care that is coordinated, safe, and effective. Sample question 4 reflects this client need.
- 3. Education and other forms of health promotion to prevent, minimize, or correct actual or potential health problems (ED).** Fulfilling this need involves supporting optimal growth and development to provide for the achievement of the highest levels of functioning. This includes encouraging use of support systems and self-care directed toward promoting the prevention, recognition, and treatment of disease throughout the life cycle. Sample question 3 reflects this client need.
- 4. Support and promotion of psychosocial and emotional equilibrium (PS).** Addressing this need includes supporting individual emotional coping and adapting mechanisms to promote optimal emotional health while limiting or modifying those responses to crises that produce psychopathologic consequences. Sample question 2 reflects this client need.

**Category of Concern** (*reflects the specific content area within the broad clinical area from which the material in the question has been drawn*)

- 1. Medicine, Surgery, and Pediatrics**
  - Blood and immunity (BI)
  - Cardiovascular (CV)
  - Drug-related responses (DR)
  - Emotional needs related to health problems (EH)
  - Endocrine (EN)
  - Fluid and electrolyte (FE)
  - Gastrointestinal (GI)
  - Growth and development (GD)
  - Integumentary (IT)
  - Neuromuscular (NM)
  - Reproductive and genitourinary (RG)
  - Respiratory (RE)
  - Skeletal (SK)
- 2. Childbearing and Women's Health**
  - Drug-related responses (DR)
  - Emotional needs related to childbearing (EC)
  - Healthy childbearing (HC)
  - High-risk maternal-fetal conditions affecting childbearing (HP)

High-risk neonate (HN)  
Normal neonate (NN)  
Reproductive choices (RC)  
Reproductive problems (RP)  
Women's health (WH)

### 3. Mental Health

Anxiety, somatoform, and dissociative disorders (AX)  
Crisis situations (CS)  
Dementia, delirium, and other cognitive disorders (DD)  
Disorders first evident before adulthood (BA)  
Disorders of mood (MO)  
Disorders of personality (PR)  
Drug-related responses (DR)  
Eating disorders (EA)  
Emotional problems related to physical health and childbearing (EP)  
Personality development (PD)  
Schizophrenic disorders (SD)  
Substance abuse (SA)  
Therapeutic relationships (TR)

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- During a routine physical examination a client is found to have a blood pressure of 150/96 mm Hg, and hypertension is suspected. In obtaining the health history, an early sign of hypertension that the nurse should expect the client to complain of is:
  - Swollen ankles
  - Recent weight loss
  - Palpitations of the heart
  - Early morning headaches

[Correct answer is 4. (2) (MS; AS; PA; CV)]
- For a woman, identification with the parenting role begins:
  - Early in life
  - During adolescence
  - After the baby has been born
  - When pregnancy is confirmed

[Correct answer is 1. (2) (CW; AN; PE; EC)]
- A young male has a history of an antisocial personality disorder. His parents tell the nurse that their son is very manipulative and causes havoc in their home. The nurse should include in the teaching plan ways that they can cope with their son by using an approach that is:
  - Rigid
  - Flexible
  - Accepting
  - Consistent

[Correct answer is 4. (1) (MH; PL; ED; PR)]



4. A 3-year-old girl is admitted for surgery. When her mother leaves, she begins to sob. The nurse should:

1. Tell her to be a big girl, her mother will be right back
2. Put up the side rails on the crib and let her calm down by herself
3. Distract her with her teddy, expecting her to forget her mother has gone
4. Hold her and explain that her mother had to go but will return in 2 hours

[Correct answer is 3. (3) (PE; IM; TC; GD)]

5. Following a mastectomy, tamoxifen (Nolvadex) is prescribed for a client. The nurse knows that teaching about this drug was understood when the client states, "I will:

1. Drink 4 glasses of milk every day while I am taking this drug."
2. Expect pain at the site of the tumor when I am taking this drug."
3. Take a stool softener every day while I am taking this medication."
4. Rise from a sitting position slowly when I am taking this medication."

[Correct answer is 2. (3) (MS; EV; PA; DR)]

- G. A few days later, review the area again. If you miss the same question a second time, you need further study of the material.

- H. After you have completed the clinical area questions, begin taking the comprehensive tests because they will assist you in applying knowledge and principles from the specific clinical area to any nursing situation. The following steps are suggested:

1. Arrange for a quiet, uninterrupted, time span for each test in the comprehensive tests
2. Pace yourself during the testing period; allow about 1 minute per question
3. Do not rush
4. Answer every question

- I. Since most examinations have specified time limits, you will need to pace yourself during the practice testing period, working as quickly and accurately as possible. It is helpful to estimate the time that can be spent on each item and still complete the examination in the allotted time. You can obtain this figure by dividing the testing time by the number of items on the test. For example, with a 1-hour (60-minute) testing period and approximately 60 items, an average of 1 minute per item will be the appropriate pace.

- J. To help analyze your mistakes on the comprehensive examinations and to provide a data base for making future study plans, two types of

worksheets are included in this text. One is designed to aid you in identifying and recording errors in the way you process information. The other is to help you identify and record gaps in knowledge. These worksheets follow the Answers and Rationales for each test in the Comprehensive Test Section and are on tear-out sheets. Instructions for their use appear on each worksheet.

- K. After completing your worksheets, do the following:

1. Use Worksheet 1 to identify the frequency with which you made particular errors. As you review material in class notes or study material such as *Mosby's Comprehensive Review of Nursing*, pay special attention to correcting your most common problems.

2. Use Worksheet 2 to identify the topics you want to review. It might be helpful to set priorities; review the most difficult topics first so that you will have time to review them more than once.

- L. Use this opportunity to learn from your mistakes.

1. Because you receive immediate feedback on your performance, you have an excellent opportunity to learn from your mistakes. Answer every question. Do not leave any questions unanswered; use educated or pure guesses.

2. The mistakes you make on the questions in this text will be as valuable to you as the confident feeling you get from answering correctly.

## READINESS FOR THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION

A few individuals can improve their scores significantly by a highly concentrated period of study immediately before taking an examination. Most, however, profit by spreading their review over a much longer period. Cramming usually does not help. Identification of your own specific strengths and weaknesses should eliminate much of the anxiety of deciding what material to study by giving you a sense of direction and a means of setting priorities.

## Reduce Stress

Stress is a part of life. While there is no way to prevent it, it is possible to reduce it by diffusing your emotional responses before stress gets the better of you. Controlling stress allows you to use it instead of being abused by it. The following are tips to reduce and control stress:

1. Talk it out, but try to talk it out with someone who is not as stressed as you are. This relieves

the burden of coping alone and helps put things in perspective. Try talking with people who have had the same experience and understand what you are going through.

2. Obtain as much information as you can. **STUDY!!!**
3. Keep fit. Good nutrition, regular exercise, and ample sleep help.
4. Try relaxation exercises. Relaxation is essential to reduce stress.
5. Sort out the important things. Take stock of your strengths. Set realistic deadlines. Drop the nonessentials.
6. Spend time on yourself and your needs outside of nursing.
7. Be greedy and put yourself first. Be flexible with yourself. Do not set rigid, unmanageable goals.
8. Discover your positive defenses and use them.
9. Become familiar with reading questions on a computer screen. Familiarity reduces anxiety and decreases errors.

## Manage Test-Taking Time

The computerized NCLEX-RN is not a timed test per se, although there is a minimum 1½-hour to a maximum 5-hour time period. The computerized test reportedly has been designed to measure the individual's level of knowledge, skills, and abilities to determine that the competency level is achieved. The test length will vary depending on each candidate's performance but will be somewhere between 75 and 265 questions, with an average around 150.

Although certain questions will be more difficult than others and will require more time, spending too much time on these difficult items may compromise your overall performance.

Do not be pressured into finishing early. Do not rush! Students who achieve higher scores on examinations are typically those who use all the time available.

## Build Test-Taking Confidence

You should feel confident and competent if you have studied and reviewed the content to be tested and you are armed with methods for reading and answering questions. Your emotional state is vitally important when thinking about, preparing for, and taking any test. Think positively.

While you are taking the test, you may have problems with a question. On a written examination it is often best to move on to another question that you can answer and come back to the more difficult question. However, on the computerized

NCLEX-RN CAT you must answer the question before you can go on to the next question, so remain calm. Anxiety can block the recall of familiar information required to answer questions, so control it early. Do not stop to think about gaps in your preparation nor waste time and emotional energy building anxiety. Focus on the positive. You have the ability to make sound "educated guesses." Now is the time to use it. Questions that seem complicated at first glance often can be answered by just such guesses. Remain calm and confident.

You will find that practice test-taking experiences will give you confidence for the actual examination. After you have completed studying in this book, you may wish to take a simulated examination such as *Mosby's AssessTest* before you take the licensure examination. The *AssessTest* is a computer-scored, multiple-choice examination designed to test nursing knowledge and evaluate your ability to apply that knowledge in clinical situations. The extensive computer analysis of your performance, which is the most outstanding feature of this test, will help you design effective and efficient plans for further study and review.

## TAKING THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION

On the NCLEX-RN each of the five steps of the nursing process is represented by 17% to 23% of the questions. There is a variety of questions from each of the clinical areas. Recently there appears to have been a deemphasis of the areas of maternity (obstetric) nursing and severe mental illness. There seems to be a greater emphasis on medical-surgical principles and interpersonal skills, especially communication. In the category of client health care needs, approximately 46% to 54% of the questions reflect the need for support and promotion of physiologic and anatomic equilibrium; 15% to 21% reflect the need for a therapeutic environment; 17% to 23% reflect the need for education and health promotion; and 8% to 16% reflect the need for support and promotion of psychosocial and emotional equilibrium. The score on the examination is reported as pass or fail.

The most crucial requisite for doing well on the licensure examination is a sound understanding of the subject and a high level of reading comprehension. Determination to do well and a degree of confidence will further enhance the well-prepared individual's chance of passing and achieving the recognition deserved.

At least three other requirements must be met if an individual's performance is to accurately reflect professional competence. First, the candidate must follow explicitly the directions given by the exam-

inner and those appearing at the beginning of the test. Second, the candidate must read each question carefully before deciding how to answer it. Third, the candidate must record the answers in the manner specified.

The computerized NCLEX-RN CAT is an individualized testing experience in which the computer chooses your next question based on the ability and competency you have demonstrated on previous questions. The minimum number of questions will be 75 and the maximum 265. You must answer each question before the computer will present the next question, and you cannot go back to any previously answered questions. There is no deduction for incorrect answers so you are not penalized for guessing. You cannot leave an answer blank, and since you have a 1 in 4 (25%) chance of guessing the correct answer, go for it. Remember, you do not have to get all the questions correct to pass.

You also should keep in mind that if you practice and learn the material, the method of testing (oral, written, or computer) should not significantly influence your performance.

## TEST-TAKING SKILLS

Test-taking skills and techniques are not a substitute for good study habits or an adequate grasp of the content and abilities measured in an examination. Memorization is of little help because few questions require simple recall and most require the use of higher, more complex thought processes. If you have a thorough understanding of the knowledge content measured by an examination, however, good test-taking skills will enhance your overall performance.

The question in its entirety is called a test item. The portion of the test item that poses the question or problem is called the stem. Potential answers to the question or problem posed are called options. In well-constructed multiple-choice items there is only one correct answer among the options supplied; the incorrect options are called distractors. Remember, test questions are meant to measure your nursing knowledge. The items may be easy to read, but the answers to questions are not intended to be readily apparent. The questions draw on your ability to apply nursing knowledge from a variety of sources.

### ■ Read Questions Carefully

Scores on tests are greatly affected by reading ability. In answering a test item, you should begin by carefully reading the stem and then asking yourself the following questions:

- What is the question really asking?

- Are there any key words?
- What information relevant to answering this question is included in the stem?
- How would I ask this question in my own words?
- How would I answer this question in my own words?

After you have answered these questions, carefully read the options and then ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there an option that is similar to my answer?
- Is this option the best, most complete answer to the question?

Deal with the question as it is stated, without reading anything into it, or making assumptions about it. Answer the question asked, not the one you would like to answer. For simple recall items the self-questioning process usually will be completed quickly. For more complex items the self-questioning process may take longer, but it should assist you in clarifying the item and selecting the best response.

### ■ Identify Key Words

Certain key words in the stem, the options, or both should alert you to the need for caution in choosing your answer. Because few things are absolute without exception, avoid selecting answers that include words such as *always*, *never*, *all*, *every*, *only*, *must*, *no*, *except*, and *none*. Answers containing these key words are rarely correct because they place special limitations and qualifications on potentially correct answers. For example:

All of the following are services of the National Kidney Foundation except:

1. Public education programs
2. Research about kidney disease
3. Fund-raising affairs for research activities
4. Identification of potential transplant recipients

This stem contains two key words: *all* and *except*. They limit the correct answer choice to the one option that does not represent a service of the National Kidney Foundation. When *except*, *not*, or a phrase such as *all but one of the following* appears in the stem, the inappropriate option is the correct answer—in this instance, option 4.

If the options in an item do not seem to make sense because more than one option is correct, reread the question; you may have missed one of the key words in the stem. Also be on guard when you see one of the key words in an option; it may limit the context in which such an option would be correct.

### ■ Pay Attention to Specific Details

The well-written multiple-choice question is precisely stated, providing you with only the informa-



tion needed to make the question or problem clear and specific. Careful reading of details in the stem can provide important clues to the correct option. For example:

A male client is told that he will no longer be able to ingest alcohol if he wants to live. To effect a change in his behavior while he is in the hospital, the nurse should attempt to:

1. Help the client set short-term dietary goals
2. Discuss his hopes and dreams for the future
3. Discuss the pathophysiology of the liver with him
4. Withhold approval until he agrees to stop drinking

The specific clause to *effect a change in his behavior while he is in the hospital* is critical. Option 2 is not really related to his alcoholism. Option 3 may be part of educating the alcoholic, but you would not expect a behavioral change observable in the hospital to emerge from this discussion. Option 4 rejects the client as well as his behavior instead of only his behavior. Option 1, the correct answer, could result in an observable behavioral change while the client is hospitalized; for example, he could define ways to achieve short-term goals relating to diet and alcohol while in the hospital.

### ■ **Eliminate Clearly Wrong or Incorrect Answers**

Eliminate clearly incorrect, inappropriate, and unlikely answers to the question asked in the stem. By systematically eliminating distractors that are unlikely in the context of a given question, you increase the probability of selecting the correct answer. Eliminating obvious distractors also allows you more time to focus on the options that appear to be potentially sound answers to the question. For example:

The four levels of cognitive ability are:

1. Assessing, analyzing, applying, evaluating
2. Knowledge, analysis, assessing, comprehension
3. Knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis
4. Medical-surgical nursing, obstetric nursing, psychiatric nursing

Option 1 contains both cognitive levels and nursing behaviors, thus eliminating it from consideration. Option 4 is clearly inappropriate since the choices are all clinical areas. Both options 2 and 3 contain levels of cognitive ability; however, option 2 includes assessing, which is a nursing behavior. Therefore option 3 is correct. By reducing the plausible options, you reduce the material to consider and increase the probability of selecting the correct option.

### ■ **Identify Similar Options**

When an item contains two or more options that are similar in meaning, the successful test taker

knows that all are correct, in which case it is a poor question, or that none is correct, which is more likely to be the case. The correct option usually will either include all the similar options or exclude them entirely. For example:

When teaching newly diagnosed diabetic clients about their condition, it is important for the nurse to focus on:

1. Dietary modifications
2. Use of sugar substitutes
3. Their present understanding of diabetes
4. Use of diabetic nutritional exchange lists

Options 1, 2, and 3 deal only with the diabetic diet, involving no other aspect of diabetic teaching; it is impossible to select the most correct option because each represents equally plausible, though limited, answers to the question. Option 4 is the best choice because it is most complete and allows the other three options to be excluded. As another example:

A child's intelligence is influenced by:

1. A variety of factors
2. Socioeconomic factors
3. Heredity and environment
4. Environment and experience

The most correct answer is option 1. It includes the material covered by the other options, eliminating the need for an impossible choice, since each of the other options is only partially correct.

### ■ **Identify Answer (Option) Components**

When an answer contains two or more parts, you can reduce the number of potentially correct answers by identifying one part as incorrect. For example:

After a cholecystectomy the postoperative diet is usually:

1. High fat, low calorie
2. High fat, low protein
3. Low fat, high calorie
4. Low fat, high protein

If you know, for instance, that the diet after a cholecystectomy is usually low or moderate in fat, you can eliminate options 1 and 2 from consideration. If you know that the cholecystectomy client usually is overweight, you can eliminate option 3 from consideration. Therefore option 4 is correct.

### ■ **Identify Specific Determiners**

When the options of a test item contain words that are identical or similar to words in the stem, the alert test taker recognizes the similarities as clues about the likely answer to the question. The stem word that clues you to a similar word in the option or that limits potential options is known as a specific determiner. For example: