Question Types in Blackboard

There are several question types in Blackboard to choose from when creating an assessment. We thought it would be worthwhile for you to understand more about each question type and see tutorials on how to create them as well as an example or two.

Multiple Choice

Multiple choice is probably the most common question type used in assessment. However, it takes thought to make a multiple choice question a quality question. The example below is a good one because the answers are thorough and the student would have had to study to know which answer to select. You will also see a resource below that gives you 14 rules for writing multiple choice questions which could be useful to you.

Example

Why did John B. Watson reject the structuralist study of mental events?

1. He believed that structuralism relied too heavily on scientific methods.
2. He rejected the concept that psychologists should study observable behavior.
3. He believed that scientists should focus on what is objectively observable. (correct)
4. He actually embraced both structuralism and functionalism.

Video Tutorial

Click here for a video tutorial on how to create this type of question in Blackboard.

Resource

14 Rules for Writing Multiple-Choice Questions.pdf (Brigham Young University)

Multiple Answer

Multiple answer is a question type that is identical to multiple choice except that you can select more than one correct answer. However, this isn't the right question format if you are seeking to do an "all of the above" type question.

Example

Which of the following were impressionist painters? (select all that apply)

1. Claude Monet
2. Any Warhol
3. Anish Kapoor
4. Camille Pissarro

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Click [here](#) for a video tutorial on how to create this type of question in Blackboard.

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**Fill in the Blank**

The fill in the blank question type is a statement sentence (not a question sentence) that is missing a word or a stanza that the student are required to fill in. Best practices include excluding a main point of the sentence which has been a main area of study and was key to a student's study or reading as required by the teacher.

**Example**
The process by which the energy of the sun is captured and used by plants and algae is called _______________. (answer: photosynthesis)

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**Fill in Multiple Blanks**

This test question type is the same as the previous type but the only difference is that it is with multiple blanks. Instructors who abuse this question format often treat this like a sentence version of Wheel of Fortune with so few words in the sentence leaving it hard for the student to decode, missing the whole point of the assessment. Remember, there must be enough of the sentence included that the student can fill in the blanks, with clarity, in relation to their previous study.

**Example**
Newton’s Third Law of Motion: The mutual forces of action and reaction between two bodies are __________, __________ and __________. (Answer: equal, opposite, and collinear)

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**Matching**

Matching is simply having two lists and pairing items from each list together. There can be an additional level of complexity to matching, where you could have one answer in a certain column be the answer for more than one item in the second column and such, but it is a fairly simple concept.
Example
Match the each term with its definition

Deposition  a. The chemical alteration and breakdown of rock
Erosion    b. The conversion of sediment to rock
Lithification  c. The dropping of sediment into a long-term reservoir
Weathering d. The picking up and carrying away of sediment

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True or False

True or false questions are basic questions that are worded in the form of a statement sentence (not a question sentence). These types of questions are often either too easy or two hard, it is difficult to get a true or false question that is the appropriate level of difficulty. The way to choose a true and false question is not to think of something that will stump the students, because that's not quite fair, but think of a statement that will cause the students to think and draw upon their previous study. Finding these types of statements do take time and research on the instructors part, but are well worth it, because when a student comes to content the question, it can be a teaching moment.

Example
(T/F) The finance ministers from the 17 nations that use the euro, known as the Eurogroup, gave Greece the funding it needs to avoid a potential default next month.

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Short Answer

Short answer questions are questions that need to be graded by you and are not graded automatically. You have a couple of options when creating a short answer question in Blackboard, such as providing a rubric and a sample answer for your students, and even key words and instructors notes to help you. However, when writing a short answer question it is best to be clear, direct, and concise so that the student understands precisely what you want them to do. The more room for interpretation you give them, the harder it will be to grade their submissions.
Example
Of the first five amendments in the Bill of Rights, choose one amendment and highlight when it was ratified and give a basic description.

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Essay Question
The essay question type is similar to the short answer question type in that when you craft your question you are clear, direct, and concise so that the student understands precisely what you want them to do. The more room for interpretation you give them, the harder it will be to grade their submissions. Blackboard provides some great tools like a rubric and a sample answer, for the students to get an idea of what you are asking of them. In addition, for grading purposes, you can enter key words and instructor’s notes to help you.

Example
Prompt: "That which we obtain too easily, we esteem too lightly. It is dearness only which gives everything its value." - Thomas Paine
Assignment: Do we value only what we struggle for? Plan your response, and then write an essay to explain your view on this issue. Be sure to support your position with specific points and examples from this semester’s study.

Video Tutorial
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Hot Spot
Hot spot questions are a lot of fun. This is where you take an image and asks students to select a particular area. Whether it is a map, or a composition of the skeleton, etc., you can have fun with this type of question. One thing that instructors get feedback from is hot spot area. Often times they get students that say I clicked on the area and got the question wrong. Be sure to add in a slight buffer for clicking error (meaning that my mouse moved at the last second a half an centimeter). If you have a rigid hot spot without a buffer, you are likely to have a lot of feedback from students.

Example
Click on the geographic location of the United States capitol. (not actually clickable, just for example purposes)
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Jumbled Sentence

The jumbled sentence question type requires students to complete a sentence by selecting words or phrases from a drop-down list. Typically, there are more than one variables missing in the sentence and the same drop-down list appears for all variables in the sentence.

Example

*Instructions*: Choose the correct order of the statements, from the drop-down list, as they appear in the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States of America.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union,

________________, __________________, __________________, __________________, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

(Correct answers: establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare)
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Ordering

Ordering is simply taking a list and arranging it in order as directed in the instructions. It is good to note that lists that are too long can cause confusion, so breaking up a list into two questions would be better.

Example
What is the correct order of the planets, starting with the closest and expanding to the furthest from the sun?

__ Neptune
__ Uranus
__ Saturn
__ Jupiter
__ Mercury
__ Venus
__ Earth
__ Mars

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Quiz Bowl

A quiz bowl question is like a Jeopardy question, where the student is presented with the answer and needs to provide the question. These type of questions can be tricky because the answer you provide needs to be phrased in a way that the question (once discovered) is unarguable or at very least provides small room for error by the student if they have studied properly.

Example
This French painter wrote: "I am good for nothing except painting and gardening."
(Student Response: Who is Monet?)

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Calculated Formula
A calculated formula question allows you to type in a formula and with the use of brackets [ ] you can have missing variables that the students are expected to fill in. You are able to give an allowable range if necessary.

**Example**
If a small soda glass contains \([x]\) ounces of soda, and a large glass of soda contains \([y]\) ounces of soda; what is the total number of ounces in 4 large and 3 small glasses of soda?
(Answer: \(4x + 3y\))

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