Scope of the presentation

- Defining an item format and an item
- Structure of an item
- Testing techniques
- Classification of test formats
Defining an item format and an item

- Item format: the form a test or an item may assume
- Each testing point in a test which is given a separate mark or marks.
- The smallest unit of language testing which produces distinctive and meaningful information or feedback on a test when it is scored or rated.
An item consists of two main parts: stem (lead) and response.

1. Stem poses the problem and could be either written, spoken, or pictorial.
2. Response is either tailor-made or student generated; it could be either recognition or production; it can also be produced in oral, written, or pictorial form.
Some examples of the structure of an item

I .......... a book from our school library yesterday afternoon.

a. got    b. borrowed       c. received d. took

The antonym of “accept” is “reject”.

a. True       b. false

Match the definitions on the left side with the words on the right side.

1. Move round an object a. shoot
2. Kill using a gun    b. attend
3. Go to an event     c. orbit
We were misled into ... that he was guilty. (to believe)

A Nobel Prize was ....... to him for his peacekeeping activities.

What happens to water when temperature goes below zero?

Differentiate between proficiency and achievement testing? Limit your discussion to four criteria: detail of information, focus and content, purpose of decision and time of administration.
Write a five-paragraph essay on the following topic, with your essay ranging in length between 500 and 700 words.

Essay topic

In your opinion, what is the best way to choose a marriage partner? Use specific reasons and examples why you think this approach is the best.

Listen to the following short story and write a summary of about 500 words.
Look at the following narrative task consisting of six pictures and recount the story.
Don’t call me at 4 o’clock tomorrow afternoon. I ........ giving my students a midterm exam.

distracters, decoys, or foils

(Stem or lead)

a. am b. will be c. would be d. shall

Answer/key

Alternatives, choices, or options
Advantages of multiple-choice items

- Ease of scoring—rapid, economical, and reliable
- Inclusion of countless number of items—due to recognition or selection nature
- No productive use of language—measurement of receptive skills
- Measurement of specific skills and learnings
- Reliable, valid, and practical
Disadvantages of selection items

- Preparation of items
- An incomplete picture of testee’s ability—lack of production
- Problem of guessing
- Problem of cheating
- Harmful backwash effect
True or false or alternative response items

- Achievement tests are based either on content of the covered materials or objectives of the course.
  a. true  b. false

- Pop quizzes are always unannounced.
  a. true  b. false
Advantages and disadvantages

- Advantages
  A. Efficacy of true or false items
  B. Easy to construct and to score
  C. Inclusion of many true or false items in a given test

- Disadvantages
  A. Based on chance
  B. Measurement of simple language learning outcomes
  C. Test of recognition knowledge
Matching item types
Match the following definitions in column one with their terms in column two.

a. Assignment of numbers to attributes
b. A type of test to place testees at appropriate levels of instruction
c. Improvement of test scores due to familiarity with the first administration of a test

1. Rehearsal effect
2. Measurement
3. Placement test
Advantages and disadvantages

I. Advantages
   A. Easy to construct and to score
   B. Measurement of facts based on simple associations

II. Disadvantages
   A. The problem of homogeneity
   B. Rote learning of factual knowledge
What are three types of prognostic tests?
Placement tests, selection tests, and language aptitude tests

What are two criteria two distinguish between formative assessment and summative assessment?
Time and purpose of data gathering
Advantages and disadvantages

- Advantages
  1. Easy to construct due to recall of memorized information
  2. Elimination of guessing and cheating due to supplying the item from memory
  3. Production than selection

- Disadvantages
  1. Difficulty of scoring
  2. Possibility of a number of answers
My brother was busy studying for his final term exams, so I ........... the TV to watch my favorite programmes.

Diagnostic tests identify students’ ............... to offer ............... if needed.

Do not turn the TV on! I ................. to concentrate on my homework. (to try)
Composition

- To test written competence
- From single paragraphs to full essays
- To test mechanics of writing, grammatical structures and vocabulary, and development and organization
Advantages and disadvantages

- **Advantages**
  1. Creation, organization, and expression of answers
  2. Motivation to improve writing
  3. Ease of preparation

- **Disadvantages**
  1. Difficulty of scoring
  2. Inability to measure specific details
Dictation

- **Advantages**
  1. To test phonological, grammatical, and lexical weaknesses

- **Disadvantages**
  1. To test trivial elements
  2. To test phonemic discrimination
  3. Imprecise and uneconomical
  4. Difficulty of scoring
Scored interview

- To test oral competence
- Unstructured in nature
- Provision of cues
- Evaluation during examination
Classification of test formats

- Method of scoring: subjective vs objective tests
- Translation test, dictation, and composition as examples of subjective tests and multiple-choice items, matching, and short answers as examples of objective tests
- Subjective tests: evaluative judgment, judgment on the part of scorer, easy to construct but difficult to grade or rate; tests the ability to communicate actual performance
Objective tests: evaluative judgment, no judgment on part of the scorer, difficult to construct but easy to score, inclusion of more test items, increase of guessing, does not test the ability to communicate and actual performance.

He is a stubborn old man. He is ……. to please.

a. hard  b. easy  c. cozy  d. wise

That old man is …………. to please.

a. Hard  b. easy  c. cozy  d. wise
Correct answer: essay type vs multiple-choice tests

Essay type test examples: fill-in items, short answers, and task items, restricted response essay items, extended response essay items

Essay type tests: to produce language

Multiple-choice tests: to select among a list of items the single best correct answer
Suppletion vs recognition items
1. Identify the odd word and put a circle around it.
   a. apple   b. orange   c. peach   d. eggplant
2. The patients waited in the room until the doctor .......... (to arrive)
3. She was thirsty because ............
4. How do you define a test item?
Psycholinguistic approach to test format

- Psychological processes: recognition, comprehension, and production
- Linguistic principles: language presentation in three forms termed as modality or instrumentality

**Modality**

- **Verbal**
  - Oral
- **Nonverbal**
  - Written
  - Pictures, tables, graphs, maps, charts, etc