

Template for Multiple Choice Tests

Like it or not, in many provincial and state jurisdictions, multiple choice tests are official assessment instruments used at some level for determining student grades for graduation. These tests are partly intended to test the students, and partly as a cheap instrument to check for rogue teachers (see the case of Jim Keegstra - <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/holocaust-denier-and-former-alberta-teacher-jim-keegstra-dead-at-the-age-of-80/article19155171/>).

Particularly if students are expected to encounter multiple choice tests at a high level, whether for high school graduation or as part of writing other standardized tests such as the GMAT or the LSAT, there is a practical argument to be made for exposing students to multiple choice tests in order to increase their familiarity with these instruments and to lessen their anxiety.

That said, departments will also want to reduce the likelihood of students cheating on such tests, increase the likelihood of catching offenders who do so, and reduce the chance of a reward for cheating. Having several versions of a test, in which the correct answers occur at different places, is one answer. This is made more difficult, however, because document programs used for creating such tests have a tendency to default to auto format, making a simple copy and paste rather challenging. Devoting time and labour to redoing tests is not the best use of teacher time, turning teachers essentially into expensive typists.

For this reason, I created a table-based version of a multiple choice template. Each table is designed to defeat auto format, allowing for cutting and pasting sentences/answers from one cell to another, and thus switching correct answers to different spots. Of course, keeping the tables with visible boundaries intact would lead to a visually cluttered and confusing test, making it more difficult for students to decipher the test itself and potentially leading to fatigue. For that reason, teachers should apply the ‘boundaries’ function to each table, selecting the table and then clicking on ‘no boundaries’. This does not actually remove the boundaries of the table, but makes them invisible.

For example, here is a formatted test question when all the boundaries are visible;

Use Source a when answering question x

X		
	a)	
	b)	
	c)	
	d)	

Here’s the same test question when all the boundaries are invisible;

Use Source a when answering question x

X

- a)**
- b)**
- c)**
- d)**

**It is important to only select the one table at a time when specifying that the boundaries are to be invisible. Otherwise, the command will likely not work, as the document program will be confused. That also means that any commands outside the table (“Use Source a when answering question x”) must not be selected at the same time.

	a)
	b)
	c)
	d)

	a)
	b)
	c)
	d)

	a)
	b)
	c)
	d)

	a)
	b)
	c)
	d)

	a)
	b)
	c)
	d)

	a)
	b)
	c)
	d)

	a)
	b)
	c)
	d)