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| **General Guidelines** | **Not Yet** | **Better** |
| **1**  **Standard-stem alignment** | **L.EV.05.12 Describe the physical characteristics (traits) of organisms that help them survive in their environment.**  Elephants in the wild have few predators. Predators that feed on large animals usually have sharp    a. scales.  b. claws.  c. horns.  d. quills. |  |
| **2**  **Target appropriate depth of knowledge** | **Knowledge Level Example**  What signal did Paul Revere ask his friend to use to let him know that the British were coming by land or sea?  a. blowing a horn  b. a lantern in the belfry tower  c. a shout and a whistle  d. firing a shotgun into the air | **Application Level Example**  What did a second lamp in the belfry tower indicate?  a. The British were on foot.  b. Paul Revere needed to hurry home.  c. The British were marching to Lexington.  d. The British were arriving by sea. |
| **3**  **Use clear, concise language** | “The presence and association of the male seems to have profound effects on female physiology in domestic animals. Research has shown that in cattle, the presence of a bull has the following effect: “ | Research has shown that the presence of a bull has which of the following effects on cows?  17 words vs. 30 |
| **4**  **Use correct grammar** | During the XYZ Affair, French agents demanded a…   * + A. bribe.   + B. more land.   + C. new rights.   + D. more money. | During the XYZ Affair, French agents demanded…   * + A. **a** bribe.   + B. more land.   + C. new rights.   + D. more money. |

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| **7**  **Avoid generalizations** | Why are simply written items better?   1. They allow **more** students to understand what is being asked. 2. They are easier for **every**  scorer to score. 3. They prevent **all** forms of  cheating.   D. They reduce **none** of the time   spent on testing. |  |
| **8**  **Avoid “tricky” items** | Who discovered the cotton gin?   1. Catherine Greene 2. Leonardo Da Vinci 3. Eli Whitney 4. None of these\*   Why is this tricky? | Who **invented** the cotton gin?   1. Catherine Greene 2. Leonardo Da Vinci 3. Eli Whitney 4. None of these\*   Why is this tricky? |
| **10**  **Avoid using synonyms** | Miguel **surveyed** his classmates to learn the number of different states each one had visited outside of Michigan. His results are shown in the line plot below.  Other States Visited    What percent of the students Miguel **polled** had  visited more than 5 states outside of Michigan? |  |

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| **13**  **Avoid unnecessary complexity** | What is (are) the capital(s) of Bolivia?   1. La Paz B. Sucre C. Santa Cruz 2. A only 3. B only 4. C only 5. Both A and B   5) All of the above |  |
| **14**  **Remember, formatting matters** | Carol asked her 4 best friends, Alice, Clark, Ruth, and Matt, if she could measure their heights in inches. She found that Alice was 58 inches tall; Clark was 62 inches tall; Ruth was 60 inches tall; and Matt was 61 inches tall. To the nearest inch, what was the mean height of Carol’s 4 friends?  Carol measured the heights of each of her 4  best friends. Her results are shown below.  Alice: 58 inches Ruth: 60 inches  Clark: 62 inches Matt: 61 inches  To the nearest inch, what is the mean height of  Carol’s 4 friends? | Carol asked her 4 best friends if she could measure their heights in inches. She obtained the following heights:  Alice: 58 inches Ruth: 60 inches  Clark: 62 inches Matt: 61 inches  To the nearest inch, what is the mean height of Carol’s 4 best friends? |

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| **Stem Guidelines** | **Not Yet** | **Better** |
| **15**  **Stuff the stem** | Matter \_\_\_\_\_.  a. takes up weight.  b. takes up space.  c. has mass and weight.  d. is when you have a problem. | Which of the following **BEST** defines anything that has mass and takes up space?  a. compound  b. element  c. matter  d. substance |
| **16**  **Avoid redundancy** | Guidelines about item writing allow a greater number of which types of students to be able to answer the questions?   1. The students that are visually impaired. 2. The students that are hearing impaired. 3. The students that are poor readers. | Which type of students will be able to answer a greater number of questions correctly due to these guidelines?  a. visually impaired  b. hearing impaired  c. poor readers |
| **17**  **Avoid the use of negatives** | Which of these is a rule about writing the stem for an item that you have **not** learned today?   1. Stems should **not** be tricky. 2. Stems should **not** use “you”. 3. Stems should **not** be open. 4. Stems should **not** contain clues. |  |
| **18**  **Avoid clues in the stem** | Which of the following  diseases is caused by a **virus**?  a. Diabetes  b. Gallstones  c. Hypertension  d. **Viral** Meningitis |  |
| **Distractor Guidelines** | **Not Yet** | **Better** |
| **20**  **Use plausible distractors/foils** | Which of the following is a mammal?  a. bear  b. can of soup  c. car  d. rock | Which of the following is a mammal?  a. an owl  b. bear  c. frog  d. salmon |
| **21**  **Use equal length and details** | 1. Survey the next 20 customers 2. Survey all the people living within one-half mile 3. Survey a large random sample  of people living within the  listening range of that  particular radio station\* 4. Survey customers at the shop |  |
| **22**  **Make all distractors equally attractive** |  |  |
| **23**  **Organize the options** | Summer is represented by what point?   1. Point C C. Point D 2. Point A D. Point B |  |

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| **24**  **Have only one correct answer** | What is the square root of 4?  a. 1  b. 2--Correct  c. 3  d. 8/4—also Correct |  |
| **25**  **Do not use overlapping answers** | Due to budget cutbacks, the university library now subscribes to fewer than \_\_\_ periodicals.   * 1. 25,000   2. 20,000 \*   3. 15,000   4. 10,000 |  |