ITEM WRITING CHECKLIST

	Guideline	Keyword
G E N E R A L G U I D E L I N E S	1. Begin writing items with test specifications.	**Specifications**
	2. Use familiar tasks in tests to avoid assessing test takers' understanding of the task rather than their knowledge of language.	**Task familiarity**
	3. Consider *the method effect*: Use a wide variety of methods to reduce the influence of a particular test method (i.e. multiple choice, cloze test, writing a response) on students' performance/score and to avoid any bias towards a particular method.	**The method effect**
	4. Ensure items are not biased against or in favour of any gender, culture, or background knowledge.	**Bias**
	5. Test one objective at a time, e.g. avoid testing 'word order' and 'verb form/tense' at the same time within the same item.	**Single focus/objective**
	6. Use simple, clear, concise, and unambiguous language.	**Clarity of language**
	7. Ensure reading load is not overwhelming. Be concise and economical. That is, avoid redundant wording/information unless it leads test takers to the correct answer or the construction of the whole meaning of the text.	**Reading/Cognitive load**
	8. Make sure the instructions are clear and simple, and provide an example where possible. Have a set of instructions for each task type and use the same instructions for the same type of task in all exams to be standard.	**Instructions**
	9. Make sure that each question can be answered independently, i.e. the answer to one question does not depend on the answer to another question.	**Independent items**
	10. Get proof-readers/editors to check items in terms of clarity of language, difficulty of items for the target level, choice of test methods for particular objectives, achievement of objectives stated in test specifications and/or syllabus.	**Proofreading**

	Guideline	Keyword
M U L T I P L E C H O I C E	1. Provide enough context for multiple choice items.	**Context**
	2. Avoid negative phrases in the stem.	**Question stem**
	3. Make sure the correct option is not very distinct from the distractors.	**Correct option**
	4. Avoid using extreme modifiers/qualifiers like *never*, *all*, *none*, *only* etc. in options.	**Extreme modifiers**
	5. Avoid giving grammatically incorrect distractors, i.e. a structure/word form that does not exist in language.	**Distractors**

	Guideline
Gap-fill/ words from the box	Ensure certain principles are followed like avoiding giveaways, having a balanced number of distractors for each word form, and giving a few more distractors than needed if written especially for upper levels.
Cloze tests: Open-cloze or MC cloze tests	1. Make sure the first gap is not placed too near the beginning of the text.
	2. There should generally be between 7 and 12 words between gaps.
	3. Deleting the first word in a sentence should be done infrequently.