Strategic Words

A vital test-taking strategy is to focus attention on strategic words in exam questions. This will help to eliminate incorrect options and understand what the question is asking. These words usually present themselves in the stem of the question and are easy to identify. Examples of words that reflect the need to prioritize are: “first,” “initial,” “early,” “highest priority,” and “most appropriate.” Examples of words that reflect the need to assess a patient are: “assess,” “collect/gather,” and “identify.” Examples of words that reflect the need to intervene are: “action” and “intervention.” Options with words that are open-ended should be choices that are considered possible correct options. These include words like, “usually,” “normally,” or “generally.” Options with words that are closed-ended (extreme or fixed meaning) should be choices that are eliminated as they are usually incorrect. These are words like, “always,” “never,” and “none.”



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WORDS THAT REFLECT THE NEED TO PRIORITIZE

First/Initial/Early

(1) Wand and Initials and Early-sun

When there is a question that presents itself with answer options that are all correct, the need to prioritize will be essential. Examples of words that reflect the need to prioritize are first, initial and early. An example of this would be something like: “Which patient should the nurse see first?”

Highest Priority

Highest Priority-list

When there is a question that presents with itself with answer options that are all correct, the need to prioritize will be essential. “Highest priority” is one of these strategic words. An example of this would be something like: “What is the nurse’s highest priority?”

Most Appropriate

Most Appropriate-apple

When there is a question that presents itself with answer options that are all correct, the need to prioritize will be essential. “Most appropriate” is one of these strategic words. An example of this would be something like: “Which nursing action is most appropriate?”

WORDS THAT REFLECT THE NEED TO ASSESS

Assess

Assess-man

Words that reflect the need to assess usually point out the need to look for the option that is the initial step, as assessment is the first step in the nursing process (ADPIE). When you see the word “assess,” that is usually what you are being asked to do. An example would be something like, “Which of the following is part of the nurse’s assessment?”

Collect/Gather

Collecting-jar and Gathering-basket

Words that reflect the need to assess usually point out the need to look for the option that is the initial step, as assessment is the first step in the nursing process (ADPIE). Terms that indicate this are “collect” or “gather,” as in; “Which data does the nurse need to gather?” Answer options might include collecting both subjective and objective data from the patient and/or family.

Identify

Magnifying-glass

Words that reflect the need to assess usually point out the need to look for the option that is the initial step, as assessment is the first step in the nursing process (ADPIE). Terms that indicate this are “identify” as in, “Which symptoms does the nurse identify as a characteristic of this disease?” This could even be asking you to identify abnormal information from a patient’s labs and asking you to interpret those results.

WORDS THAT REFLECT THE NEED TO INTERVENE

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Action/Intervention

Action-clapper and Nurse Entering-between Patient and Disease-guy

Words that reflect the need to intervene usually point out the need to look for the option that is after the assessment has been done, as interventions are initiated after the assessment portion in the nursing process (ADPIE). Terms that indicate the need to intervene are “action” or “intervention” as in; “The nurse should take which action next?” Answer options might be activities like organizing or managing care, educating, or administering meds.

OPEN-ENDED WORDS

Normally/Generally

Norman-Norm and General

Options with words that are open-ended should be choices that are considered possible correct options. These include words like, “usually,” “normally,” or “generally.”

CLOSED-ENDED WORDS

Always/Never/None

Around-the-clock and No-sign-clock and Nun

Generally, options with words that are closed-ended (extreme or fixed meaning) should be choices that are eliminated as they are usually incorrect. These are words like, “all,” “always,” “must,” “never,” and “none.”

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