



Correctness Guidelines

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A. General Information

1. The NAQT Correctness Guidelines are maintained at <https://www.naqt.com/go/correctness-guidelines>
This version is current as of August 1, 2023.
2. These guidelines are written for tournaments using questions provided by NAQT, but are available free of charge for other events provided that...
 - a. The guidelines are identified as NAQT guidelines.
 - b. Any variations from these guidelines are announced before the tournament begins.
 - c. The tournament is not advertised as using NAQT questions (though it may bill itself as an NAQT-style tournament).
 - d. If you would like to use these guidelines under other circumstances, please write to naqt@naqt.com.
3. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to moderators, players, and tournament directors as to when answers meet NAQT's criteria of **accuracy** (correctness) and **precision** (proper specificity) for judging them to be correct. As such, this document expands on Section I of the NAQT Gameplay Rules.
4. It is not intended that *moderators* memorize this document prior to reading at a tournament; its contents should logically follow from Section I of the NAQT Gameplay Rules and/or be explicitly embodied in the underlining of answers. This document is primarily intended as a guide to players, so they know what kinds of answers will be considered acceptable; to writers and editors, so they can produce questions that consistently meet NAQT's standards and players' expectations; and to tournament directors, so they can resolve protests in a manner consistent with NAQT's standards and players' expectations.

B. Underlining

1. The required part of an answer will be underlined (e.g., **George Washington** or **The Scarlet Letter**); a player who gives only the underlined portion(s) should be ruled correct.
2. Some answer lines will have multiple underlined sections. In this case, all of the underlined information must be given, but the intervening material need not be. In the case of the answer **William Henry Harrison**, answers of **W. Harrison**, **W. H. Harrison**, and **William Harrison** would all be accepted. Such an answer line would likely also give an instruction to prompt on **Harrison** alone (as correct but imprecise).
3. Some answer lines will have instructions like **or Soviet Union** or **accept Russia**. Those indicate an alternate response that should be accepted as well, with the difference (which doesn't affect gameplay) being that answers introduced by **or** are completely equivalent, while those introduced by **accept** are not completely equivalent but should be accepted due to the wording of this particular question.
4. Some answer lines with multiple underlined sections will have an instruction like **(accept either underlined portion)** or **(accept any underlined portion)**. For instance, in the case of **San Francisco Giants (accept either underlined portion)**, either the response **San Francisco** or the response **Giants** would be acceptable (as would **San Francisco Giants**).
5. An instruction of the form **accept First Battle of Manassas before "Manassas"** indicates a response that should be accepted until the moderator has read the first syllable of the word "Manassas" in the question. If the word appears multiple times, the directive applies to its first occurrence (unless otherwise specified).

6. An instruction of the form **accept similar answers that mention Beethoven and piano sonatas** indicates that the moderator has wide latitude to accept responses that include the specified terms in any reasonable order and with any reasonable connecting information (e.g., **Beethoven’s piano sonatas** or **the sonatas by L. Beethoven for the piano**).
7. Instructions may also be provided to prompt on specific responses, either in general or before certain words. In addition, instructions may be provided to not prompt on specific responses, either in general or after certain words. In general, moderators should not prompt in the absence of a specific directive to do so.
8. The instruction **prompt on partial answer** means that the player should be prompted on any subset of the underlined words in the answer.
9. If an underlined section includes a generic word (e.g., “war” in **Korean War**) and that generic word is used in the question itself to refer to the answer, then a player need not repeat that word if they are answering after it has been read. For instance, if the above question ended “For 10 points—name this 1950–1953 war,” a player would need to give **Korean War** prior to the final word, but could just give **Korean** after the question was completed.

C. Specific Classes of Answers

1. The following guidelines define NAQT’s interpretation of what constitutes accurate and precise knowledge in several specific cases of answers. The underlining in answer lines will conform to these guidelines.
2. Real persons:
 - a. The following are generally acceptable: surnames, family names, nicknames that are nearly universally known (e.g., **LBJ** but not **Landslide Lyndon**), pseudonyms, birth names, unmarried or married names, and regnal names.
 - b. Responses consisting of a given name and a family name or surname may be given in either order (e.g., **Richard Nixon** and **Nixon, Richard** are both correct). If one or more middle names are included, they must immediately follow the first name (e.g., both **Martin Luther King** and **King, Martin Luther** are correct, but **King, Luther Martin** is not.)
 - c. Given names are generally neither acceptable nor promptable, except where they coincide with regnal names. People who are better known by their given name, such as Galileo, Raphael, and Dante, are exceptions to this general guideline.
 - d. Players will be prompted if they give part of a compound surname or family name that is separated by spaces (e.g., giving **Webber** for **Andrew Lloyd Webber**). This guideline does not apply to hyphenated names (e.g., giving **Strauss** for **Claude Lévi-Strauss** is incorrect).
 - e. Nobiliary particles will be required when it is standard practice for English-language works to use them (e.g., **Johannes van der Waals**); they may be omitted when it is common to do so (e.g., **Ludwig van Beethoven**). In less clear-cut cases, the answer line will indicate whether a response missing a particle may be prompted. The presence of such a particle does not constitute a “compound surname or family name.”
3. Dates, years, centuries, and millennia must usually be exact (e.g., the year **71** will not be accepted if the answer is **1971**.) Partial decades such as **the fifties** will be interpreted to mean the most recently completed such decade (e.g., **the fifties** will be interpreted as the 1950s until January 1, 2060), or may be promptable, depending on the question text. Years will be assumed to be AD/CE unless otherwise modified. However, if the question clearly indicates that only a particular century, decade, or other limited interval is under consideration, abbreviated dates will be interpreted in that context.
4. Titles of works must be exact, except that leading articles may be omitted (e.g., **Misérables** is acceptable for **Les Misérables**). All words other than leading articles must be correct (e.g., **Bridge of San Luis Rey** is acceptable, but **Bridge over San Luis Rey** is not.) Rarely will subtitles or working titles be accepted for the published title.
 - a. If an incorrect leading article is used, the response is incorrect (e.g., **A Bridge of San Luis Rey** is not acceptable.)
 - b. Insertion of a leading article before a title where none exists will not invalidate a response (e.g., **The San Francisco Chronicle** for **San Francisco Chronicle**), so long as no other ambiguity is introduced (e.g., **Invisible Man** by H. G. Wells is acceptable; **The Invisible Man** by Ralph Waldo Ellison is not.)

- c. Commonly used titles may be accepted if the actual title is long and cumbersome (e.g., **Wealth of Nations** in lieu of **Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations**).
 - d. Players are not prompted if they give a partial title (e.g., giving **San Luis Rey** for **The Bridge of San Luis Rey**); partial titles do not count as “accurate and precise knowledge” except in the cases listed above (or when directed by specific notes on the question).
 - e. A response that (correctly) combines the possessive form of a creator’s name with the title of a creative work will be treated as a response giving the title (e.g., **Dante’s Inferno** will be evaluated as **Inferno** and **Fitzgerald’s Great Gatsby** will be evaluated as **Great Gatsby**).
5. Other than in the case of titles, there is no universal rule concerning leading articles: They will be required when it is standard practice for English-language works to use them (e.g., **Los Angeles** or **Le Havre**), and they may be omitted when it is common to do so (e.g., **The Ohio State University**). In less clear-cut cases, the answer line will indicate whether a response missing an article may be prompted.
 6. Acceptable responses for fictional characters depend on the way in which they are referred to in the book and related scholarship. It is common for just the given name or just the surname or family name of a character to be acceptable. Occasionally, identifying phrases (e.g., **Tess of the d’Urbervilles** or **The Hunchback of Notre Dame**) may also be acceptable.
 7. Common acronyms and abbreviations for organizations are generally acceptable.
 8. Acronyms and abbreviations for other answers may or may not be acceptable, depending on how widespread their use is and possible ambiguity. If commonly used, they will usually at least be promptable.
 9. Postal abbreviations are acceptable for the names of states provided that the question has specified the answer is a state.
 10. Atomic symbols are generally acceptable for chemical elements. Atomic numbers are generally *not* acceptable.
 11. Arabic numerals (e.g., **Group 18**) are generally acceptable for groups on the periodic table, as are trivial names like **alkali metals** or **noble gases**. The outdated CAS and old-style IUPAC names that combine a Roman numeral and a letter (e.g., **Group VIII B**) are generally promptable (but not acceptable).
 12. Both single-letter and three-letter abbreviations are generally acceptable for amino acids, but codons are not. For example, **A** and **Ala.** are acceptable for **alanine**, but **GCU** is not.
 13. Single-letter codes are generally acceptable for nucleotides and nitrogenous bases.
 14. Answers relying on highly specialized knowledge, such as the ISO 3166 codes for countries, are not generally acceptable (or promptable) despite their international use and uniqueness.
 15. For chemical compounds:
 - a. Common names and formulas are generally acceptable, but in some cases may be ambiguous (and thus merely promptable).
 - b. Systematic IUPAC names are generally acceptable if they are ten syllables or fewer in length (and generally not promptable if longer).
 16. Symbols commonly used for mathematical and physical quantities (e.g., **S** for **entropy**) are rarely acceptable and may or may not be promptable. In a limited number of cases, near-universal use (e.g., **e** for **Euler’s number** or **h** for **Planck’s constant**) may make such symbols acceptable.
 17. Numeric approximations are not generally acceptable or promptable for symbolic constants (e.g., **3.14** is not acceptable for **π**).
 18. Common names and scientific names are generally acceptable for specific organisms (e.g., **silkworm** or **Bombyx mori**). In general, when scientific names are acceptable, only the first letter of the genus name will be required (e.g., **E. coli** is acceptable for **Escherichia coli**); other forms of the scientific name, including genus names and abbreviations thereof, may be acceptable where commonly used (e.g., **staph** for **Staphylococcus aureus** or **Drosophila** for **Drosophila melanogaster**), but will not be acceptable or promptable in other cases (e.g., **Homo** will not be acceptable or promptable for **Homo habilis**). Similarly, in cases where the species name is not commonly used as shorthand for the scientific name, the species name by itself will be neither acceptable nor promptable (e.g., **habilis** will not be acceptable or promptable for **Homo habilis**).

19. Scientific names and common names for generic members are acceptable for taxa (e.g., either **Echinodermata** or **echinoderm(s)** is acceptable).
20. Answers that are shared by multiple religious or mythological traditions may generally be given in a form appropriate to any of those traditions so long as the clues that have been read (in a tossup) or that appear in the entire question (in a bonus) do not directly contradict the tradition suggested by the form of the response. This applies until the question explicitly indicates a tradition for the answer. For example, a question beginning “This god was the father of Apollo...” could be correctly answered with either **Zeus** or **Jupiter**. In contrast, if it began “This Greek god was the father of Apollo...,” then only **Zeus** would be correct (and **Jupiter** would not be promptable).
- The notion of “direct contradiction” is looser than that typically applied in Correctness Guideline G.2 and is meant to reflect the incomplete and interlinked nature of many primary sources. For example, the bonus part “Name the father of Romulus” could be (correctly) answered with **Ares** since Greek mythology does not give an alternative version of Romulus’s parentage (but simply does not contain that story at all). Conversely, a question starting “This religious figure was prepared to sacrifice his son Ishmael” can only be answered with **Ibrahim**, as the Christian and Jewish traditions directly contradict this clue by stating that the would-be sacrifice was Isaac.
 - The mere mention of names from a specific tradition is not enough to require an answer specific to that tradition. For example, a question beginning “This wife of Zeus...” could be (correctly) answered with **Juno** until a point at which it said “Greek goddess.”
 - The above rule notwithstanding, in the case of Sumerian, Akkadian, and Babylonian mythologies, questions will generally accept any of the three forms of an answer, even if the question has specifically named a tradition. This reflects the especially fragmentary nature of the source material and the widespread use of names outside their native tradition.
 - In the case of a question that draws clues from different traditions, the form of the name from any of the relevant traditions will generally be accepted.
21. Common (e.g., **Zimbabwe**) and official (e.g., **Republic of Zimbabwe**) English names are generally acceptable for modern-day countries and other political entities. (Note that Correctness Guidelines F.3 and F.4 allow some non-English names as well.)
22. Questions with a historical context may require historical names of entities and may or may not prompt on other names depending on the nuances of the question (e.g., a question on the **Persian Empire** might specify that **Iran** is neither promptable nor acceptable).
23. Historical names are generally acceptable if the question involves the time period in which they were in use (e.g., a question about 21st-century Thai politics would neither accept nor prompt on **Siam**, and a question about **sulfuric acid** with no historical context would neither accept nor prompt on **oil of vitriol**).
24. Questions about the United Kingdom as an international actor since 1707 will *not* generally accept (or prompt on) **England** as an equivalent answer (but will accept **Britain** or **Great Britain**). **England** will remain a potentially correct answer in other contexts (geography, sports, national politics, etc.) with the context of the question determining whether it is acceptable, promptable, or incorrect.
25. Responses to computation (“pencil and paper ready”) questions must be simplified.
- Fractional responses must generally be given in lowest terms (e.g., **6/10** is not acceptable but **3/5** is). They may, however, be in improper form (e.g., either **1½** or **3/2** is acceptable).
 - Square roots and other radical expressions should have powers brought outside (e.g., **square root of 20** is not acceptable but **2 square root 5** is).
 - In general, computational responses that are not simplified will not be prompted.
 - The denominator of a fraction *may* contain a complex number or a radical (unless the question specifically indicates otherwise).
26. Questions which ask for a physical quantity will specify the units of the answer in the question; answers given without units will be assumed to be in the units specific in the question, even if that part of the question had not been read when the answer was given. Physically equivalent answers given in different units are generally

acceptable so long as, in the moderator's judgment, the answer was not given with the intention of delaying of the game.

27. Probabilistic answers may *not* generally be given in terms of odds, but may be generally given as either fractions, percents, or decimals.
28. Enharmonic equivalents (such as **D flat/C sharp** or **diminished fourth/major third**) will be acceptable only when the wording of the question allows those equivalents as correct answers. For example, if a question asks for "the note that is one half-step above C natural," then either **D flat** and **C sharp** is acceptable; if instead a question asks for "the note that lies a minor second above C natural" then only **D flat** is acceptable (since C natural to C sharp is an augmented unison rather than a minor second). Similarly, if a question asks for "the third step in the A major scale" then only **C sharp** is acceptable (since calling that step a D flat would indicate a key signature of mixed flats and sharps, so there would be two steps on the D line of the staff and no steps on the C line).
29. There is no general rule for the acceptability of opus numbers for musical works: They may be acceptable, promptable, or incorrect depending on the norms of music scholarship.
30. The name of either party in a court case is acceptable when it reasonably identifies the specific case (e.g., either **Baker** or **Carr** would be acceptable for **Baker v. Carr**, but **Ohio** is not acceptable for **Mapp v. Ohio**).
31. If a player interrupts a question and gives a response that is equivalent to the answer sought, but the response is later used in the question as a clue, the moderator will generally take the answer as correct if a tossup, and will prompt if a bonus.
32. If a question asks to identify an answer from a list, the player must give an exact or very similar answer to the form included in the list (e.g., giving **Mississippi** instead of **Mississippi River** is acceptable, but **the second thing you read** and **the one that started with 'M'** are not).
33. Players may spell answers, but it is considered misconduct for a player to spell an answer intending to delay the game.
34. Both singular and plural forms are generally acceptable for non-specific nouns (e.g., **electron(s)** or **river(s)** or **planetary ring system(s)**), even if all of the question's clues suggest a specific word form. This is not necessarily true for more specific answers (e.g., **Earth's moons** would not be acceptable for **Earth's moon**).

D. Related Responses

1. Many questions involve clues that reference topics whose names include some form of the intended answer; a response that names one of those topics (instead of the intended answer) is considered a **related response**. The evaluation of related responses depends on how the referenced topics relate to the answer.
2. If the related response is of the same general class of concepts as the intended answer, then it will generally be evaluated as per Rule I.2 (namely, it must be compatible with all clues that have been read). For instance, a response of **South Sudan** is not acceptable for **Sudan** if any clue has been read that is specific to Sudan (regardless of whether the question references South Sudan). Similarly, a response of **gas laser** for **lasers** is incorrect if any clue has been read that is not true of gas lasers.
3. If the related response is not of the same general class of concepts, acceptability depends on the connection between the related response and the answer:
 - a. A related response will generally be accepted if the required part of the answer appears in an unmodified or possessive form. For instance, **Hudson Bay** is acceptable for **Henry Hudson** (if the question references the bay) and **Avogadro's number** is acceptable for **Amedeo Avogadro** (if the question references that number). Such related responses will generally be accepted at any point in the question; this is an exception to Rule I.2 and Correctness Guideline G.2.
 - b. If the required part of the answer appears in the response in a plural form, the response may be acceptable, promptable, or incorrect.
 - c. If the required part of the answer appears in the response in a more highly modified form, the response may be promptable. For instance, **Hamiltonian path** would be promptable for **William Rowan Hamilton** (if the question referenced Hamiltonian paths) and **German chancellor** would be promptable for **Germany** (if the question referenced the chancellorship).

4. The determination of whether a response is of the same general class as the answer will generally be based on language in the question like this color **is...** or **identify** this class of particles **that....** If the response matches that description, it will be considered to be of the same general class. For instance, in the case of a question about **James Monroe** beginning “This U.S. president gave his name to an 1823 ‘doctrine’...,” a related response of **Monroe doctrine** would not be considered to be in the same general class, as it is not a “president.” In the case of a question about **plants** beginning “This group of organisms...”, a related response of **flowering plants** would be considered to be of the same general class.
5. In the case of questions that specifically ask for a shared name (given name, family name, or surname) by giving clues about different people who have borne it, the full name of any referenced person will be acceptable (even if the people are relatives). Note that this does not apply to questions asking for a specific person, even if the family name or surname is the only part of the answer that is required.
6. In all cases, for a related response to be accepted or prompted, it must be relevant to the question (in the sense of providing the name of a topic referenced by the question).
7. For a related response to be accepted or prompted, it must be an accurate version of the topic’s name. For instance, if a question about **Lord Byron** referenced **Byronic heroes**, a response of **Byronesque hero** would be rejected.
8. For a related response to be accepted or prompted, it must contain a modified form of the entirety of the required portion of the answer. For instance, **Daniel Shays** is neither acceptable nor promptable for **Shays’s Rebellion** (but **Shays’s Rebellion** could be acceptable for **Daniel Shays**).

E. Pronunciation

1. Correctly pronounced responses are always acceptable. For non-English responses, that may involve either a correct pronunciation in the foreign language or a correct pronunciation of a standard English form (e.g., **loh dz**, **lah dz**, and **wooch** are acceptable for the Polish city of Łódź).
2. A plausible pronunciation using English phonetics is generally acceptable, unless it demonstrates a fundamental lack of understanding about the correct answer (e.g., **Malcolm the Tenth** is not acceptable for **Malcolm X**). As a general rule, while leeway may be given to vowel sounds, consonants should be in the correct order (e.g., **Olduvai** is not the same as **Olvudai**), and syllables may not generally be added or omitted. In some cases, however, a pronunciation may still be deemed plausible (and thus acceptable) even if it adds or removes a syllable (e.g., pronouncing **koan** identically to “cone”).
3. It is not the case, however, that “vowels do not matter.” Plausible pronunciations of answers according to standard English phonetics are acceptable, so long as they do not create ambiguity. Plausible pronunciations of answers according to other languages may or may not be acceptable depending on the exact context. For instance, **mee-jee**, **mye-jye**, and **may-ih-jee** would all be acceptable for **Meiji**. **Moo-joo** and **may-jay** would be incorrect. The intent of this guideline is to avoid penalizing players for learning by reading without an opportunity to hear words pronounced correctly.
4. A player may be prompted to spell a phonetically close response. In such cases, the exact spelling is not always required (e.g., a player gives **muh-NAY** and is prompted. A response of **M-A-N-A-Y** would be sufficient to remove ambiguity with **Monet**.)

F. Foreign-Language Responses

1. English-language responses are usually (but not always) acceptable, even if foreign-language names for the same entity are more commonly used.
2. In some cases, the use of a foreign-language term may be so universal in English that the English version is not even promptable (e.g., **openness** would not be prompted for **glasnost**).
3. Foreign-language responses are generally acceptable for questions whose geographic context involves a region with which the language is strongly associated. This will be most common in questions about geographic features, political entities, or international organizations, but could apply to any answer.
4. As a specific case, questions about modern-day countries will accept any foreign-language name listed for that country in the CIA World Factbook. This does not necessarily include every official language used by the country.

5. Titles of, and proper names from, works in the original language of the answer are generally acceptable. English titles under which translations have been published, or major performances held, are generally acceptable (e.g., for the Camus work, **L'Étranger** is acceptable, as are **The Stranger** and **The Outsider** — the original British translation — but **Der Fremde** is not, as the work was not originally written in German.) Potential translations of foreign-language titles into English that have not been used for published editions of the work are generally not acceptable. For the purposes of this guideline, “works” includes texts, films, works of art (visual and musical), TV shows, video games, and songs. Works that were the result of a multinational creative process may have multiple “original languages,” all of which will be acceptable.
6. Names of people in their original language are generally acceptable.

G. Other Notes

1. Indicating that a class of response is “generally acceptable” does not prevent it from being merely promptable (or even outright incorrect) if the wording of a particular question disallows it. This would most commonly occur if that response appeared as a clue in the question itself or if a question were very specific about the type of answer sought (e.g., a question that specifically asked for an “English-language” answer or a “regal name”).
2. In general, a response to a tossup question must be compatible with every clue that has been read (e.g., a response that is correct for the second clue of a question but too specific to be correct for the first clue will be ruled incorrect). Responses to parts of bonus questions must be compatible with every clue contained in the question through the end of the current part.
3. In rare cases, an otherwise acceptable (or promptable) response may be ruled incorrect when it creates ambiguity with another plausible answer (e.g., even though it is generally acceptable to give a given name and a family name or surname, **John Adams** would not be acceptable or promptable for **John Quincy Adams**, as it creates confusion with the full name of his presidential father).
4. In general, descriptions of answers that have well-known names are not acceptable (e.g., **the first president of the U.S.** is not acceptable for **George Washington**). In some cases, a canonical name may not exist or may be deemed too obscure; in such cases descriptions will be acceptable.
5. It is not permitted to give multiple, related pieces of information (“blitzing”) as a response. If a player gives such a response, the first part will be evaluated and the rest will be ignored. (See Correctness Guideline C.4.e for a partial exception.)