Correctness Guidelines

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A. General Information

1. The official NAQT guidelines on answer correctness are maintained at:
   http://www.naqt.com/correct-answers.html
   This version is current as of September 1, 2008.

2. These guidelines are written for Official NAQT tournaments, but are available free of charge for other events (including those not using NAQT questions) provided that:

   1. The guidelines are identified as NAQT guidelines.

   2. The tournament is not advertised as an official NAQT event, though it may bill itself as an NAQT-style tournament (if NAQT rules are being used) or as an Unofficial Event (if NAQT questions are being used but the complete requirements of an Official Event are not met).

   3. Any variations from the official NAQT guidelines are announced before the tournament begins.

3. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to moderators, teams, and tournament directors as to when answers meet NAQT's criteria of **accuracy** (correctness) and **precision** (not ambiguous) for judging them to be correct. As such this document expands on Section I of the Official NAQT 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 official rules and/or be explicitly embodied in the underlining of answers. This document is primarily intended as a guide to *players*, so that they know what kinds of answers will be considered acceptable.

5. If you would like to use these guidelines given the conditions stated above, or under other circumstances, please contact NAQT at *naqt@naqt.com* or by mail at 11521 W 69th Street; Shawnee, KS 66203-3749.

B. Underlining

1. Generally, the required part of an answer will be underlined (e.g., **George <u>Washington</u>**); a team that gives only the underlined portion should be counted correct.

2. Some questions will have an answer line with 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 <u>Harrison</u>**, answers of **W. <u>Harrison</u>**, **W. H. <u>Harrison</u>**, and **William <u>Harrison</u>** would all be accepted. **<u>Harrison</u>** by itself should be prompted (as correct, but imprecise).

3. Some questions will have an answer line with multiple underlined sections and a note like **(accept either)** as in this case: **San Francisco <u>Giants</u> (accept either)**. In this case, either the answer **San Francisco** or the answer **Giants** would be acceptable (as would **San Francisco Giants**).

4. Some questions will have an answer line with the note **(accept forms)** or **(accept word forms)**. This means that the answer is a generic word and any reasonable inflection of that word should be counted correct. For instance: **<u>disease</u> (accept word forms)** means that **disease**, **diseases**, **diseased**, and so on would all be acceptable.

5. If an underlined section includes a generic word (e.g., "war" in **<u>Korean War</u>**) and that generic word appears in the question itself, then a player need not repeat that word if he or she is 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 say **Korean War** prior to the final word, but could just say **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. The following are generally acceptable for persons, unless the question indicates otherwise: last names for real persons, nicknames that are nearly universally known (e.g., **LBJ** but not **Landslide Lyndon**), pseudonyms, birth names, unmarried or married names, and regnal names. If a last name is not acceptable outright, it will at least be promptable.

3. First names are rarely acceptable or promptable, except where they coincide with regnal names. Among the exceptions to this rule are figures like Galileo, Raphael, and Dante who lived in eras when the use of surnames was less well established.

4. In rare cases, an otherwise acceptable (or promptable) answer may be ruled incorrect when it creates ambiguity with another plausible answer (e.g., even though first and last names are almost always sufficient, **John Adams** would not be acceptable-- or promptable--for **John Quincy Adams**, as it creates confusion with the full name of his presidential father).

5. Players will be prompted if they give part of a compound last name (e.g., saying **Webber** for **Andrew Lloyd Webber**.)

6. Dates must usually be exact (e.g., the year **71** will not be accepted if the answer is **1971**.) Years given will be assumed to be AD/CE unless otherwise modified. However, if the question explicitly or implicitly indicates that only a particular century, decade, or other limited interval is under consideration, abbreviated dates will be interpreted in that context.

7. Titles of works must be exact, except that leading articles may be omitted. 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.

   1. If an incorrect leading article is used, the response is incorrect (e.g., **A Bridge of San Luis Rey** is not acceptable.)

   2. Insertion of a leading article before a title where none exists will not invalidate an answer (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.)

   3. 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**).

   4. Players are not prompted if they give a partial title (e.g., saying **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).

8. Acceptable answers 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 first name or the last name of a character to be acceptable. Occasionally, identifying phrases (e.g. **Tess of the d'Urbervilles**) may also be acceptable.

9. Common acronyms and abbreviations for organizations are generally acceptable.

10. 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.

11. Postal abbreviations are *not* acceptable for the names of states.

12. Neither chemical symbols nor atomic numbers are generally acceptable for the names of elements.

13. Answers relying on highly specialized knowledge, such as the ISO 3166 codes for countries, are not generally acceptable despite their international use and uniqueness.

14. Common names, formulas, and IUPAC names are generally acceptable for chemical compounds, but in some cases one or more may be ambiguous and require resolution.

15. 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.

16. Answers that are religious figures or concepts belonging to more than one tradition may generally be given in the corresponding form of *any* of the traditions unless the question is specifically about differences or similarities among the various traditions. For instance, **Ibrahim** is generally acceptable for **Abraham**. It would not be acceptable, however, if the question were specifically asking for Biblical equivalents of given Qur'anic figures.

17. Questions that refer to "Greek myth" or include unambiguous references to Greek mythological characters generally require that the Greek forms of names be given as answers (e.g. **Poseidon** rather than **Neptune**). Similarly, questions that specifically mention "Roman myth" or include unambiguous references to Roman mythological characters generally require that the Roman forms of names be given as answers. The names of corresponding figures from other mythological traditions will not generally be prompted.

18. Both common and official English names are always acceptable for modern-day countries and other political entities. Foreign-language names for countries and other political entities are generally not acceptable unless specifically requested by the question. Historical questions may require the contemporary names of political entities and may or may not specify prompting on other names depending on the nuances of the question. Historical names of countries, cities, and other political entities are generally not acceptable if the question does not involve the time period in which they were in use.

19. Fractional answers must be given in lowest terms, unless otherwise specified in the question. They may, however, be in improper form.

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

21. Probabilistic answers may *not* generally be given in terms of odds, but may be generally given as either fractions, percents, or decimals.

22. Musical notes that are enharmonic on a piano (e.g. **C sharp** and **D flat**) are not generally considered equivalent answers because they may not be on other instruments or under other tuning systems.

23. 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 take the answer as correct if a tossup, and will prompt if a bonus, unless the question directs otherwise.

24. Titles and names in the original language of the answer are generally acceptable unless specifically disallowed by the question. English titles under which translations have been published will also be accepted (e.g., for the Camus work, **L'Etranger** is acceptable, as is **The Stranger** or **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.

25. 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., saying **Mississippi** instead of **Mississippi River** is acceptable, but **the second thing you read** or **the one that started with F** are not).

26. Players may spell answers, but it is considered misconduct for a player to spell an answer intending to delay the game.

27. Pronunciations do not have to be exact. A plausible or phonetic pronunciation is usually 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 should not be added or omitted.

28. It is not the case, however, that "vowels do not matter." Correctly pronounced answers are always acceptable. 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** or **may-jay** would be incorrect. The intent of this rule is to avoid penalizing players for learning by reading without an opportunity to hear words pronounced correctly.

29. 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 says **muh-NAY** and is prompted. A response of **M-A-N-A-Y** would be sufficient to remove ambiguity with **Monet**.)

D. Other Notes

1. These guidelines do not address the practice (also known as "blitzing") of giving multiple, related pieces of information in the answer to a single question under the assumption that if any of them is the answer sought, then the response will be considered correct. NAQT allows a limited form of this practice (in its **creator-creation rule**); tournaments that are not being played under NAQT's official rules should clarify the extent to which that practice is allowed.