Examples of Multiple-Choice Exam Items at Different Cognitive Levels

The following exam questions have been designed to show how a single primary trait might be assessed at different cognitive levels using multiple-choice questions. They have not been vetted to ensure that they comply with the guidelines for writing effective and valid multiple-choice exam items; their purpose is illustrative only.

Learning Outcome: Students will be able to choose a place to live.

Student Learning: Using a budget to select an apartment.

1. (Remember) “Fits my budget” means the apartment
   a. allows me to live comfortably within my means.
   b. costs more than I can comfortably afford.
   c. costs no more than the monthly amount I have earmarked for housing.
   d. will require me to make pre-authorized automatic withdrawals from my bank.

2. (Understand) In order for an apartment to “fit my budget,” I must
   a. ensure the down payment is modest.
   b. forecast how each month’s income will be spent.
   c. ensure the bank will cover unforeseen costs associated with housing.
   d. be willing to forego luxuries.

3. (Apply) Use your understanding of budgeting to answer the following item:
   Your annual gross earnings are $38,000 and your total tax liability is 32%. You sit down to think through your financial picture and decide you can afford to spend 1/3 of your income on housing. Based on those figures and assuming the more you pay the better the apartment, which apartment is the best choice?
   a. Two bedroom at the Green Grotto, $850/month.
   b. Studio at Hoosier Hangout, $450/month.
   c. One bedroom at College Corner, $700/month.
   d. Downtown loft, $795/month.

4. (Analyze) After choosing the best apartment in item 3 above, you receive a salary raise to $42,000, which bumps you into the next tax bracket @ 35%. Gleeful at your handsome raise, you decide to buy a new car, for which you must pay $294 each month. Assuming nothing else changes in your budget, how do these changes affect the proportion of your monthly income you can spend on your apartment?
   a. I can now spend more than 1/3 of my income on rent.
   b. Although I must take the changes into consideration, I will continue to spend 1/3 of my income on rent.
   c. I must now spend less than 1/3 of my income on rent.
   d. The changes are irrelevant to the proportion I will spend on rent.

5. (Evaluate) You have become unhappy with your current living situation and have decided to move to another apartment. You identify 3 apartments to choose from:
   1. a rundown studio apartment located 2 miles from campus; rent = $500/month
   2. an older, but reasonably well maintained 2-bedroom apartment 3 blocks from campus; rent = $1200/month
   3. a brand new deluxe 3-bedroom apartment 1 mile from campus; rent = $1875/month

Your budget is a primary criterion for choosing an apartment, but you also care about having the fewest possible roommates, as close to campus as possible, in the nicest possible apartment for the price. After agonizing over your choices for a while, you select apartment number 2 as your new residence. Which of the statements below best describes the tradeoff you made in arriving at your decision?
   a. Having no roommates outweighed living as close to campus as possible.
   b. Living in the nicest apartment available outweighed having no roommates.
   c. Paying the lowest possible rent outweighed living in the nicest apartment available.
   d. Living as close as possible to campus outweighed paying the lowest possible rent.