

Setting of Questions

(Based upon Guidance provided by the Merseyside Quiz League)

To assist teams in the completion of sets of questions, facilitate the work of the vetting groups and to improve the standard of quizzes, the following notes should be borne in mind.

SETTING

Nobody ever sits down to write a poor quiz and what constitutes a good quiz is of course, quite subjective.

However, there are certain things that every setter can check for, including:

- Spelling and typographical errors
- Factual accuracy. Check each question/answer against an irrefutable reference
- Missing questions or missing answers
- Balanced questions going to the same side because the half time switch around has been overlooked
- A predominance of questions in one subject area
- A certain player getting several questions on the same subject area

Set papers in good time and play them before submission. All of the above problems should easily be identified if the set has been played as a friendly.

Questions should balance in terms of topic, severity and fairness. Severity is again very subjective but is helped by trying out the sets. Fairness can be easier to judge e.g. one team may be asked to give a specific name whereas the balance for the question might require a year or a number, which is much more guessable.

Similarly, 'Year in the life' type questions an attempt should be made to choose two people who had similar lengths of lives.

It is appreciated that the areas of Light Entertainment and Current Affairs lend themselves to the attempt to find new and interesting questions, but setters should guard against overuse and be aware of the temporary nature of some news stories. Questions that have an answer that may change should be qualified, e.g. naming the manager of a football team in a particular date range.

Questions involving innovations brought about by Act of Parliament need consideration, as often the Act is passed in a year before it is implemented. The question should make clear which is required. Similarly, awards for films, books, etc. are often presented in the year following their release, so the question should remove ambiguity e.g. "Which film won the 2012 Oscar for Best Picture at the Awards Ceremony in April 2013".

Do not use trick questions or questions containing YES/NO answers.

Avoid questions with long-winded or multi-part answers. Questions with one word answers are usually the most suitable, e.g. questions involving the meaning of abbreviations could identify just one of the words.

Pay close attention to the phrasing of questions to ensure that there is only one possible answer. For example, there are a number of equally correct answers to the question "Where are the Karakoram?" but there is only one possible answer to the question, "Of which mountain range are the Karakoram a part?"

Do not copy sets directly from published quiz books, or old sets.

Bear in mind that several Leagues now use the Two Attempt system and that certain answers can be rendered too obvious by this.

PRODUCTION OF SETS

If at all possible, please produce the questions electronically on the LQL template and send them by email to the General Secretary before 31st January deadline.

Failing this, type the questions and answers. If this too is not possible, and the set is hand written, then please use capital letters.

When setting out the paper, use the existing format of the league sets, i.e. at the top of the paper, indicate the name of the setting team, head each round with a round number and number the questions 1a to 4b.

... A FINAL THOUGHT.

We often bemoan the fact that there is little new blood coming into the Leagues. The flip side of this however means that we have all been playing for a number of years and as such we all appreciate the effect that a quiz that was too hard or too easy or poorly balanced or riddled with errors has on our night out! The question sets are everything, let's all make the effort to produce sets that we would enjoy playing!