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# Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination

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EIGHTH EDITION

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# Dedication

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*In loving memory of my parents—*

*To my mother, **Frances Mary**, and my father, **Arnold Lawrence**, who taught me to always love, care, and be the best that I could be. My memories of their love, support, and words of encouragement will remain in my heart forever!*

*Linda Anne Silvestri*

*To my parents, **Mary Elizabeth** and **Lawrence Peter**, who have instilled in me the values of working hard and being selfless, and who have been my support system as I pursue my professional goals and life aspirations. My success thus far would not have been possible without them. From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Mom & Dad!*

*Angela E. Silvestri*

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# Letter from the Authors

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## To All Future Registered Nurses,

Congratulations to you!

You should be very proud and pleased with yourself on your most recent well-deserved accomplishment of completing your nursing program to become a registered nurse. We know that you have worked very hard to become successful and that you have proven to yourself that indeed you can achieve your goals.

In our opinion, you are about to enter the most wonderful and rewarding profession that exists. Your willingness, desire, and ability to assist those who need nursing care will bring great satisfaction to your life. In the profession of nursing, your learning will be a lifelong process. This aspect of the profession makes it stimulating and dynamic. Your learning process will continue to expand and grow as the profession continues to evolve. Your next very important endeavor will be the learning process involved to achieve success in your examination to become a registered nurse.

We are excited and pleased to be able to provide you with the Saunders *Pyramid to Success* products, which will help you prepare for your next important professional goal, becoming a registered nurse. We want to thank all of our former and current nursing students whom we have assisted in their studies for the NCLEX-RN® examination for their willingness to offer ideas regarding their needs in preparing for licensure. Student ideas have certainly added a special uniqueness to all of the products available in the Saunders *Pyramid to Success*.

Saunders *Pyramid to Success* products provide you with everything that you need to ready yourself for the NCLEX-RN examination. These products include material that is required for the NCLEX-RN examination for all nursing students regardless of educational background, specific strengths, areas in need of improvement, or clinical experience during the nursing program.

So let's get started and begin our journey through the Saunders *Pyramid to Success*, and welcome to the wonderful profession of nursing!

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Anne Silvestri and Dr. Angela E. Silvestri

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## About the Authors

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**Linda Anne Silvestri, PhD, RN**

(Photo by Laurent W. Valliere.)

As a child, I always dreamed of becoming either a nurse or a teacher. Initially I chose to become a nurse because I really wanted to help others, especially those who were ill. Then I realized that both of my dreams could come true; I could be both a nurse and a teacher. So I pursued my dreams.

I received my diploma in nursing at Cooley Dickinson Hospital School of Nursing in Northampton, Massachusetts. Afterward, I worked at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, where I cared for clients in acute medical-surgical units, the intensive care unit, the emergency department, pediatric units, and other acute care units. Later I received an associate degree from Holyoke Community College in Holyoke, Massachusetts; my BSN from American International College in

Springfield, Massachusetts; and my MSN from Anna Maria College in Paxton, Massachusetts, with a dual major in Nursing Management and Patient Education. I received my PhD in Nursing from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and conducted research on self-efficacy and the predictors of NCLEX® success. I am also a member of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, Phi Kappa Phi, the American Nurses Association, the National League for Nursing, the Western Institute of Nursing, the Eastern Nursing Research Society, and the Golden Key International Honour Society. In addition, I received the 2012 Alumna of the Year/Nurse of the Year Award from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, School of Nursing. I was selected for Fellowship in the American Academy of Nursing and will be inducted in October, 2019.

As a native of Springfield, Massachusetts, I began my teaching career as an instructor of medical-surgical nursing and leadership-management nursing in 1981 at Baystate Medical Center School of Nursing. In 1989, I relocated to Rhode Island and began teaching advanced medical-surgical nursing and mental health nursing to RN and LPN students at the Community College of Rhode Island. While teaching there, a group of students approached me for assistance in preparing for the NCLEX examination. I have always had a very special interest in test success for nursing students because of my own personal experiences with testing. Taking tests was never easy for me, and as a student I needed to find methods and strategies that would bring success. My own difficult experiences, desire, and dedication to assist nursing students to overcome the obstacles associated with testing inspired me to develop and write the many products that would foster success with testing. My experiences as a student, nursing educator, and item writer for the NCLEX examinations aided me as I developed a comprehensive review course to prepare nursing graduates for the NCLEX examination.

Later, in 1994, I began teaching medical-surgical nursing at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, and I remain there as an adjunct faculty member preparing senior nursing students for the NCLEX-RN examination. Also, I am currently a part-time instructor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

I established Professional Nursing Seminars, Inc. in 1991 and Nursing Reviews, Inc. in 2000. These companies are located in Henderson, Nevada. Both companies are dedicated to helping nursing graduates achieve their goals of becoming registered nurses, licensed practical/vocational nurses, or both.

Today, I am the successful author of numerous review products. Also, I serve as an Elsevier consultant for HESI Live Reviews, the review courses for the NCLEX examinations conducted throughout the country. I am so pleased that you have decided to join me on your journey to success in testing for nursing examinations and for the NCLEX-RN examination!





**Angela E. Silvestri, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, CNE**

(Photo by Brent A. Elmore)

Being a nurse is one of the most enriching aspects of my life. It is a career that is multifaceted and complex, and allows me to be challenged scientifically, technically, and spiritually. As a nurse educator, I feel honored to impart my knowledge and experience to others who are hoping to serve in this selfless, caring profession. As a nurse scientist, I aim to make an impact on health care delivery methods, quality of care provided, and overall health care outcomes.

I earned my baccalaureate of science in nursing at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island. Upon graduation, I worked in long-term care, subacute care, rehabilitation, and acute care settings. I continue to work as a bedside nurse to maintain my technical skills set and to remain apprised of the changes reflected in health care today. I had the opportunity to serve as a preceptor for new graduate RNs while working in these areas. With the desire to become an educator, I pursued my Master of Science in nursing with a focus in education from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and began my teaching career. I continued my studies in the Doctor of Philosophy program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, focusing on beginning my research program as a nurse scientist. I completed my postgraduate certificate in advanced practice recently and am looking forward to serving in the role of the advanced practice nurse.

Throughout the years, I have worked extensively in the development of NCLEX

review products, as well as with students in live review courses for the NCLEX. I am very excited at the prospect of helping graduates take the final step in becoming a licensed nurse. Thank you for your dedication to the profession of nursing, and I hope you find this resource useful as you move forward in your journey in becoming a licensed nurse. If you don't already know, nursing is an amazing profession!

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# Preface

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Linda Anne Silvestri, PhD, RN

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*“To laugh often and much, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better, to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded.”*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*“Success is never an accident. To be successful is to have been perseverant, to have sacrificed, and to have loved what you are cultivating to become successful.”*

## Welcome to Saunders Pyramid to Success!

### An Essential Resource for Test Success

*Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination* is one in a series of products designed to assist you in achieving your goal of becoming a registered nurse. This text will provide you with a comprehensive review of all nursing content areas specifically related to the new 2019 test plan for the NCLEX-RN examination, which is implemented by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. This resource will help you achieve success on your nursing examinations during nursing school and on the NCLEX-RN examination.

## Organization

This book contains 20 units and 70 chapters. The chapters are designed to identify specific components of nursing content. They contain practice questions, both multiple-choice and alternate item formats, that reflect the chapter content and the 2019 test plan for the NCLEX-RN examination. The final unit, Chapter 70, contains a 75-question Comprehensive Test. All questions in the book and on the Evolve site are presented in NCLEX-style format.

The new test plan identifies a framework based on *Client Needs*. These Client Needs categories include Safe and Effective Care Environment, Health Promotion and Maintenance, Psychosocial Integrity, and Physiological Integrity. *Integrated Processes* are also identified as a component of the test plan. These include Caring, Communication and Documentation, Culture and Spirituality, Nursing Process, and Teaching and Learning. All chapters address the components of the test plan framework.

## Special Features of the Book

### Pyramid Terms

*Pyramid Terms* are important to the discussion of the content in the chapters in each unit. Therefore, they are in bold **green** type throughout the content section of each chapter. Definitions can be reviewed in the Audio Glossary on the Evolve site.


### Pyramid to Success

The *Pyramid to Success*, a featured part of each unit introduction, provides you with an overview, guidance, and direction regarding the focus of review in the particular content area, as well as the content area's relative importance to the 2019 test plan for the NCLEX-RN examination. The *Pyramid to Success* reviews the Client Needs and provides learning objectives as they pertain to the content in that unit. These learning objectives identify the specific components to keep in mind as you review each chapter.

### Priority Concepts

Each chapter identifies two *Priority Concepts* reflective of its content. These *Priority Concepts* will assist you to focus on the important aspects of the content and associated nursing interventions.

### Pyramid Points

*Pyramid Points* (  ) are placed next to specific content throughout the chapters.

The *Pyramid Points* highlight content that is important for preparing for the NCLEX-RN examination and identify content that is likely to appear on the NCLEX-RN examination.

### Pyramid Alerts

*Pyramid Alerts* are the **red** text found throughout the chapters that alert you to important information about nursing concepts. These alerts identify content that typically appears on the NCLEX-RN examination.

## Special Features Found on Evolve

### Pretest and Study Calendar

The accompanying Evolve site contains a 75-question pretest that provides you with feedback on your strengths and weaknesses. The results of your pretest will generate an individualized study calendar to guide you in your preparation for the NCLEX-RN examination.

### Heart, Lung, and Bowel Sound Questions

The accompanying Evolve site contains *Audio Questions* representative of content addressed in the 2019 test plan for the NCLEX-RN examination. Each question presents an audio clip as a component of the question.

## Video Questions

The accompanying Evolve site contains *Video Questions* representative of content addressed in the 2019 test plan for the NCLEX-RN examination. Each question presents a video clip as a component of the question.

## Case Study (Testlet) Questions

The accompanying Evolve site contains case study questions. These question types include a client scenario and several accompanying practice questions that relate to the content of the scenario.

## Audio Review Summaries

The companion Evolve site includes three *Audio Review Summaries* that cover challenging subject areas addressed in the 2019 test plan for the NCLEX-RN examination, including *Pharmacology*, *Acid-Base Balance*, and *Fluids and Electrolytes*.

## Practice Questions

While preparing for the NCLEX-RN examination, it is crucial for students to practice taking test questions. This book contains 945 NCLEX-style multiple-choice and alternate item format questions. The accompanying software includes all questions from the book plus additional Evolve questions for a total of more than 5200 questions.

## Multiple-Choice and Alternate Item Format Questions

Starting with Unit II, each chapter is followed by a practice test. Each practice test contains several questions reflective of the content in the chapter and those presented on the NCLEX-RN examination. These questions provide you with practice in prioritizing, decision-making, critical thinking, and clinical judgment skills. [Chapter 1](#) of this book provides a description of each question type. Sample questions of the Next Generation NCLEX (NGN) are also provided in this chapter.

The answer section for each practice question throughout the chapters and on the Evolve site provides the correct answer, the rationale for the correct and incorrect options, and a specific test-taking strategy that will assist you in answering the question correctly. The specific test-taking strategy is highlighted in bold **blue** type. This highlighting will provide you with guidance and direction for further remediation in the *Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX® Exam*.

The categories identified in each practice question include Level of Cognitive Ability, Client Needs, Integrated Process, the specific nursing Content Area, the Health Problem, and Priority Concepts. Every question on the accompanying Evolve

site is organized by these question codes, so you can customize your study session to be as specific or as generic as you need. Additionally, a link to view normal laboratory reference intervals are provided with each practice question.

## Pharmacology and Medication Calculations Review

Students consistently state that pharmacology is an area with which they need assistance. The 2019 NCLEX-RN test plan continues to incorporate pharmacology in the examination, but only the generic drug names will be included. Therefore, pharmacology chapters have been included for your review and practice. This book includes 13 pharmacology chapters, a medication and intravenous prescriptions calculation chapter, and a pediatric medication administration and calculation chapter. Each of these chapters is followed by a practice test that uses the same question format described earlier. This book contains numerous pharmacology questions. Additionally, more than 950 pharmacology questions can be found on the accompanying Evolve site.

## Next Generation NCLEX (NGN) Questions

The NCSBN is currently piloting research questions for a project known as the “Next Generation NCLEX.” An NCLEX candidate may encounter these questions once they complete their examination, and they will have the option to answer these questions as part of NCSBN’s research on these new item types. The NCSBN is aiming to launch the NGN questions on the examination sometime during the years 2022-2023, and these item types are designed to test the candidate’s ability to make safe and competent clinical judgments. This resource includes 25 NGN item types, and although it is not live on the NCLEX now, practicing these items will assist the current candidate in preparing for the NCLEX examination. The NGN questions are located on the Evolve site.

## How to Use This Book

*Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination* is especially designed to help you with your successful journey to the peak of the Saunders *Pyramid to Success*: becoming a registered nurse! As you begin your journey through this book, you will be introduced to all of the important points regarding the 2019 NCLEX-RN examination, the process of testing, and unique and special tips regarding how to prepare yourself for this very important examination.

You should begin your process through the Saunders *Pyramid to Success* by reading all of Unit I in this book and becoming familiar with the central points regarding the NCLEX-RN examination. Be sure to read [Chapter 3](#), written by a nursing graduate who recently passed the examination, and note what she has to say about the testing experience. [Chapter 4](#) will provide you with the critical testing strategies that will guide you in selecting the correct option or assist you in selecting an answer to a question if you must guess. Keep these strategies in mind as you

proceed through this book. Continue by studying the specific content areas addressed in Units II through XIX. Review the definitions of the *Pyramid Terms* located in each chapter, and the *Pyramid to Success* notes, and the Client Needs and Learning Objectives located in each unit introduction. Read through the chapters and focus on the *Pyramid Points* and *Pyramid Alerts* that identify the areas most likely to be tested on the NCLEX-RN examination. Pay particular attention to the *Priority Nursing Actions* boxes because they provide information about the steps you will take in clinical situations requiring clinical judgment and prioritization.

As you read each chapter, identify your areas of strength and those in need of further review. Highlight these areas and test your abilities by taking all practice tests provided at the end of the chapters. Be sure to review all rationales and test-taking strategies.

After reviewing all chapters in the book, turn to Unit XX, Chapter 70, the Comprehensive Test. Take this examination and then review each question, answer, and rationale. Identify any areas requiring further review; then take the time to review those areas in both the book and the companion Evolve site. In preparation for the NCLEX-RN examination, be sure to take the pretest and generate your study calendar. Follow the calendar for your review because the calendar represents your pretest results and the best study path to follow based on your strong and weak content areas. Also, be sure to access the *Case Studies* and the *Audio Review Summaries* as part of your preparation for the NCLEX-RN examination.

## Climbing the Pyramid to Success

The purpose of this book is to provide a **comprehensive review** of the nursing content you will be tested on during the NCLEX-RN examination. However, *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination* is intended to do more than simply prepare you for the rigors of the NCLEX-RN examination; this book is also meant to serve as a valuable study tool that you can refer to throughout your nursing program, with specific customizable Evolve site selections to help identify and reinforce key content areas and prepare you for your nursing exams.

After using this book for comprehensive content review, your next step in the *Pyramid to Success* is to get additional practice with the **Q&A review** product. *Saunders Q&A Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination* offers more than 6000 unique practice questions in the book and on the companion Evolve site. The questions are focused on the Client Needs and Integrated Processes of the NCLEX-RN test plan, making it easy to access your study area of choice. For on-the-go Q&A review, you can pick up *Saunders Q&A Review Cards for the NCLEX-RN® Examination*.

Your final step on the *Pyramid to Success* is to master the **online review**. *Saunders Online Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination* provides an interactive and individualized platform to get you ready for your NCLEX exam. This online course provides 10 high-level content modules, supplemented with instructional videos, animations, audio, illustrations, case studies, and several subject matter exams. End-of-module practice tests are provided along with several *Crossing the Finish Line* practice tests. In addition, you can assess your progress with a *Pretest, Test Yourself quizzes*, and a *Comprehensive Exam* in a computerized environment that prepares you for the actual NCLEX-RN examination.

At the base of the *Pyramid to Success* are our **test-taking strategies**, which provide

a foundation for understanding and unpacking the complexities of NCLEX-RN examination questions, including alternate item formats. *Saunders Strategies for Test Success: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX® Exam* takes a detailed look at all of the test-taking strategies you will need to know in order to pass any nursing examination, including the NCLEX-RN. Special tips are integrated for nursing students, and there are more than 1200 practice questions included so you can apply the testing strategies. NGN questions are included on the Evolve site.

Good luck with your journey through the *Saunders Pyramid to Success*. We wish you continued success throughout your new career as a registered nurse!

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# Acknowledgments

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## A Few Words From Linda

There are many individuals who in their own ways have contributed to my success in making my professional dreams become a reality. My sincere appreciation and warmest thanks are extended to all of them.

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I also wish to acknowledge all of the nursing faculty who taught in my review courses for the NCLEX-RN examination. Their commitment, dedication, and expertise have certainly assisted nursing students in achieving success with the NCLEX-RN examination. I also want to extend a very special thank you to my niece, Angela, for joining me in preparing and authoring these NCLEX resources. Angela is wonderful to work with. Her tremendous theoretical and clinical knowledge and expertise and her consistent ideas and input certainly added to the excellent quality of this product. She is very dedicated to promoting and ensuring student success. Thank you, Angela!

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## **A Few Words From Angela**

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**UNIT I**  
NCLEX-RN® Exam Preparation

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## CHAPTER 1

# The NCLEX-RN® Examination

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<http://evolve.elsevier.com/Silvestri/comprehensiveRN/>

## The Pyramid to Success

### Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination

#### About This Resource and the NCLEX-RN® Examination

Welcome to the *Pyramid to Success* and *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination*. This resource is specially designed to help you begin your successful journey to the peak of the pyramid, becoming a registered nurse. As you begin your journey, you will be introduced to all of the important points regarding the NCLEX-RN examination and the process of testing, and to unique and special tips regarding how to prepare yourself for this important examination. You will read what a nursing graduate who recently passed the NCLEX-RN examination has to say about the test. Important test-taking strategies are detailed. These details will guide you in selecting the correct option or assist you in making an educated guess if you are not entirely sure about the correct answer. Each unit in this book begins with the Pyramid to Success. The Pyramid to Success addresses specific points related to the NCLEX-RN examination. Client Needs as identified in the test plan framework for the examination are listed, as are learning objectives for the unit. Pyramid Terms are key words that are defined in the glossary at the end of the book and set in color throughout each chapter to direct your attention to significant points for the examination.

This resource provides you with nursing content review, including the content identified in the current NCLEX test plan, and practice questions. Throughout each chapter, you will find Pyramid Point bullets that identify areas most likely to be tested on the NCLEX-RN examination. Read each chapter, and identify your strengths and areas that are in need of further review.

The book contains 945 NCLEX-style questions. The Evolve site accompanying this book contains all of the questions from the book plus additional Evolve questions for a total of more than 5200 practice questions. The types of practice questions include multiple choice; fill-in-the-blank; multiple-response; ordered-response (also known as drag and drop); questions that contain a figure, chart/exhibit, or graphic option item; audio or video item formats; and case studies (testlets). In addition, the new Next Generation NCLEX® (NGN) question types are also provided on the accompanying Evolve site. Examples of question types can be located throughout this chapter.

Test your strengths and abilities by taking all practice tests provided in this book and on the accompanying Evolve site. Be sure to read all rationales and test-taking