

Video 2 of 6: Writing Questions (Facts and Attitudes)

Questionnaire Design



THE WORLD BANK

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Guidelines for Writing “Good” Questions

- Data archives often have questionnaires in them. Those can be a source of inspiration
- Summaries of research results feed into many online guidelines
 - Question Appraisal System (QAS): 26 potential problem categories
 - Lessler & Forsyth’s (1996) scheme consists of numerous problem categories from four stages of response process
 - Graesser et al. (2006) distinguish 12 general problem categories mostly concerned with language issues
 - Implemented in computer program that applies to draft questionnaires
 - QUAID (Graesser and colleagues) automated question critic
 - <http://mnemosyne.csl.psyc.memphis.edu/QUAID/quaidindex.html>

General Tips on Writing “Good” Questions

- Use simple, familiar words
(avoid technical terms, jargon, and slang)
- Use simple syntax
- Avoid words with ambiguous meanings – Aim for wording that...
 - ...all respondents will interpret in same way
 - ...is specific and concrete
- Avoid leading or loaded questions that push respondents toward an answer
- Ask about one thing at a time (avoid double-barreled questions)
- Avoid questions with single or double negations

*based on Krosnick & Presser (2010)

In-video exercise

- Example for a double-barreled questions

for more see https://www.liquisearch.com/double-barreled_question/examples

"How satisfied are you with your pay and job conditions?"

"How often and how much time do you spend on each visit to a hospital?"

How would you fix these questions?



Questions about Facts

10	11	12
<p>In what [STATE]are you currently?</p> <p>USE CODES</p>	<p>Does your household have access to internet at your home?</p> <p>YES..1 NO..2</p>	<p>In the last week, what was the the main source of drinking water for your household ?</p> <p>PLEASE DO NOT READ OPTIONS</p> <p>PIPED WATER INTO DWELLING.....1 PIPED WATER INTO YARD OR PLOT.....2 PUBLIC TAP OR STANDPIPE.....3 BOREHOLE OR TUBEWELL.....4 DUG WELL OR SPRING.....5 RAINWATER COLLECTION.....6 DELIVERED WATER (TANKER TRUCK)....7 PACKAGED WATER (BOTTLE OR SACHET) .8 WATER KIOSK.....9 SURFACE WATER (RIVER, STREAM, DAM, LACK, POND, CANAL).....10 OTHER.....11</p>

High Frequency Mobile Phone Surveys of Households to Assess the Impacts of COVID-19 (Vol. 4) : Questionnaire Template (English). Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/567571588697439581/Questionnaire-Template>

Guidelines for Nonthreatening Questions: Behavior*

1. If question is closed, include all reasonable options
2. Make questions as specific as possible
3. Make it clear who and what is covered and what time period
4. Use aided recall procedures (include recall cues – examples, lists of specific activities, etc.) when forgetting is concern; list should be exhaustive if possible

*adapted from Sudman & Bradburn (1982)

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In the last week, what kind of toilet facility did members of your household use?
FLUSH TOILET (TO PIPED SEWER, SEPTIC TANK OR PIT LATRINE) ...1
PIT LATRINE WITH SLAB.....2
PIT LATRINE WITHOUT SLAB.....3
NO FACILITY/BUSH/FIELD.....4
OTHER.....5

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Guidelines for Attitude Questions*

1. Use response categories or scales
 - Let respondents classify themselves
 - Avoid open-ended items and field-coded items
2. Make sure that attitude objects are clearly specified
 - *“Do you think the government is spending too little, about the right amount, or too much on the COVID-19 response?”*
3. Measure critical aspects of attitude
 - Beliefs vs. feelings vs. behavioral intentions
4. Avoid double-barreled items
 - *“The instructor was fair and rigorous in grading assignments.”*

*adapted from Sudman & Bradburn (1982) and Krosnick & Presser (2010)

Guidelines for Attitude Questions

5. Use balanced items

- Unbalanced: *“Are you in favor of the governments response to COVID-19*
 - Yes = unambiguous
 - No = opposition, has no opinion, does not care, has mixed feelings
- Explicit balance:
 - Favor or oppose
 - Allow or not allow
 - Permit or not permit
- Balance arguments: *“Some people think ... other people think ... What do you think?”*

Guidelines for Attitude *Questions*

6. Use bipolar scales with alternative positions as end points rather than unipolar agreement scale
7. Specify all relevant alternatives
 - Presence or absence of an explicitly stated alternative can have dramatic impact on answers
 - Middle answers, don't know, etc.
 - If mentioned, *respondents* cooperate by picking alternatives provided
 - Include unless there's compelling reason not to

Guidelines for Attitude Questions

8. When measuring attitudes over time, use the same questions in each wave of data collection
9. Pretest new attitude questions to determine how they're interpreted
10. Put general item before specific items on same issue – Problem: context effects
 - *“Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage? Would you say that your marriage is very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?”*
 - *“Taken all together, how would you say things are these days? Would you say ...?”*

Guidelines for Attitude Questions

11. When asking questions with differing levels of popularity, ask least popular first

- It is easier for a respondents to admit their preference for an unpopular item if they already declined an even more unpopular position.
- “...be able to obtain a legal abortion if she’s married and doesn’t want any more children?”
- “...be able to obtain a legal abortion if there is strong chance of a serious birth defect?”

12. Avoid agree-disagree format

- Response task can be complex, e.g. to disagree with a negative statement
- Acquiescence
- Object must be unambiguously on one end of continuum
 - What does it mean to disagree with “*I am sometimes depressed*”?

Guidelines for Response Scales: Attitude Items*

1. Use scales that are easy to remember when read out loud
 - Label every point on a five-point scale
 - Use unfolding if necessary (below or above, if above)
2. Watch out for primacy and recency effects
 - Satisficing: selecting the first acceptable option
 - Memory: selecting late options when the options are read out loud
3. Avoid check-all-that-apply items
 - Get answer for each item (e.g., yes/no)

*adapted from Sudman & Bradburn (1982) and Krosnick & Presser (2010)

END OF VIDEO 2