

## • Appendix •

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### Checklist for Quality Question Design

This checklist was created as a companion to *Designing Quality Survey Questions* and will be most helpful to survey researchers who have read the text. The purpose of this checklist is to assist the survey researcher in designing an effective survey instrument that will elicit a rich, robust, and useful dataset for a respondent-centered survey aligned with the researcher's information needs. This checklist serves as a reflective self-assessment that focuses on the design of survey questions themselves and will not thoroughly inform *all* aspects of survey design. It is meant to be particularly helpful for researchers who are drafting questions from scratch, though it could also be applied to assist the review and finalization of questions adapted from existing tools.

This tool will be of greatest use if the following has already been determined:

- That a survey is indeed the appropriate tool to meet data collection needs
- The research or evaluation questions and information needs
- The population or sample of desired respondents
- How the survey will be administered: online, paper, by phone, in person, or some combination of these

We recommend going through the checklist for *each* individual survey question. Use the space to the right of each item to jot down notes about why you are checking yes or no and/or any edits needed. Note that not every item will apply to every question; use N/A as needed.

Checklist Item	Yes	No	N/A	Notes
Question type is appropriate:				
Question type will result in the type of data needed given research question(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Researcher is prepared to analyze results from this type of question	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question design is centered around respondents:				
Question asks for information respondent is likely to know, or respondent will have access to the information needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question focuses on respondent and respondent experiences (and not what respondent thinks about others)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Researcher can anticipate how a respondent might answer the question	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question is focused:				
Question relates closely and clearly to one (or more) research question(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question is as specific and narrowly focused as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question asks about only one concept (i.e., is not double-barreled)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question is concise, using as few words as possible to convey meaning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question phrasing is consistent with language used in other places in the survey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question wording supports respondent understanding:				
Question is written in semantically valid, plain, straightforward language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Checklist Item	Yes	No	N/A	Notes
Question is syntactically correct, employing correct grammar and usage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question wording reflects the language and culture of respondents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question is specific enough for respondents to know exactly what information is being requested	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question requires as little inference or mental math as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question is phrased using active voice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question is phrased as neutrally as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Instructions and contextual cues are included as needed:				
Question itself includes any necessary instructions for answering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Explanations are included for any terms that might require clarification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
For an open-ended question, question instructions note how long or detailed answers should be	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reference periods correspond to the information needed (e.g., shorter time periods for more common occurrences)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reference periods are clear and specific (e.g., <i>since last Tuesday</i> as opposed to <i>in the last week</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Checklist Item	Yes	No	N/A	Notes
If question is sensitive (e.g., a demographic question), question instructions include information about why the question is being asked and/or how responses will be used/useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Closed-ended questions feature appropriate instructions and response options:				
Question instructions make it clear how to answer (e.g., <i>check all that apply</i> , <i>select the top three</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Response options are exhaustive; that is, they fully cover the range of expected responses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Response options are mutually exclusive; that is, they do not overlap	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Response options are labeled (either numerically, pictorially, verbally, or a combination) where appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Closed-ended scale questions feature appropriate response options:				
Response options are aligned with wording of question stem (i.e., direct labeling or item-specific response options are used)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bipolar response options are balanced with the same number of positive and negative options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5–7 options are used for scaled responses (unless desired level of precision requires fewer or more options)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Don't know</i> , <i>neutral</i> , <i>N/A</i> , or similar response options are used only as needed and have a clear purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Checklist Item	Yes	No	N/A	Notes
A midpoint is used when a neutral option is needed or when forcing respondents to "choose a side" may result in measurement error	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The order of scaled response options is consistent (e.g., left to right, least to greatest) with other questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Numeric scales are ordered least to greatest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Response options start with least desirable and move to most desirable (to mitigate possible primacy effect)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Demographic questions reflect deep understanding of and respect for respondents:				
Question uses appropriate terminology for the specific respondent population (check with members of respondent population whenever possible)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Response options reflect all desired respondents (i.e., respondents can see themselves in the options) and avoid use of the term <i>other</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question includes a <i>prefer not to answer</i> or <i>prefer to describe</i> response option when question topic is sensitive or potentially threatening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Response options reflect a balance of the need for accuracy, granularity, and respondent sensitivity (e.g., a question about age asks for year of birth or offers a series of age ranges depending on context)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	