

## How to write a survey

**Objective:** to identify how to design a good survey.



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Imagine that this survey was sent to students in another school.

What is your favourite food?

- A - Soup
- B - Spinach
- C - Fish
- D - Carrots



What might have been done better?

*The survey asked an open question then offered limited choices. What if students don't like any of those foods?*

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Why would it have been better to write the question like this?

What is your favourite food? \_\_\_\_\_

*It allows an open answer - students have the chance to write any kind of food.*

Other examples:

Which politician do you most respect? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your favourite charity? \_\_\_\_\_

What recent news story has concerned you the most?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Imagine that you want to find out about students' recycling habits.

The aim is to find out if students recycle any of these things:

- cans
- glass bottles
- plastic bottles
- paper.



What question could you ask to find out this information?

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Imagine that you asked this question:

What do you recycle? \_\_\_\_\_

You have received the following responses:

1 student said 'glass, paper, metal and food waste'.

7 students said 'glass bottles and newspapers'.

3 students said 'paper and glass'.

2 students said 'nothing'.

Does this information tell you what you wanted to know?

What could you have asked instead?

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Would it have been better to write the question like this?

Which of the following do you recycle? Please tick.

A - Cans

B - Glass bottles

C - Plastic bottles

D - Paper

E - Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_



What is better about this method?

*You wanted to know about specific things and the question asks about those things, but it also gives people the chance to choose something different.*

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## You are now going to design a survey.

Remember to be really clear about what information you want.

Otherwise you might end up with information that is not at all useful!

You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- **Who** am I going to ask?
- **What** exactly do I want to know?
- **Why** do I want this information?
- **When, where** and **how** will I ask the questions?

(Will I send the survey? Will I interview people face-to-face ...?)



## Designing your survey

Design a survey which contains at least five questions.

Choose one of the following themes:

- smoking and drugs
- recycling
- being British
- public transport.



You might like to start your questions with a phrase such as:

- **What is your favourite ...**
- **How often do you ...**
- **Who do you think is the best ...**
- **Where is your nearest ...**
- **What do you think is the most important ...**

## Plenary

Check for teething problems now, before you actually conduct your survey.

Try it out on another group. What improvements do they suggest?

Do your questions gather all of the information that you need?