

6 Tips for developing questions

On the right we have included 6 tips for writing questions to use in impact measurement tools such as questionnaires or focus group guides.

We go into more detail on the tips to the right, including exceptions when these tips might not apply, in our Impact measurement and management (IMM): Builder eLearning course:

[Click here to view the course](#)

1 Use clear and precise language

Use clear and precise language, avoiding jargon and negatives and double negatives. Include a time-frame (where relevant) and ask yourself whether the question could be easily misinterpreted?

✗ *How important is it that a candidate shares your values*

✓ *How important is it that a **political** candidate shares your **religious** values*



4 Use wording appropriate for your respondents

Use wording that is appropriate for your respondents, for example, consider the educational level, age, language and culture of the respondents. Would the question cause offence? Would it be fully understood?

When measuring a concept such as 'wellbeing'. It may not be advisable to use standardised questions relating to satisfaction or anxiety with younger children.



2 Avoid leading questions

Avoid 'leading' questions, which direct the respondent towards a particular response:



✗ *How short was Napoleon?*

✓ *How would you describe Napoleon's height?*

A closed question could also be leading if it uses an unbalanced response scale with too many positive or negative options:

- Satisfied- Unsatisfied- Very unsatisfied- Extremely unsatisfied

5 Keep wording neutral, avoiding any over-emotive language

Next, it is best to keep wording as neutral as possible and not include adjectives that introduce emotion into the question.

✗ *Are you **angry** about the standard of education in our local schools?*

✗ *Do you believe that we should **immediately** withdraw troops from the **failed** war in Iraq?*



3 Only measure one thing

In most situations a question should be specific and only measure one concept so there is clarity on what responses relate to.



✗ *How satisfied were you overall with the facilities and teaching in our programme? (closed question with 5 point satisfaction scale)*

6 Don't ask for information that would take too much time for the participant to recall

Don't ask for information that would take too much time for the participant to recall as you may get an inaccurate answer, or no response at all.

✗ *Over the past 30 days, how many hours have you spent watching TV?*



✓ *On average how many hours a day do you spend watching TV?*