

How to design a survey

Step 1: WHAT'S THE POINT? Decide what you want to ask

Your survey could ask which chocolate bars individual pupils and teachers buy every week and how much they spend. This information can then be used to see how much the whole school spends on chocolate in a year.

Here are some examples of questions to help you:

Ask everyone the first two questions – well the answer to the first one should be obvious if you are face-to-face and it might be advisable to avoid asking teachers the second question! You could just indicate that they are adult, perhaps.

Question

Answer

1. Are you a boy or a girl?	
2. How old are you?	
3. Do you eat chocolate? (If No, don't ask any more questions)	
3b. If yes, how many bars do you usually eat in a week?	
4. How much does each bar cost?	
5. Who pays for your chocolate?	
6. Which brands of chocolate do you usually eat?	
7. Which companies/firms make the chocolate you eat?	
8. Chocolate is made from cocoa. Which continents does cocoa come from?	
9. Have you heard of the chocolate bar Dubble?	
10. Do you know what's special about it?	

Step 2: STEER A CLEAR COURSE! Designing a survey or questionnaire

You will need to think carefully about how you word your questions to make sure they are easily understood. You will also need to consider if each question should be open or closed. Closed questions are those where the person answering (known as *the respondent*) is given options to choose from. For example:

Which brands of chocolate do you usually eat?

Bounty

Flake

Dubble

Aero

Yorkie

None of the above

Open questions allow the person answering freedom to give any answer. So, for example, they could say Crunchie or Dairy Milk which are not on your list.

Closed questions are easier to tally up but sometimes cannot include all the possible answers. They might be left having to tick "None of the above" and so you would not find out what they usually eat.

Finally, the survey should have a clear and logical order.

Step 3: PUT IT TO THE TEST! Testing the questionnaire

Before you use your survey on large groups, you should test it with a small group. This will identify any problems and help you to make any changes to questions.

Step 4: WHO, HOW, WHERE, WHEN? Carrying out the survey

You will need to select whom you are going to ask (*your sample*). It is said that a survey is only as good as its sample. You will need to consider issues such as:

- 1) Age range.
- 2) Ratio of girls to boys.
- 3) How respondents will complete it - will they fill in a form or will it be done as an interview?
- 4) Where and when will it be done - with teachers in class, or at break times?
- 5) Sample size - the more the better, particularly if looking at percentages.

Step 5: TALLY-HO! Collating and presenting information

Having collected the completed survey forms the information must be rearranged in such a way as to make it easy to understand at a glance. Tallying is the most straightforward method for initial number crunching!

There are many different ways in which information can be presented, including entering it onto simple spreadsheets and constructing graphs and diagrams using ICT.

You should decide the most appropriate way to present the information.

Stage 6: OPEN AND SHUT CASE? Analysing and drawing conclusions from the information

The final part of the process is very important. You should refer back to Step 1 and consider what evidence from the survey results is useful. You will need to present the conclusions so that they provide meaningful and persuasive information.

The main purpose of the survey is to show how much buying power young people have, but your information may reveal big differences in chocolate consumption between boys and girls and across the age groups.