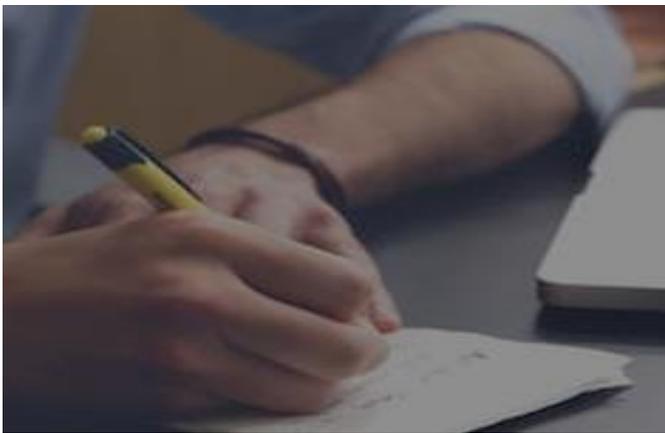


# 8 simple tips to help you write questions that respondents will understand



## Introduction

The wording of questions matters and can have a significant impact on how respondents interpret the question. Therefore, it is important to use questions that have been validated or tested to ensure respondents correctly interpret what the question is asking.

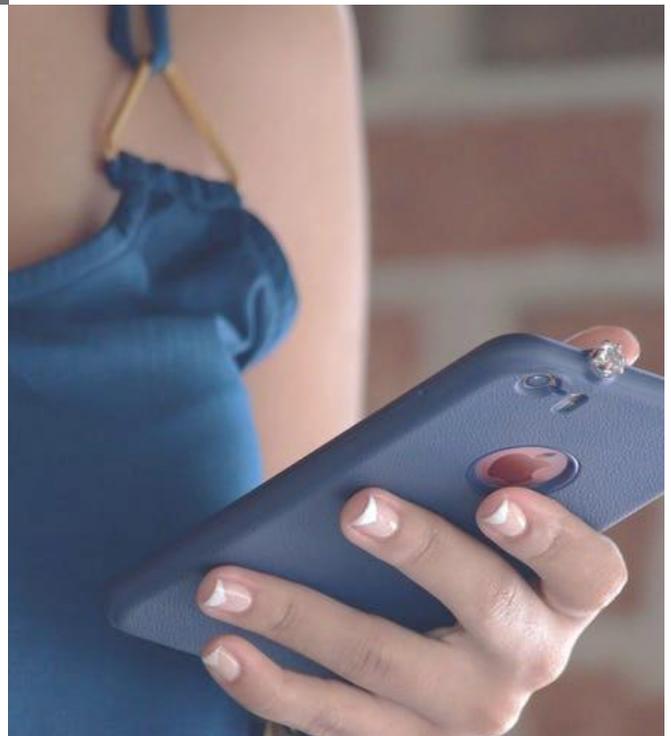
Here are 8 simple tips that will help you write survey questions your respondents will be less likely to be confused and frustrated.

### 1 Ensure your questions are specific

How would you rate your general practice?  
This is very unclear what the question is asking. Is it about accessing your GP services, ease of making appointments, waiting times? Be specific in what you are asking. How would you rate the time you have to wait for an appointment to see a doctor?

### 2 Avoid loaded and leading questions

Should smoking in cars be prohibited?  
Biased or strong wording can make a lot of difference on how informants respond to a question. Do you agree or disagree that smoking in cars should be stopped?



### 3 Confusing or unfamiliar words

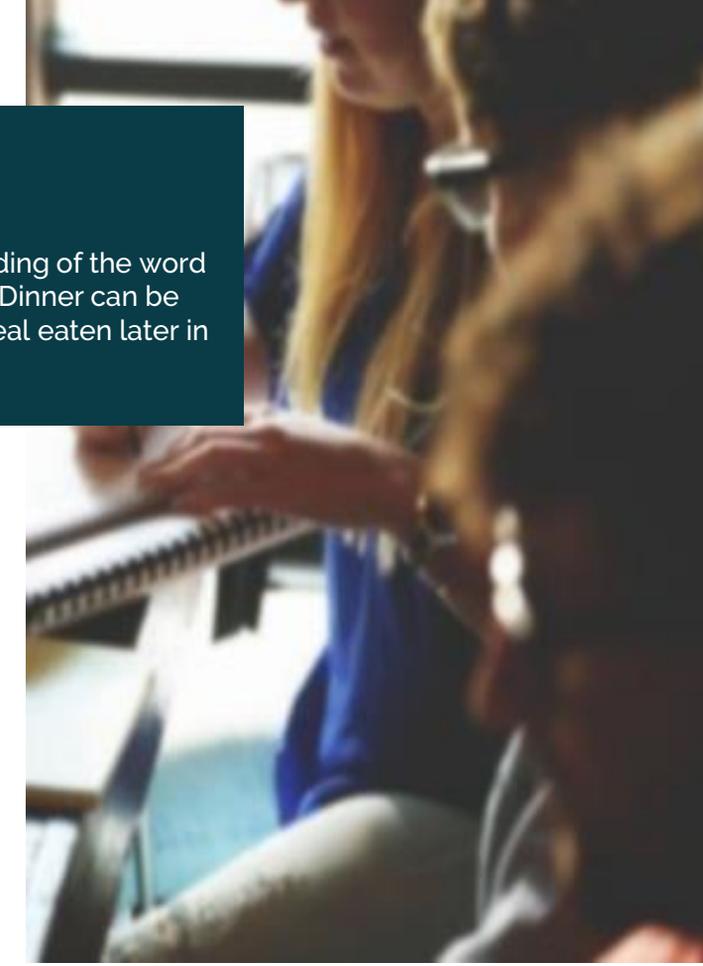
At what time do you normally eat dinner? Understanding of the word dinner can vary across different parts of the country. Dinner can be understood as either the meal at lunchtime or the meal eaten later in the evening.

### 4 Avoid double-barreled questions

How would you rate the friendliness of your doctor and practice nurse? The question should be split into two.

### 5 Avoid long questions

Questions should not have more than around 20 words. A useful rule of thumb is that words with fewer syllables and sentences with fewer words are simpler to read.



### 6 Avoid emotionally charged words

Words are cues and triggers so avoid using emotional words such as worthwhile, banned reduced etc.

### 7 Ensure your response options are exhaustive

Ensure you are providing all the response options to answer the question correctly? If not you will need to do a pre-test using the "Other" category to identify those options which need to be included.

### 8 Ensure response options are mutually exclusive

Response options should not overlap making the choice difficult for the respondent e.g. Age: 15-20, 21-26, 27-32.



# About Health Outcomes Insights

Health Outcomes Insights is an independent research consultancy serving academia, life science researchers, healthcare agencies and the pharmaceutical industry, get targeted answers to patient behaviour, experience and health outcomes across a range of conditions and diseases – with particular expertise in diabetes.

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