

EVALUATION TIP 5: WRITING BETTER SURVEY QUESTIONS

Good questions are needed for an effective survey. Poorly worded questions can confuse people and cause them to provide inaccurate information that will not be useful.

Recognizing Bad Questions

Following are examples of poorly-written questions. Read each one and think about why it is not a good question. After each question, the problem with it is explained and a better way to ask that question is suggested.

1. Did you think this class was informative and enjoyable? Yes Somewhat No

Question 1: This is an example of a double-barreled question, where two items (*informative* AND *enjoyable*) are combined in one question. The trainee cannot, for example, respond “Yes” to informative and “No” to enjoyable.

Question 1 Improved:

- | | | | |
|---|-----|----------|----|
| 1.1 Did you think this class was informative? | Yes | Somewhat | No |
| 1.2 Did you think this class was enjoyable? | Yes | Somewhat | No |

2. Did this class meet Part 46 annual refresher requirements? Yes No

Question 2: This question assumes everyone knows Part 46 requirements. Anyone who did not know these requirements would not be able to respond accurately.

Question 2 Improved:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 2.1 Do you know what Part 46 requires for annual refresher training? | Yes | No |
| 2.2 If you answered “Yes” above, do you think this class met those requirements? | Yes | No |

3. Please give the following items a rating from 4 (most positive) to 1 (most negative).

	Positive		Negative	
The instructor	4	3	2	1
The room	4	3	2	1
The course materials	4	3	2	1

Question 3: This question does not give enough information. “Positive” and “Negative” are only two options – different levels of each do not exist. The information that this question is trying to obtain may be more easily and accurately obtained by creating open-ended questions.

Question 3 Improved:

- 3.1 List one thing you liked about the instructor and one thing that could be improved.

Liked: _____ Improvement: _____

- 3.2 List one thing you liked about the room and one thing that could be improved.

Liked: _____ Improvement: _____

- 3.3 List one thing you liked about the course materials and one thing that could be improved.

Liked: _____ Improvement: _____



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4. Where do you work?

- A. a mining company
- B. a federal agency
- C. a school
- D. a contractor company

Question 4: This is an example of missing response options. If you worked somewhere other than the places listed or at more than one place, you would not be able to respond accurately.

Question 4 Improved:

4. Where do you work? (Circle all that apply.)

- A. a mining company
- B. a federal agency
- C. a contractor company
- D. Other (please specify): _____

5. When did you last drive over the speed limit on company property?

- A. within the last week
- B. more than a week, but less than a month ago
- C. more than one month ago

Question 5: Choosing any of the options given for this question forces the person answering to admit to doing something wrong. If you wish to learn about negative behaviors, you must word your questions so they do not accuse the person of misconduct.

Question 5 Improved:

5. It has been suggested that employees driving over the speed limit on company property is a safety problem that should be addressed. When, if ever, was the last time you noticed others or yourself driving over the speed limit on company property?

- A. within the last week
- B. more than a week, but less than a month ago
- C. more than one month ago
- D. never

6. Should this important safety program be funded again next year? Yes No

Question 6: This is a leading question which encourages a positive response. The word “important” may influence people to respond positively regardless of whether or not they actually agree with funding the program

Question 6 Improved:

6. Do you think this safety program should be funded again next year? Yes No

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