

## Survey Question Quality Checklist

The question is:

- Clear
- Easy to answer
- Specific
- Concise
- Relevant
- Free of sensitive information
- Asked in a positive way
- A question, not a statement

The question:

- Avoids a double negative
- Uses a reading level that is appropriate for the respondents
- Minimizes bias
- Avoids culturally insensitive or offensive language
- Avoids assumptions about the respondents
- Avoids soliciting a socially desirable answer

A definition is:

- Included
- Clear
- Unnecessary

Directions are:

- Included
- Clear
- Unnecessary

Response scale:

- There are four to six response categories
- All response options are labeled
- All possible response options are included, or there is an “Other” category
- The scale is ordered in the same direction as all others on the survey (either negative to positive or positive to negative).

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For questions where the respondent is expected to select a single answer:

- There is only one correct answer

For “strongly agree to strongly disagree” scales (survey respondents have a tendency to agree with statements when given this type of scale, so alternatives should be considered when appropriate):

- This is a better alternative than other scales (e.g., “not very interested to very interested,” “not very important to very important,” “never to very often,” “none to a lot,” and “very dissimilar to very similar”)

For questions that use a “Neutral” category:

- A “Neutral” category is reasonable
- A “Neutral” category makes sense
- “Neutral” is more appropriate than “Not applicable”
- “Neutral” is more appropriate than “Don’t know the right one”
- “Neutral” is in the middle

For questions that use a “Not applicable” or “Don’t know” category:

- The category is at the beginning or end, not in the middle

## References

- Artino, A. R., Jr., Gehlbach, H., & Durning, S. J. (2011). AM Last Page: Avoiding five common pitfalls of survey design. *Academic Medicine*, 86(10), p. 1327. Retrieved March 25, 2019, from [https://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/fulltext/2011/10000/AM\\_Last\\_Page\\_Avoiding\\_Five\\_Common\\_Pitfalls\\_of.38.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/fulltext/2011/10000/AM_Last_Page_Avoiding_Five_Common_Pitfalls_of.38.aspx)
- Harlacher, J. (2016). *An educator’s guide to questionnaire development* (REL 2016-108). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Central. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED562653>
- Walston, J., Redford, J., & Bhatt, M. P. (2017). *Workshop on survey methods in education research: Facilitator’s guide and resources* (REL 2017-214). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED573681>