



## Designing questions

When designing questions for a questionnaire it is important to be very clear about what you are asking.

Questions with negatives in can be quite confusing: for example, 'Are you against a ban on foxhunting?' People often leave questions that they don't understand.

It is also best to avoid asking more than one thing in a question as people may only answer one part of it. For example, do you think there are enough parks in the area and should dogs be kept on a lead in the parks? If someone answers yes, you will not know which part of the question they are answering or whether they are answering both parts.

Questionnaires must also be fair so you need to avoid asking leading questions such as, 'Do you agree that cigarettes are bad for you?'

### Tick box questions

Questions tend to require a very precise brief answer, which is why tick boxes are used quite a lot rather than open ended questions such as, 'What improvements need to be made in the town?'

Tick box questions may involve ticking a yes or no box, or choosing one or more boxes to tick from a selection of answers, for example:

better lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>
more rubbish collections	<input type="checkbox"/>
more car parking facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
sports centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
more restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/>

With the tick boxes above you could ask them to 'Tick the improvement that you think the town needs most', or 'Tick all that apply'. They could also be asked to rank them in order of importance.

Where you only want one box ticked it is important to make sure that it is simple to choose only one answer. For example, if you ask, 'How do you travel to work?' and ask them to choose between bus, train, car or walk they would find it difficult if they use more than one of these.

Sometimes you have to answer using a scale, for example:

'How good is the local transport system? Give your answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is excellent and 5 is very poor.'