



Table D.4a Basic question categories

Question	Example	Remark/function
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'What do you think about...' • 'Could you tell me a little bit about...' • <i>Reflective/hypothetical:</i> 'If you were in the following position, what would you do...' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invites more elaborate answers and perhaps more relevant (spontaneous) information. • Is more difficult to control. • Use a list of 'priority' questions that <i>must</i> be addressed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Do you consider this measure appropriate for the aims included in the long-term planning?' • 'Do you agree with this contract?' • <i>Multiple-choice question:</i> 'Do you prefer (a), (b) or (c)?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reflective or hypothetical question guides the interviewee's answer, because it specifies the topic. • You could also use <i>comparisons</i> to achieve the same effect. • Gives you maximum control over the interview, but also limited flexibility. • Requires considerable knowledge in order to be effective, and can only establish simple 'facts'. • Can lead to simple 'yes' 'no' answers that represent more the interpretation framework of the interviewer than of the respondent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suggestive/leading/rhetorical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Don't you also think that...' • 'Wouldn't you agree that...' • 'I think this is morally wrong. What do you think?' • I expect that you are well informed 'about this topic'. 	<p>Avoid asking questions in which the answer is implicit in the question ('leading') or in which your opinion is included ('suggestive'). You manipulate your respondent more openly than desired. This interview style could have serious effects on the reliability of the answers you get. It may also anger the interviewee.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Socratic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Why is this...' • <and if you get an answer you continue> ...why ...why? 	<p>Very effective for getting to the causes of a particular phenomena or to the core of a person's opinions. Continue asking the 'why question' until you see that the respondent becomes irritated.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confrontational/interrogative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions asked in rapid sequence • Questions asked in an aggressive manner • 'Are you withholding information?' 	<p>This style could lead to information that otherwise would not be revealed by the respondent. But it could easily become counter-effective if the interviewee becomes annoyed with interviewer/interrogator during or after the interview.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Do you know that...' • 'Are you aware that...' 	<p>Used in action research. The question is intended to introduce your respondent to new ideas and new insights. The questioning itself is supposed to lead to action, but is not necessarily 'leading'. Can be very manipulative (see category 3).</p>