



## checklist

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- Non-standardised interviews are valuable as strategies for discovery. They enable researchers to become familiar with the modes of expression and ideas used by a population of respondents.
  - Interviews can be used to document the variety of opinions concerning a topic or to establish the relevant dimensions of attitudes.
  - When conducting interviews, be sure that your line of questioning is as open-ended as possible, in order to gain spontaneous information rather than rehearsed positions.
  - Also take care that your questioning techniques encourage respondents to communicate underlying attitudes, beliefs and values, rather than glib or easy answers.
  - Interviews can generate biased data if carried out badly. Specifically, misdirected probing and prompting, ignoring the effects of interviewer characteristics and behaviour, neglecting the cultural context in which the researcher is located and problems with question wording can all contribute to this.
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## project

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In this project exercise, you will pair with a partner for an interview. Each acts as interviewer and respondent in turn. The exercise takes about an hour and its broad subject is school. Begin by thinking over your school experiences and choose something about school that would make a good interview topic. It could be relations with teachers, the problem of bullying or many other things.

Since you will only be interviewing for 10 minutes, you just need to prepare for the beginning stage of the interview. Write down several questions addressing the research issue and a standard 'project explanation' – a general statement of the research issue that you can give to your respondent to get the interview going.

- Take 10 minutes to design your questions.
  - Now choose who will be the interviewer first. Do your interview in 10 minutes. There is no need to take notes on the respondent's replies.
  - The next stage is debriefing. The interviewer should write down the skills they managed well and those needing work. Discuss this with your respondent. Debriefing should take 5 minutes.
  - Now swap roles and do another 10-minute interview and another 5-minute debriefing.
  - When you have finished, discuss with your partner your experience of interviewing and the accuracy of your debriefing notes. Allow 15 minutes for this.
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