



checklist

When coding quantitative data:

- be sure to follow some basic rules: codes must be mutually exclusive so that any particular response must fit into only one category; codes must also be exhaustive so that all possible coding options are allowed for in your scheme; and finally, codes must be applied consistently throughout
- recall that when selecting categories for closed questions, it is a good idea to be consistent with the codes that have been used in other established surveys.

When coding qualitative data:

- use filing cards to note down each response from the questionnaire or each significant feature or quote from the interview/fieldnote; use a new filing card for each new response or concept
 - use 'brainstorming' sessions to generate a list of multiple plausible accounts of the meaning of a qualitative response; these will help to form possible codes which are then compared to other fieldnotes in the set
 - some codes will be discarded because they do not resonate with the other data, so don't be worried if you initially produce codes which seem relevant but end up being less so, having looked at all types of responses
 - several codes are likely to end up being applicable to the fieldnote shown; for each code, an attempt should be made to 'define' it by writing it up in more formal, abstract terms.
-



project

You have been asked to investigate people's beliefs in the paranormal through administering a questionnaire in the street to the general public. From such a study, you can begin to investigate people's understanding of scientific knowledge.

Decide whether you are going to administer a survey questionnaire or carry out a structured interview. Design your interview schedule or your interviewer-administered questionnaire to include the following questions. Try to pre-code the questions where possible and mark your questionnaire with response codes and column numbers in order to simplify data entry:

- 1 What kinds of things come to mind when you think of the paranormal?
This is an open question to which people may offer more than one answer. Allow several lines on the questionnaire for the answers.
- 2 Do you think that any of the following are true:
 - (a) It is possible to make someone turn round just by looking at them.
 - (b) Prayers can sometimes be answered.
 - (c) It is possible to know what someone else is thinking or feeling, even if they are hundreds of miles away and out of touch by ordinary means.
 - (d) Some houses are haunted.
 - (e) The Earth has been visited by beings from outer space.

- (f) Dreams can sometimes foretell the future.
- (g) Some people can remember past lives (i.e. other incarnations they may have lived).
- (h) It is possible to get messages from the dead.

You should expect people to respond with either a positive or negative answer, although it is likely that there will also need to be a 'Don't know' category.

3 Are you a religious person?

Decide whether to use a yes/no answer or an ordinal scale, with responses ranging from very religious to not at all religious.

4 Age

Decide whether to use age ranges or to ask people their actual age.

5 Sex

6 Social class

7 Ethnic group

After designing your questionnaire, select a small sample to interview and administer it to them. Create a code book and then code the open question. Finally, create the data file.
