* Sampling techniques in qualitative research are intentional, as opposed to random.
* This type of sampling is known as purposeful sampling.
* There are several specific types of purposeful sampling:
	+ In maximum variation sampling, the researcher selects cases that differ on an important characteristic.
	+ Extreme case sampling focuses on the sampling of an outlying case.
	+ Typical sampling involves the selection of a person or site that is typical to outsiders.
	+ Theory or concept sampling helps the researcher generate or discover a new theory or concept.
	+ In homogeneous sampling, sites or individuals are selected because they possess a similar trait.
	+ Critical sampling focuses on individuals or sites that represent in dramatic terms the phenomenon studied.
	+ Opportunistic sampling allows the researcher to sample for new and different information as questions emerge in the study.
	+ Snowball sampling relies on participants to recommend other potential participants for the study.
	+ Confirming or disconfirming sampling allows the researcher to seek additional data to confirm or disconfirm preliminary findings.
* Qualitative research sample sizes are typically very small, although they may range from a single individual or site to as many as 30 or 40.
	+ It is the researcher’s responsibility to strike a balance between the amount of data collected and the depth of data sought.
* There are numerous ways to collect qualitative research data.
* Observations involve carefully watching and systematically recording what you see and hear in a setting.
* Observations may be structured, unstructured, or semistructured.
* Researchers may assume several roles along the participant–observer continuum.
	+ When the researcher is in an *observer*role, participants may not even know they are being observed.
	+ An *observer as participant*is primarily an observer, but has some interaction in the setting.
	+ A *participant as observer*acts as an observer, but also interacts more formally with participants.
	+ A *full participant*is a researcher who is also a fully functioning member of the community.
* Observations are recorded in the form of field notes.
* When observing and taking field notes, it is good practice to include observer’s comments, which are preliminary interpretations of observational data.
* Interviews are formal conversations between the researcher and participants in the study.
* Interviews may be conducted individually or in groups, known as focus groups.
* Before interviewing participants, it is best to prepare an interview guide to be closely followed during data collection.
* Interviews may be structured, semistructured, or open-ended.
* Journals—including student journals, teacher journals, and class journals—can also be used to collect qualitative data at the research site.
* Validity of research data deals with the extent to which the data collected accurately measure what the researcher intended to measure.
* When establishing the validity of qualitative data, researchers are concerned with the data’s trustworthiness.
* Trustworthiness is established by examining four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.
* Additional criteria that can be used to establish the validity of qualitative research include descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, evaluative validity, and generalizability.
* Triangulation is a process of using multiple methods, data collection strategies, data sources, and sometimes multiple researchers to enhance validity.
* Persistent and prolonged participation in the study site also enhances the validity of the research.
* Enlisting other professionals to help review and critique your data collection and analysis to enhance the study’s validity is known as peer debriefing.
* Having an outsider review the final report is called an external audit, and can also enhance validity.
* Member checking is a process of asking participants to review the accuracy of the research report.
* Reflexivity—the process of documenting and evaluating your interpretations, assumptions, and biases—also aids in establishing validity.
* Although there is not a single method for analyzing qualitative data, the general approach is a process of inductive analysis.
* Inductive analysis focuses on three main steps: organization of the data, description of coded themes, and interpretation of those themes.
* Numerous software programs are available to assist the researcher in organizing and coding data.
* Qualitative data analysis is complex and time-consuming. Multiple interpretations are a distinct possibility.