



Different Ways to Collect Information for Surveys

KS3 Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

What Is a Survey?

A **survey** is a way of collecting information from people to find out what they think, feel, or do. Surveys help scientists, businesses, and schools understand patterns and make decisions. But how do you actually gather all that information? There are lots of different ways!

Face-to-Face Interviews

One of the oldest methods is talking directly to people. An **interviewer** asks questions and writes down the answers. This works really well because you can see if someone is confused and explain things more clearly. You can also ask follow-up questions to dig deeper into their answers.

Think of it like having a chat with a friend where you ask them questions and listen carefully to what they say.

Telephone Surveys

Instead of meeting in person, surveyors can call people on their phones. This is faster and cheaper than travelling around. However, some people don't like answering calls from strangers, so response rates can be lower.

Online Questionnaires

Online surveys are becoming super popular. People fill out forms on the internet using websites or apps. This method is quick, cheap, and can reach thousands of people across the world at once. The downside? Not everyone has internet access, and some people ignore survey emails.

Think of it like posting a question in a group chat and waiting for everyone to reply with their answers.

Paper Questionnaires

Sometimes surveys are printed on **paper** and handed out in person or through the post. This is good for reaching older people or communities without reliable internet. However, collecting and reading all those papers takes a long time.

Focus Groups

A **focus group** brings together a small number of people (usually **6-12**) to discuss a topic in detail. A moderator asks questions and encourages conversation. This method gives rich, detailed information but involves fewer people than other methods.

Think of it like getting your friends together to have a debate about what flavour ice cream the school should sell at lunch.

Street Surveys

Surveyors sometimes stand in busy places like shopping centres and ask people quick questions. This reaches a mix of people but takes time, and many people are too busy to stop and chat.

Choosing the Right Method

Different surveys need different methods. If you want lots of responses quickly and cheaply, **online** works best. If you need deep, detailed answers, **interviews** or **focus groups** are better. The best surveys often use a mix of methods to get the fullest picture possible.