

# Quick Tips for Good Survey Design

These tips are from "Smart Survey Design" by SurveyMonkey. Refer to the full guide for more detailed help with survey design: [www.umaine.edu/eng317/docs](http://www.umaine.edu/eng317/docs).

---

⇒ Questions need to be **relevant** and **accurate**.

⇒ A survey needs to be **relevant** to its participants. The participants have the information and experience to respond to the survey.

**Example:** Surveying the general UMaine student population about their experiences in sororities is only relevant to some students. Surveying four sororities about their experiences is relevant to all survey participants.

⇒ A survey needs to generate **accurate** responses. The participants need to understand the question and be able to answer the question.

**Example of inaccurate question:**

Do you think having children in your 20s would impact your career?

YES     NO

Think about what a "YES" answer might mean: Yes, having children in my 20s would destroy my chances of a career as a surgeon. Yes, having children in my 20s would improve my career because I study child development and I would learn so much early in my career how children learn.

Using an ambiguous question makes it impossible to write an accurate report.

⇒ For this survey, **write only 5 or 6 questions**. More than that will generate more data than you have time to assess.

⇒ Pilot test your survey questions during class or with friends to make sure the questions cannot be read more than one way. Do not count your pilot test surveys in your report.

⇒ Write **brief questions**.

⇒ Be **objective**.

- Avoid leading questions.
- Avoid loaded questions.
- Avoid built in assumptions.

⇒ Avoid **open-ended** questions for this survey. Open-ended questions are difficult to "count."

⇒ SurveyMonkey is an excellent tool to use for this project. [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com).

- When using an online survey tool, make sure survey takers can skip questions. Do not have required questions.

⇒ Always include an Informed Consent statement at the top (beginning) of your survey.