

Name of Method	Structured Interviews
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Brief Outline of Method
<p>In its simplest form, a structured interview involves one person asking another person a list of predetermined questions about a carefully-selected topic.</p> <p>The person asking the questions (“the interviewer”) is allowed to explain things the interviewee (or “respondent” - the person responding to the questions) does not understand or finds confusing.</p>

This method has the following Strengths / Uses:	This method has the following Weaknesses / Limitations:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It enables the researcher to examine the level of understanding a respondent has about a particular topic - usually in slightly more depth than with a postal questionnaire. 2. It can be used as a powerful form of formative assessment. That is, it can be used to explore how a respondent feels about a particular topic before using a second method (such as observation or in-depth interviewing) to gather a greater depth of information. Structured interviews can also be used to identify respondents whose views you may want to explore in more detail (through the use of focused interviews, for example). 3. All respondents are asked the same questions in the same way. This makes it easy to repeat (“replicate”) the interview. In other words, this type of research method is easy to standardise. 4. Provides a reliable source of quantitative data. 5. The researcher is able to contact large numbers of people quickly, easily and efficiently 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can be time consuming if sample group is very large (this is because the researcher or their representative needs to be present during the delivery of the structured interview). 2. The quality and usefulness of the information is highly dependent upon the quality of the questions asked. The interviewer cannot add or subtract questions. 3. A substantial amount of pre-planning is required. 4. The format of questionnaire design makes it difficult for the researcher to examine complex issues and opinions. Even where open-ended questions are used, the depth of answers the respondent can provide tend to be more-limited than with almost any other method. 5. There is limited scope for the respondent to answer questions in any detail or depth.

Continuation of strengths / uses (if necessary)	Continuation of weaknesses / limitations: (if necessary)
<p>6. It is relatively quick and easy to create, code and interpret (especially if closed questions are used).</p> <p>7. There is a formal relationship between the researcher and the respondent with the latter knowing exactly what is required from them in the interview</p> <p>If, for example, a respondent is unable or unwilling to answer a question the researcher (because they are present at the interview) is aware of the reasons for a failure to answer all questions.</p> <p>8. The researcher does not have to worry about response rates, biased (self-selected) samples, incomplete questionnaires and the like</p>	<p>6. There is the possibility that the presence of the researcher may influence the way a respondent answers various questions, thereby biasing the responses.</p> <p>For example, an aggressive interviewer may intimidate a respondent into giving answers that don't really reflect the respondent's beliefs. Similarly, a young male researcher asking a middle aged woman how frequently she had sexual intercourse in the past month may be embarrassing for the respondent and make her unlikely to answer truthfully. This is known as the interview effect.</p> <p>7. A problem common to both postal questionnaires and structured interviews is the fact that by designing a "list of questions", a researcher has effectively decided - in advance of collecting any data - the things they consider to be important and unimportant.</p>

