

# Effective questions

## Open-ended questions

- are designed to encourage a conversation about an interviewee’s experiences, emotions, attitude, or opinions.
- tend to be less leading than closed-ended questions, which encourage a limited response, a single-word answer such as ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ or perhaps even just a nod. They may not be “bad” questions but they do not provide a “springboard” for follow-up questions.
- typically begin with the 5 Ws (who, what, where, why, when, and how) or phrases such as the ones listed below. Often, they are not a question at all, but a statement meant to prompt a response.

## Open-ended phrases

- What would happen if ...
- I wonder ...
- What do you think about ...
- In what way ...
- Tell me about ...
- What would you do ...
- How can we ...
- How did you ...

## Leading questions

- direct or sway the interviewee to answer in a particular way.
- should be avoided because they can taint the information/evidence you are collecting and result in misleading assumptions and conclusions.

For example:

<i>Leading questions</i>	<i>Open-ended questions</i>
<p><b><i>Do you get along with your parents?</i></b>                      This questions prompts the person to question their relationship. It hints that maybe they do not get along.</p>	<p><b><i>Tell me about your relationship with your parents.</i></b>                      This direction is non-judgmental. There is no hint that there might be something wrong with the relationship.</p>
<p><b><i>How fast was the red car going when it smashed into the blue car?</i></b>                      This question implies (hints) that the red car was at fault, and the word “smashed” implies at high speed.</p>	<p><b><i>How fast was each are going when the accident happened?</i></b>                      This question does not assign any blame or make any assumptions about the accident.</p>