

Question count guidelines

Standardized question-count guidelines help measure survey length, or how long it will take the typical respondent to complete a survey. This allows us to maintain respondent burden at reasonable levels. This, in turn, helps maintain high response and completion rates. One question item is called a Standard Question Equivalent or SQE.*

Question Type Name	SQE Value	Description	Question Type
Battery item	0.67	A set of related questions grouped under a common theme, each answered using the same response scale. Example of four battery items: Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following aspects of our service: 1) Friendliness of staff 2) Speed of service 3) Quality of product 4) Ease of payment	Battery Item
Stand-alone question	1.00	A single question requiring one response. This is the most common format in surveys.	Basic
Open-ended numeric entry	1.00	Respondents enter a number in response to a question—typically used for factual data like age, household size, or years lived in a location. Example: "How many years have you lived in your current city?"	Open-ended
Vignette (per 50 words in length)	1.00	A short scenario or description precedes the question. Commonly used to provide context, such as outlining a policy before asking for an opinion. Each 50 words of vignette text counts as one question.	Basic
Thermometer rating	1.50	Respondents express their feelings or attitudes on a numeric scale—typically from 0 to 100—similar to measuring temperature. Commonly used to gauge favorability or intensity of opinion.	Basic
Check-all question	1.50	Respondents select multiple answers from a list of options. Example: "Which of the following services have you used? (Select all that apply)"	Basic
Open-ended question (short, low burden)	1.00	A typed answer requiring minimal effort, typically a factual or one-word response. Example: "What is your email address?"	Open-ended
Open-ended question (short answer implied)	2.00	Respondents type brief responses in their own words, typically in 1-3 sentences.	Open-ended
Open-ended question (long answer implied)	4.00	Respondents provide detailed, thoughtful responses, often in several sentences or a paragraph.	Open-ended

**Some questions may not fit neatly into a question type. Please reach out to us for guidance.*