

Different Types of Questions

Closed Questions

Closed questions are usually easy to answer as the choice of answer is typically a yes or no, depending on the question here are a few examples.

Examples of Closed Questions

- Are you feeling better today?
- May I use the bathroom?
- Will you please do me a favor?
- Have you already completed your assignment?
- Is that your final answer?
- Were you planning on becoming a manager?
- Can I help you with that?

Open Questions

Open questions allow for much longer responses, and therefore potentially more creativity from you and more information from the one you're asking. Here are a few examples.

Examples of Open Questions

- What were the most important parts of the project?
- What are you planning to do today at work?
- How exactly did the argument between the two of you start?
- What is your favorite part of your job?
- How will you help the company if you are hired to work for us?
- What do you plan to do immediately following graduation from college?
- What was your college experience like?
- What is the quickest way to get to the meeting room?

Transforming Your Questions

Here are some examples of closed-ended questions turned into open-ended questions.

Closed

- Would you like vanilla ice cream?
- Have you ever met Joe before?
- Where did you go to college?
- What is your best quality?
- Are you happy?
- Do you enjoy your car?
- Does your brother have the same interests as you?
- Do you have a pet?
- Do you like animals?
- When is your birthday?
- Do you like rain?

Now Open

- What is your favorite flavor of ice cream and why?
- How did you meet Joe?
- What do you feel was most beneficial about your college experience?
- How can your top qualities help your company to thrive and grow?
- What are some of the things that bring you the most joy?
- Why did you decide to purchase your car?
- What interests do you and your brother share and which interests do you not share?
- Do you have a pet and what is your pet like?
- Do you like animals and why?
- When is your birthday and how do you like to celebrate?
- Do you like rain and what do you usually do during rainstorms?

Examples of Types of Answers

- **A direct and honest response.** This is what the questioner would usually want to achieve from asking their question.
- **A lie.** The respondent may lie in response to a question. The questioner may be able to pick up on a lie based on plausibility of the answer but also on the nonverbal communication that was used immediately before, during, and after the answer is given.
- **Out of context.** The respondent may say something that is totally unconnected or irrelevant to the question or attempt to change the topic. It may be appropriate to reword a question in these cases.
- **Partially answering.** People can often be selective about which questions or parts of questions they wish to answer.
- **Avoiding the answer.** When asked a difficult question, which probably has an answer that would be negative, avoidance can be a useful tact. Answering a question with a question or trying to draw attention to some positive aspects of the topic are methods of avoidance.
- **Stalling.** Although similar to avoiding answering a question, stalling can be used when more time is needed to formulate an acceptable answer. One way people do this is to answer the question with another question.
- **Distortion.** People can give distorted answers to questions based on their perceptions of social norms, stereotypes, and other forms of bias. Different from lying, respondents may not realize their answers are influenced by bias or they exaggerate in some way to come across as more “normal” or successful.
- **Refusal.** The respondent may simply refuse to answer, either by remaining silent or by saying, “I am not answering.”