



Survey Response Scales

The response formats used in surveys vary depending on the type of question being asked. Responses can be as simple as a choice between “Yes” or “No” or as complex as choosing an answer among seven response options.

The response options for each question in your survey may include a dichotomous, a three-point, a five-point, a seven-point or a semantic differential scale. Each of these response scales has its own advantages and disadvantages, but the rule of thumb is that the best response scale to use is the one which can be easily understood by respondents and interpreted by the researcher.

Dichotomous Scales

A dichotomous scale is a two-point scale which presents options that are absolutely opposite each other. This type of response scale does not give the respondent an opportunity to be neutral on his answer in a question.

Examples:

- Yes- No
- True - False
- Fair - Unfair
- Agree – Disagree

Rating Scales

Three-point, five-point, and seven-point scales are all included in the umbrella term “rating scale”. A rating scale provides more than two options, in which the respondent can answer in neutrality over a question being asked.

Examples:

1. Three-point Scales

- Good - Fair – Poor
- Agree – Undecided - Disagree
- Extremely- Moderately - Not at all
- Too much - About right - Too little

2. Five-point Scales (e.g. Likert Scale)

- Strongly Agree – Agree – Undecided / Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree
- Always – Often – Sometimes – Seldom – Never
- Extremely – Very - Moderately – Slightly - Not at all
- Excellent - Above Average – Average - Below Average - Very Poor

3. Seven-point Scales

- Exceptional – Excellent – Very Good – Good – Fair – Poor – Very Poor
- Very satisfied - Moderately satisfied - Slightly satisfied – Neutral - Slightly dissatisfied - Moderately Dissatisfied- Very dissatisfied

Semantic Differential Scales

A semantic differential scale is only used in specialist surveys in order to gather data and interpret based on the connotative meaning of the respondent's answer. It uses a pair of clearly opposite words, and can either be marked or unmarked.

Examples:

1. Marked Semantic Differential Scale

Please answer based on your opinion regarding the product:

	very	slightly	neither	slightly	very	
Inexpensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expensive
Effective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ineffective
Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useless
Reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unreliable

2. Unmarked Semantic Differential Scale

The central line serves as the neutral point:

Inexpensive _____|_____ Expensive

Effective _____|_____ Ineffective

Useful _____|_____ Useless

Reliable _____|_____ Unreliable

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Measurement Scales ^[1]

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