Interviewing for

NORC

NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
DENVER 10, COLORADO

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FOREWORD

This book is designed to help you become a good interviewer. Within these pages we have tried to explain just what is expected of an interviewer and why; and, as you master these basic principles of the work, you will approach the peak of skillful interviewing.

We hope that you will find the material interesting as well as instructive and that you will refer to it frequently during your interviewing career. The principles set forth here apply on all NORC surveys, and we shall assume that you are familiar with them.

As this is the first edition, we shall be grateful for your reactions, for only through them can we make later editions progressively more helpful.

The Interview Department

PREFACE

Public opinion polls and surveys hold a grave responsibility both in times of war and of peace. The proved accuracy of the established organizations in forecasting election results within a very small margin of error has bolstered public confidence in opinion surveys to a remarkable—and sometimes alarming—degree. Polls must be worthy of this trust.

Reports of the leading surveys are familiar to thousands of readers. They are closely watched by government officials in Washington. The government itself frequently relies on surveys made at its own special request to help decide important points of policy. Public opinion polls played a vital part in the country's war effort, and may well play an even more vital part in time of peace. As a consequence, questionable work on the part of the polling agencies, failure to improve still further their techniques and procedures, and failure to supervise properly the work of their interviewers contain the seeds of possible danger and should not be tolerated.

Nowhere does this burden of being worthy of public confidence fall more heavily than on the individual interviewer. For the heart of public opinion surveys is the thousands of personal interviews gathered from people in all walks of life.

The most advanced techniques and procedures may be used by the statisticians working in the main office; the most carefully devised questions may be employed to measure the state of opinion; the most detailed instructions may be given as to the proper methods of handling various problems—all these are of no avail *unless each individual interviewer recognizes the responsibility resting on his shoulders, the responsibility to obtain and record completely and accurately the opinions of the persons he interviews.*

One bad apple can spoil a barrel of good ones. It is equally true that one careless, dishonest, or incapable interviewer can distort the results of a carefully planned survey.

Each interviewer should be worthy of his responsibility! His is an important job, and half-way compliance with these fundamental principles is no better than none at all. He should be careful, thorough, conscientious—and should realize that we in the office stand ready and eager to cooperate in solving any problems he may encounter.

Harry H. Field,
January, 1946. *Founder and Director, 1941-46.*

For this second printing of *Interviewing for NORC*, some revisions were made by the staff, under the direction of Gordon M. Connelly, who served as Acting Director of NORC for several months following Mr. Field's death. These revisions bring the material up to date and add to the clarity and comprehensiveness of the statement. It is our hope that the revised edition will prove of value, not only to NORC's interviewers, but also to academicians, public opinion practitioners, and commercial researchers, all of whom have expressed interest in the book.

January, 1947 *Clyde W. Hart, Director*

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YOU AND NORC

Chapter 1

What Is NORC?

The purposes and sponsors of NORC are described in a printed brochure given to all interviewers. NORC is a non-profit organization devoted to improving the techniques and procedures of opinion research and to conducting surveys at cost for non-profit organizations and institutions who request such services. NORC does no "commercial research."

Shortly after its inception NORC contracted with the United States Government to make surveys for various federal agencies, and since that time much effort has been devoted to this obligation. An eastern office, located at 280 Madison Avenue, New York 16, New York, was established to assist in the production of these surveys. Through its two offices the Center also conducts polls for non-governmental groups.

Naturally the circulation of findings obtained on surveys made at the request of the government or other clients is restricted. However, the Center makes regular polls of its own on important current issues, results of which are published in printed reports available from the Denver office. These reports, sent to subscribers at cost, are finding their way into more and more of the nation's libraries and classrooms. Every week end the Center releases its findings to the major press associations and to local newspapers and radio stations.

Although NORC surveys cover a wide variety of subject matter, emphasis is placed upon issues of social, political, and economic significance as such issues affect the American people. The wide

scope of NORC questions is indicated by the main topics of several past surveys which have explored public opinion on:

The war in Europe (pre-Pearl Harbor)
Satisfaction with the conduct of the war
Labor problems
A world organization and other post-war problems
Municipal finance and politics
Prices and rationing
Government efforts to combat inflation
Problems of reconversion
Problems of minority groups
Public education in the United States

Responsible for gathering opinions on these issues is NORC's staff of over 200 part-time interviewers.

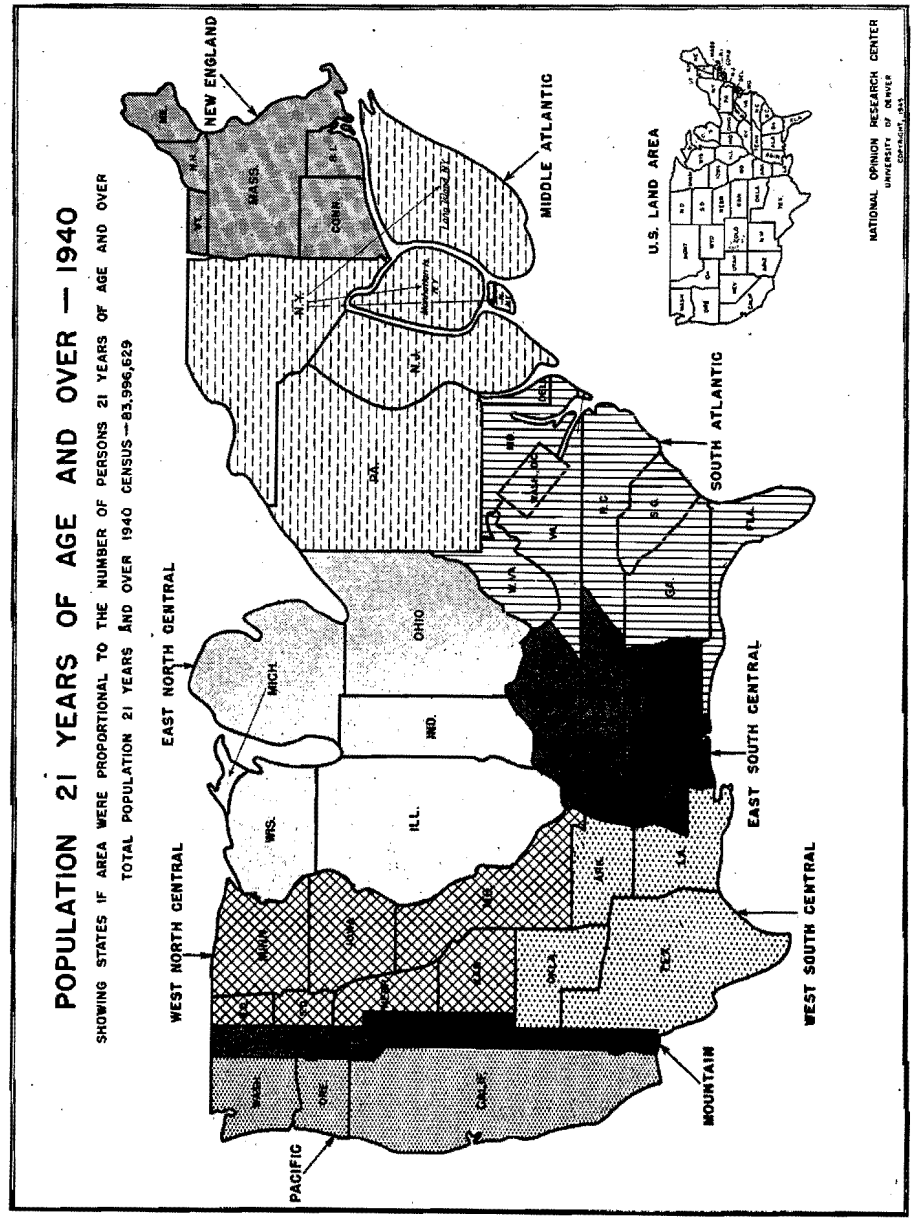
These interviewers are spotted all over the country. Once personally trained and enrolled on the staff, the interviewer works in or near his home community, receiving and returning his assignments by mail. To keep a constant check on the quality of its interviewing, the Center grades the work of all interviewers, rating each job on a 5-4-3-2-1 scale. (A "5" represents work of the finest quality; a "1," relatively inferior interviewing.) Personal letters and memoranda, informing, correcting, or commending interviewers, constitute a large part of the office work. In addition, representatives of both the New York and Denver offices make occasional field trips to discuss interviewing problems in person.

Chapter 2

Planning a Survey

Basic to the making of any public opinion survey is the scientific fact that the views of a very small number of persons faithfully reflect in accurate ratios the opinions of the entire population—provided that the persons interviewed (the sample) represent an accurate cross-section of all the people, a miniature population drawn to scale.

Most of the surveys made by the Research Center are national in scope. That is, people are interviewed all over the country, and



the opinions of this cross-section mirror the opinions of the entire adult population of 84 million.* In addition, the Research Center has from time to time conducted local surveys within a single state or community, a single election district, or, in at least one case, a single neighborhood.

> No matter what the scope of the survey, the important thing is that the persons interviewed represent a true cross-section of the population being studied.

On its national surveys, NORC apportions interviews according to section of the country and according to size of the town. For example, 7 per cent of the adults in the United States live in New England, therefore 7 per cent of the sample is drawn from the New England states. And 17 per cent of the adults in New England live in rural areas, therefore 17 per cent of the New England interviews are obtained from such districts. The distorted map on the preceding page shows how the adult population of the country is distributed among the various states, and gives a visual picture of the NORC sample in terms of geography. A proportionately large number of interviews is obtained in the populous eastern states, and only negligible quotas are allotted to the vast Rocky Mountain area, where the population of eight large states amounts to only 3 per cent of the national total.

Furthermore, NORC assigns the proper number of interviews from each sex, from each age group, and from the various standard-of-living groups. The correct proportion of Negroes is interviewed, the proper number of persons living on farms. In some cases the "controls" on cross-section are carried even further, and steps are taken to insure that various nationality groups, religious faiths, rental, or occupational groups are interviewed in their exact proportions.

As a result, when the small quota assigned to each individual interviewer is combined with the quotas of other interviewers in the same general area, a true cross-section of that area is attained. In the preparation of a survey, the first step is to decide how many interviews are needed for results reliable to the desired degree, and quotas are then assigned to the individual interviewers accordingly. These quotas may range from 10 interviews to 30 (or even more), depending on the total number of interviews needed and the amount of time allowed to complete them. Individual quotas vary not only according to the size of the sample,

*1940 Census.

but also according to the ability of the interviewer, the importance of his community to the cross-section, and the availability of other interviewers in that area.

Warning Postal Cards

Interviewers should be available for all work assigned unless there are compelling reasons why a particular survey cannot be handled. Advance notice of the next survey—in the form of postal cards—is normally sent. This notice gives the date the assignment is to be mailed to the interviewing staff, the time limit within which the assignment is to be completed, and the estimated number of interviews. This time limit is usually about a week from the day the assignment is received by the interviewer, excluding Sundays and holidays. The work can be done at any convenient time during that period. In the interest of interviewing men at home, however, it is advisable for interviewers to do some evening and week-end work.

If it is impossible for you to work on the survey, it is *imperative* that upon receipt of the card you so notify the office by wiring night letter collect.* This notice enables the office to assign your quota to someone else in the same section. If the quota is lost through your failure to notify the office, the cross-section for that survey is jeopardized. If you are not available for the entire length of the survey, but can interview one or more days on it, please specify in your refusal wire the number of interviews you can complete *without* a time extension, and the date by which you could fill the full quota assigned should a time extension be possible.

If you must refuse, state as fully as possible in your night letter the reason for refusing. The maximum of *25 words* for this message should not be exceeded. If you have been wired with regard to a reassignment, you may reply by straight telegram if you can send your message using 10 words or less. But, if your message is appreciably more than 10 words, wire by day letter. Always mention the survey number in your wire, as there may be several other surveys in the field at the same time. Follow your wire with a letter explaining in detail the reason for your refusal.

Once you have actually received an assignment, we rely on you to complete it. The time limit given on surveys is normally twice

*The wire should be sent to the office from which the assignment was mailed. The Denver office address is: National Opinion Research Center, University of Denver, Denver 10, Colorado. The New York office address is: National Opinion Research Center, 280 Madison Avenue, New York 16, New York. These names and addresses should not be abbreviated.

as long as would actually be needed if you worked steadily until finished. You may complete your quota at your convenience within this time limit.

If, for any reason, you are unable to finish an assignment within the specified time limit, you should send a *straight wire* to us immediately, stating how many interviews have been made and either that you cannot complete the job or that you can complete it only by a certain later date. *Always hold* all materials until you hear from us. We will then inform you what to do. If it is impossible to grant a time extension, we may want you to forward the assignment to someone in your vicinity.

No Substitutes, Please

NORC interviewers are personally trained. We believe this is essential to sound work. Interviewing is not a job that an untrained person is equipped to handle. Furthermore, even experienced interviewers cannot be expected to meet NORC standards without adequate instructions on the particular techniques and procedures stressed by NORC.

Therefore, no substitutes are allowed to do NORC work. Except in unusual circumstances, we expect you to *be available for all assignments sent to you* no matter what the time limit. If you expect to be particularly busy at a certain time, or if you are planning an out-of-town trip, see that we are notified by postal card *in advance*. In such circumstances, we can reassign your quota to another interviewer.

Under no circumstances may you allow an unauthorized person to obtain interviews assigned to you, even if you feel sure that person would do an entirely satisfactory job. *No exceptions can be made to this rule.*

Interviews Face to Face

NORC's research is made possible by *personal interviews* with all types of people. The interviews themselves are conducted by means of *questionnaires*—printed forms containing the questions to be asked and providing space for the person's answers. These questionnaires are sent to the interviewer, together with a *Quota Sheet,* which assigns the number and types of people to be interviewed, and the *Specifications,* which offer detailed instructions for handling specific questions on that survey.

Note that these are *personal interviews.* The interviewer calls on the person himself, asks the questions, and writes down the person's answers.

No interviews are obtained over the phone.

The person being interviewed (the respondent) never fills out the questionnaire himself.

Chapter 3

Interviewers' Earnings

Interviewers are paid "by the hour," a system which results in varying remuneration for the same number of interviews, but which we feel nevertheless is superior to a method of payment "by the day," "by the interview," or "by the survey." Payment "by the day" is impractical because many of our interviewers are persons with other duties who only occasionally devote full days to interviewing; they prefer to choose their own hours, working when it is most convenient for them. Payment "by the interview" encourages hurried work and a regard for each interview as a unit, rather than for the assignment as a whole. Payment "by the survey" is out of the question because quotas vary greatly from interviewer to interviewer. Interviewers bill us, therefore, for the number of hours they work at the prescribed rate per hour.

Before an interviewer is trained, he is told the current regular rate of pay per hour. This rate has been changed several times in recent years as the cost of living has fluctuated. Interviewers are always notified of such changes in general policy. Certain special assignments may be paid for at a rate somewhat higher than the current regular rate. Either the Specifications or the Time and Expense Sheet will state the rate of pay for each survey. In addition, the interviewer is reimbursed for *necessary transportation* expenses incurred during the course of his interviewing. Car mileage, when driving is necessary, is also chargeable to the Center. The Time and Expense Sheet states plainly the prevailing rate per mile.

Checks are mailed by our Denver office as soon as possible after the completion of each survey—usually three to four weeks after the last interview has been obtained on that study. Social Security and State Unemployment Compensation taxes are not deducted from checks, because NORC is a non-profit institution, not

subject to these laws. Federal income tax is not withheld from checks because interviewers are classified as independent contractors. These earnings are taxable income, however.*

Since the number and size of assignments varies greatly among interviewers of different aptitudes and in different areas, it is difficult to estimate an "average earning." Under normal circumstances, however, a good interviewer in a community regularly included in our cross-section has averaged—in addition to travel and other deductible expense—between $30 and $40 per month—or approximately 50 hours' work per month, the equivalent of six full working days.

*Each January every person who has interviewed for NORC during the previous calendar year receives a statement of his total earnings for that year.

HAZEL

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

"We're in favor of it—next question."

Reproduced through the courtesy of the *Curtis Publishing Company*, Philadelphia

HOW TO GET A GOOD INTERVIEW

Chapter 4

Creating a Friendly Atmosphere

Like many another job, interviewing requires exactitude, patience, persistence, and some degree of ingenuity—but it is not too difficult. The key to successful interviewing is to *put your respondent at ease.*

If the interview is on an informal, conversational basis, the respondent's mind will be functioning normally and he will not hesitate to voice his real opinions. But if the interview is stiff and formal, he may become so self-conscious that he can't think; or he may "freeze up" when he sees you writing everything he says, and withhold or disguise his real opinions. Obviously, either of these reactions makes the interview not only worthless but misleading.

> Remember that an interview is not a quiz, an intelligence test, or an academic discussion. Your job as interviewer is to win the person's confidence, to *put him at his ease,* so that he will give you freely, frankly, and fully his opinions on the questions you ask.
>
> The more informal the atmosphere of the interview, the more freely the respondent will talk about the questions, and the greater the number of added remarks—as opposed to cold formal "Yes" or "No" responses without elaboration.

The Informal Touch

Since successful interviewing depends in large measure upon informality, it is each interviewer's responsibility to attain it. To some interviewers informality comes naturally, but many have to develop it consciously—and contrary to what may be supposed, informality *can* be cultivated. Its essence lies in acting *naturally,* just as you would with an old friend.

The way the interviewer is dressed offers a good example of how informality can be acquired. We once had an interviewer who would be driven up to slum areas, climb out of her Packard wearing a silver fox jacket, and knock on the doors of tenements, while her chauffeur waited outside. Naturally her respondents were suspicious, resentful, *ill at ease*. When she was tactfully informed that an interviewer does well to wear simple inconspicuous sport clothes, which are not unusual either to the poorer classes or to the well-to-do, she soon began to achieve a better than average response from all types of people.

One of our best interviewers recently sent us a picture of herself interviewing a share-cropper in Mississippi. She was dressed in slacks and seemed quite at home sitting on the floor of the old man's porch, her clipboard holding the questionnaires propped up on her knees, while the respondent bent over from his seat on the porch swing to listen to her next question. The whole thing added up to informality, and you could see that the respondent was completely at ease in the presence of the interviewer—though she was a total stranger from an entirely different station in life.

Another way to acquire informality is to avoid the appearance of being "on your best behavior," to feel free to make the little gestures which are natural to you. One of the best interviewers on the Research Center's staff, for example, frequently leans against the side of the door while talking to his respondent, tilts his hat back on his head, taps his pencil against his cheek while he awaits an answer—does the little things he feels like doing, and by doing so, makes the respondent feel at ease.

A Conversational Attitude

A conversational interview is bound to be an informal interview. Don't waste time discussing these matters, but, where it seems advisable, show a friendly interest in the state of the weather, in the family pets, flowers, or children. Feel free to punctuate the interview throughout with such remarks as "Uh-huh," "I see."

> Be familiar enough with the wording of the questions to ask them as though they were your own—rather than *read* them.

The informality of an interview is largely destroyed if the interviewer reads each question haltingly, directly from the questionnaire, without looking at his respondent. This does not mean, of course, that you must memorize the entire questionnaire, nor does it mean that you are at liberty to change the wording of the question—even an article or a preposition—in order to be conversational.

It does mean that you should study the questionnaire carefully before starting in order to have a pretty good idea of how the various questions are worded and what their sequence is. During the actual interview, then, you need only refer to the questionnaire briefly in order to refresh your memory before each question—and ask that question as if it were your own, on which you yourself were eager to get the respondent's opinion.

You may find it difficult to conduct an informal interview at first, particularly with certain types of people. But as you master the mechanics of the interviewing job and as you acquire experience in approaching and talking to all types, you will soon get the knack of putting your respondent at ease.

A Word of Warning

To be conversational and informal, an interview need not be long-winded. Obviously, you have a job to do, and an interview in which 20 minutes is spent on the actual questions and 20 minutes more is devoted to irrelevancies and "conversation" is inefficient. You should try to preserve a balance between the stiff, formal inquisition, in which you grimly read off questions and methodically check answers, and the gabfest in which the respondent wastes your time and his own with long-winded irrelevancies.

Keep him on the point as pleasantly as possible. If he wanders from the subject, don't hesitate to say, "Well, let's see, then, how would you answer that?" and repeat the question. If he continues talking after you have already recorded his reply, get him onto the next question by such devices as "I think that's very interesting. Now what do you think about this. . .?" Since talkative persons encounter interruptions often, they are the ones who least mind being interrupted, and you will be surprised how seldom this gives offense. They are used to it!

Don't let the respondent talk your arm off about unrelated things—and don't reverse the process by talking too much yourself. Remember that you are interviewing *him*. Guard against elaborating the questions, repeating them unnecessarily, or "ad-libbing" on anything that occurs to you at the moment. Experi-

enced interviewers are found to be almost as likely to fall into these bad habits as newcomers. It isn't necessary for someone to be talking all the time in order to have a good interview.

Be Absolutely Neutral

The purpose of public opinion research is to find out how people really think and feel—sometimes what they know. Obviously you will not influence a respondent's answers consciously, but be careful lest an *unconscious* mannerism or remark of yours induces someone to reply in a certain way. It takes very little to encourage a respondent to give you the answers he thinks you want—especially if he has no strong feelings on the subject or if he holds an unpopular minority opinion.

Recent studies of interviewing procedure, for instance, show that Negroes sometimes give different answers when interviewed by Negroes than they do when interviewed by whites. Working people may express different opinions when talking to members of their own group than when interviewed by an obviously white-collar interviewer. Men may tend to hide masculine tastes when interviewed by women, and women may tend to conceal some feminine preferences when interviewed by men. Part of these biases are probably caused by the selection of unrepresentative persons from the group to be interviewed (Negroes, for example, may interview more "typical" or less "typical" Negroes than white interviewers do). But a larger part of the biases are traceable to *unconscious influence,* when the respondent is led to feel that he ought to give an answer which will please the interviewer.

> If you do your best to meet each respondent on his own ground and talk to him in his own language, you can avoid this fault.

Never show surprise at a person's answers. Should a respondent tell you, "I didn't see any sense in this war, and I didn't think we ought to be in it," don't look startled or uneasy or angry. You may frighten him and cause him to hide his real opinions on subsequent questions. As an interviewer, you are a fact-finder, seeking *not* "right" or "wrong" answers but *opinions*—unabridged and not modified by any interpretation on the part of the interviewer. If a respondent praises Hitler (and some have), take it in your stride. It may be a distinct service to democracy if we find out what proportion of people actually hold such opinions. Our surveys would be of much less value if such minority opinions were repressed.

Exercise tact. Listen with respect and attention to *all* opinions, and report them faithfully. Everyone likes to think his views may be important, and the fact is that *they are.* Submerge your own ideas. Don't discuss issues with respondents. As an unbiased reporter of the opinions of *others,* you are not at liberty to disclose your own. If you are asked how you feel about the question, laugh it off with the remark that you've talked to so many persons, you're going to have to make up your mind all over again—or some similar remark.

Chapter 5

Your Approach

Unless you get off on the right foot with a prospective respondent, either you don't get an interview or you have an awkward one—but approaching people for an interview is far easier than you might think. Veteran interviewers have found that if they *assume the person will be interested* in their questions, a turndown is really a rare occurrence.

Naturally your method of approach will vary a great deal according to circumstances. An introductory statement which works well with a leading clubwoman may be quite unsuitable for approaching a day laborer. Some inexperienced interviewers make the mistake of adopting a formal manner and introducing themselves at great length. Actually, a casual approach is essential, and introductions are best kept *as brief as possible.*

As a general rule, the following approach works best:

> "Good morning. I'm working on a national survey, and I'd like to get a few of *your* ideas. For instance, . . ."

Get to the first question as quickly as possible. It is in the actual questions themselves that the interest lies. You will be surprised to see how many people will answer the first question and the second and third and go right through the entire interview without even asking about the purposes and sponsors of the survey.

If, in your introduction, you start to tell the respondent all about opinion research in general and NORC in particular, you frequently waste time; you risk boring him (because he is more interested in the questions you are going to ask); and you may

make him wonder if all this chatter isn't some new kind of sales talk. Answer any questions he may have, but let him take the initiative in asking them.

Here is a summary of tips on approach:

1. Don't say, "Are you busy?" or "Would you mind answering some questions?" or "Could you spare a couple of minutes?"
2. Always remember that you have a right to ask a person his opinions (just as he has a right to refuse to answer!). Your work is legitimate, and the results of it are important.
3. Always assume that the person will be interested in the questions. The average person will be glad to answer as best he can, as soon as he finds it won't do him any harm. Usually he'll be flattered! If you honestly believe that he will be interested, your manner will show it and he *will* be interested.
4. If anyone thinks that you are a door-to-door salesman or solicitor, make it clear that you are not. But don't dwell on it, lest he get the idea that you're merely using a new line to sell him some magazines.
5. Don't be too grim—it might bias the person's answers to your questions. Be pleasant, friendly, at ease.
6. Do not present your NORC interviewing card unless necessary. It takes time to read the card, and the average person is satisfied with a simple statement of your purposes.
7. Don't use big words or high-flown language. Speak simply.

"What's This All About?"

Although many persons will go right through the interview without any apparent interest in the survey's purposes or sponsors, some will ask who is conducting the survey, what its purpose is, and what the questions are about. Such inquiries usually come after you have introduced yourself and before you ask the first question; or else they come after you have asked a question or two—when the respondent suddenly remembers that he has neglected to "find out what this is all about."

The who, why, and what of the survey are legitimate questions, and you should answer them as frankly (but as briefly) as you can. Don't hesitate to give the Denver address and invite respondents to write for facts about the Center or its publications.

In answer to "What's this for?" or "Who's doing this?" explain that

> "(My name is Mary Jones.) I'm working for the National Opinion Research Center (at the University of Denver). They do these surveys all over the country to find out people's ideas. And you know the only way to find out what people think is to ask them. It's interesting, don't you think?"

—then get on with the interview.

In answer to "What kind of questions?" or "What's it about?" say

> "Well, the first question is . . . What do you think about that one?"*

In the vast majority of cases such brief explanations are enough; in many instances you won't be asked for these. But occasionally you will meet more difficult situations. A few of them are described below:

1. During times of economic and political stress, such as the period following a war, it is only natural that some people will be suspicious of "strangers asking questions." If the above explanations don't reassure the skeptic, show him your identification card, the NORC "Announcement of Purposes," or a recent report. (It's not a bad idea to carry around a clipping or two mentioning NORC just for such cases.)
2. A few persons may be reluctant to talk if they feel their names will be taken. You can explain that NORC *never* wants the name of anyone who doesn't want us to have it. We ask for them on a very few surveys only to constitute proof of the interview, a fact which you are free to mention.
3. Sometimes you will get a response of: "My opinions aren't worth anything," or "I don't read up on

*As a general rule, it is better not to mention the specific subject of the survey. Should you say, for example, "Well, the questions deal with the subject of inflation," the respondent might say, "Oh my goodness, I don't know anything about that. Don't ask me." If you hadn't mentioned the subject, however, the respondent might have answered all the questions very easily without realizing they concerned a subject he "didn't know anything about." To encourage cooperation, we try to start all questionnaires with as simple a question as possible.

> things much," or "Better ask someone else." In such cases, explain that this isn't a poll of experts, that there aren't any "right" or "wrong" answers, that we just want to find out what average people think.

We expect you to try to gain the confidence of skeptical persons. Your objective should be to win over everyone you approach. Just because someone is curious or suspicious or doubtful or in a bad mood does not mean that he cannot be interviewed. It's your job to try to "sell" such persons, and normally the more quickly you can get into the interview, the more quickly you can get their cooperation.

But don't continue an interview with a person who isn't cooperating. If it becomes obvious that the respondent is not giving you honest answers—either through unsatisfied suspicion or through desire to be a "wise guy"—politely terminate the interview and go on to someone else. Such a situation happens rarely. The extreme scarcity of "smart alecs" is pretty good proof that surveys are composed almost entirely of opinions given conscientiously.

> The best way to discontinue an interview is simply to pretend that you've asked all the questions you need, say, "All right. Thanks very much," and leave.

"Goodbye"

In this chapter on "Approach" it might not be amiss to say a word about leaving your respondent after you have interviewed him. Two points will probably cover it:

1. *Leave as pleasantly as possible.* Don't forget to thank the person, to make him feel as if he's done a good job. It seldom hurts to say something like, "That was fun, wasn't it?" Remember that the respondent's future attitude toward opinion surveys will depend largely on the impression *you* leave.

2. *Leave as quickly as possible.* Many respondents will just love you to hang around and talk. As soon as you have finished, say "That's fine. Thank you ever so much," stand up, and start for the door. If the person insists on talking, tell him you'd like to come back sometime but today you have quite a few other calls to make, thank him again, and leave.

Chapter 6

Asking the Questions

Ask All Questions Exactly as Worded

A great deal of time and thought go into the wording of every question before it appears on an NORC questionnaire. Each question is carefully drafted and thoroughly "pre-tested" so that it will (1) express the exact meaning we want, (2) be as free as possible from bias, (3) mean the same thing to all people, and (4) be understandable to a person of the simplest education. Questionnaires have been rewritten as many as 19 times to meet these four tests.

Experiments have shown that even a slight change of wording can distort results. If you change the wording, you risk influencing the person's response, and you risk getting a response on quite a different issue. And there is no assurance that such changes will suit our purpose. At the very least, the answers received will not be comparable to the answers other interviewers get to the original question. In order to analyze results from all over the country on a comparable basis, we have to be sure that every interviewer asked each question in the same way on every interview.

> If you feel that the wording of a question is faulty, complete your assignment and then when you write your Interviewer's Report on the job, tell us exactly what the trouble was and how it could be rectified. But *do* ask the question as worded.

Here is one example of how changes in wording can affect results on a simple question. The question is: "Where do you get most of your news about the war: from the newspapers, the radio, or talking to people?" And here are four possible variations on the wording with the results they might effect.

1. *"Where do you get most of your news: from the newspapers, the radio, or talking to people?"*

   > The interviewer, in his haste, omitted the words "about the war." The respondent answered that he got most of his news from the daily papers. Had the interviewer inquired where he got most of his news *about the war,* the respondent might have given an entirely different reply: the radio.

2. *"Where do you get most of your news about the war?"*

   The interviewer, either through carelessness or design, neglected to mention the three news sources listed in the question. The respondent replied, "From the radio, I guess." Had the interviewer listed the three possible choices, the respondent might have been reminded that he actually got most of his war news from talking to his friends.

3. *"Where do you get most of your news about the war—from the newspapers, the radio, talking to people, or from the magazines?"*

   This interviewer felt that such magazines as *Time* were a likely source of war news and saw no reason why he shouldn't suggest "magazines" as a fourth possibility. Result: Some of his respondents gave magazines as their biggest source of war news; other interviewers received very few, if any, such replies. His interviews could not be combined with the others.

4. *"Where do you get most of your news about the war—from the radio, the newspapers, or talking to people?"*

   The interviewer, perhaps not sufficiently acquainted with the wording of the question, inadvertently transposed "the radio" and "the newspapers." It has been established that the order in which alternatives are presented has in some cases an effect on responses. Sometimes NORC will send out slightly different versions of the same questionnaire to test the effect of such differences in order. Unless each interviewer follows the exact wording and order which appear on his questionnaire, results will not be comparable.

Note that not only are *conscious* word changes to be avoided; you must constantly be on guard against *unconscious* word changes. Careless asking of a question, such as omitting some words or changing others around, can do just as much harm as a deliberate re-wording.

Don't Attempt to Explain

While every effort is made to phrase each of our questions so that a person of the simplest education can understand it easily, there are bound to be certain persons who will fail to understand certain questions. They may look at you blankly; they may ask you what you mean.

Under such circumstances, you can only *repeat the exact wording of the question,* slowly and distinctly, *emphasizing* the key words. In most cases, this repetition of the question is sufficient to put across the idea, but, if the respondent is still unable to answer, your only choice is to record his answer "Don't know."* This rule is necessary for the same reason that we must insist on your asking the question as worded—to insure comparableness of results. If each of 200 interviewers all over the country were allowed to provide his own explanation of the questions, the apparent results of our research obviously could not be trusted.

Don't Elaborate the Wordings

Some interviewers, in an effort to be "conversational," fall into the habit of "ad-libbing" on each question. They will ask the question just as worded, to be sure, but they will then keep on talking, elaborating the wording and rephrasing it in several

*Sometimes we may purposely ask a difficult question and provide a category for "Respondent doesn't understand question." Where such provision is made, you would, of course, check this answer rather than "Don't know."

"He said he was making a survey of kissproof lipstick, and then . . ."

"That last question, Dr. Gallup, is going to get a lot of faces slapped."

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ways. Such a practice is not only unnecessary, but is harmful and is to be carefully guarded against.

As an example of this practice, we might take our previous question on sources of war news. An interviewer might ask: "Where do you get most of your news about the war: from the newspapers, the radio, or talking to people?—that is, which one do you rely on most?"

He has asked the question exactly as worded, but he has also elaborated it and ended up by asking an entirely different question: which medium does the respondent *rely on most*, as contrasted to the medium which furnishes the respondent with *most of his news*. The respondent probably answered the last question he heard instead of the original one—and the result was confusion of terms and poor research.

At certain points in an interview, "silence is golden." Silence is golden on your part immediately after you finish asking the question. Be content with asking the question as worded, and give the respondent a chance to answer it on that basis. If he seems to be having trouble and you feel like talking, play safe and add only something like, "Now, I just want your own opinion on that."

Always Ask Every Question

The interviewer has a responsibility to *ask* every question which he is directed to ask on the questionnaire. Occasionally, when you are required to ask a series of similar questions, the respondent may say, "Just put me down as 'Yes' to all of them." He doesn't know what's coming, and there may be a good chance that he will want to say "No" to the next one.

For instance, we once asked if respondents thought it would be a good idea or a bad idea for the United States to join a union of nations after the war. If they thought it a good idea, we said, "Now I'd like to find out what other countries besides the United States you think ought to be in this union," and asked a series of questions: "Do you think Sweden should be in this union? How about France? Russia? Germany?" etc.

A respondent might answer "Yes" to the first three countries and then say, "Just check 'Yes' to all of them for me. What's the next question?" It's quite possible, however, that that respondent might feel very strongly that Germany should *not* belong to such a union, and if the interviewer had taken his advice, we would

not have obtained a true opinion. In such a case, therefore, the interviewer should say, "Well, if you don't mind, I'd just like to make sure on the rest of these. How about Germany?" and then follow through with the remaining countries listed.

Occasionally, too, a respondent may *seem* to answer one question in a casual remark made incidentally while answering a previous question. To a thoughtless interviewer, this may appear to be an adequate answer for the question, so he automatically marks the answer to the subsequent question and does not ask it when its turn comes up.

The wise interviewer, however, asks the question when its turn comes up. He asks it just as it's worded, for he knows that it is necessary that every respondent respond to the identical *stimulus* —the *exact* question and *all* the words and the *precise* words of which it is constructed.

Here is one illustration of how an interviewer could "go wrong" by not repeating the exact question: A certain respondent casually remarked that he approved of government price control, meaning—but not explaining—during wartime. When the thoughtless interviewer got to this question: *"After the war,* do you think the government should try to control prices?" he assumed it had been answered, not realizing that "those three little words" at the beginning made the difference between a "Yes" and "No" answer in this man's case.

You may also come across a question sometime which does not seem to apply to the particular respondent you are interviewing. For example, we frequently ask, "Are you a member of a labor union?" Offhand, it might seem pointless to ask this question of a farmer. Unless the questionnaire specifically directs otherwise, however, the question should be asked in *every* case. It does no harm, and it may prevent you from being fooled on some occasion, with consequent damage to our research. Some dairy farmers, for example, are unionized.

Ask All Questions in the Order Presented

For the same reasons that the identical wording must be used each time, the questions must be asked in the same *order* in which they appear on the questionnaire. A question asked out of order can influence responses to subsequent questions, and, as mentioned above, if the questions are not asked in exactly the same way each time, results cannot be compared.

Here is an example. We once asked the question, "What do you think the United States is really fighting for? What is Russia really fighting for? What is England really fighting for?" This three-part question appeared early in the interview, and some interviewers reported slight difficulty in getting replies. They pointed out that such "open" questions, where the respondent was not given a choice of alternatives but had to frame an answer for himself, would have gone over much better if they had been saved till later in the interview—when the respondent was "warmed up."

This criticism was sound. Yet had those three questions been asked later in the interview, results would have been meaningless because later questions dealt with post-war subjects, such as a union of nations, maintenance of peace, the future of democracy, etc. Had we asked these questions and then followed with a query on what the three Allies were really fighting for, we would have brought the respondent to a "post-war" frame of mind where he would frequently have given such replies as "For democracy," "So there won't be any more wars," etc. By asking this question early in the interview, we got his uninfluenced opinion on the subject, and could then proceed to the other questions.

Chapter 7

Obtaining the Response

NORC questionnaires contain two broad types of questions. On one type the question presents a choice of alternatives, and the interviewer checks the answer-box or circles the code number corresponding to the person's opinion. On the other type, no alternatives are presented. The question is an "open" one, and the respondent must frame his own answer, which the interviewer then writes down verbatim. Here are examples of these two types of questions:

ALTERNATIVE-TYPE QUESTION

"Would you like to see the United States join the world organization set up at San Francisco, or would you like to see us stay out?"

1 Join
2 Stay out
X DK

OPEN-TYPE ("FREE-ANSWER") QUESTION

"What are some of the things you like about the British people?"

.....

In certain respects the alternative-type question is the more difficult, because it involves not only obtaining a complete response answering the specific question, but also classifying the answer. Whereas on the open-type question the interviewer's job ceases with the recording of a complete response to a specific question, on the alternative-type the interviewer must decide whether a certain response fits one category or another, whether a response is essentially a "Yes" or a "No" answer, for example. You should take great care in classifying each answer, and, when in doubt, record the complete verbatim response and leave the coding to the Coding Department. But be certain that the respondent has been asked to explain his opinion fully.

Likewise, when recording a respondent's comment beside the category you have marked, do not permit that which you have written to contradict the category. When the Coding Department finds such contradictions, the coders are at a loss whether to attribute the contradiction to careless and inaccurate classifying on your part or to an incomplete job of writing down all the respondent said.

Offhand, it may seem a simple matter to ask a person either of these two types of questions and then to check the proper box or to record his answer verbatim. Actually, it isn't. People seldom state their opinion precisely and completely, and, as a result, the interviewer is faced with all sorts of problems: the person doesn't agree with either of the alternatives presented, or he wants to choose both of them; he misunderstands the question and gives you his opinion on an entirely different issue; or he says, "I don't know" or gives you some other vague response because it's too much trouble really to consider the issue. The manner in which the interviewer handles these problems is a measure of his interviewing ability.

The interviewer must not go on to the next question until

1. He has obtained the respondent's opinion on the *specific* question asked.
2. He has obtained the respondent's *complete* opinion on that question.

Get Specific Answers

Here are some examples of what we call "inspecific" replies. They simply don't answer the question the interviewer asked, nor do they permit interviewers or coders to classify the question accurately.

QUESTION. *"What are some of the things you like about the British people?"*

ANSWER. "They're nice people. My sister married an Englishman.

(Here you would have to repeat the question: "Well, what are some of the *things* you like about the British people?")

Q. *"Do you think there is any need for married women with children to work in war plants?"*

A. "They're better off at home with their family."

(The respondent has missed the whole point of the question. You have to repeat it, stressing the word "need.")

Q. *"In general, do you think war plants can get all the workers they need now?"*

A. "Well, I guess some of them are having a hard time."

(Some are, and some aren't, but the question asks for an opinion "in general," and must be repeated with emphasis on those two words.)

Q. *"Do you think England should repay us for the war supplies we're sending them under lend-lease?"*

A. "They never will!"

(The question is put in terms of *"Should* they repay us?" The respondent has replied in terms of whether or not they *will*. So the interviewer has to repeat the question and try again.)

Q. *"About how much longer do you think the war will last?"*

A. "I hope it's over real soon."

(Well, regardless of what you hope, about how much longer do you think the war *will* last?")

Q. *"Which do you think is our Number One enemy, Germany or Japan?"*

A. "They both are. We've got to lick them both."

(The interviewer has to press for a choice on the basis of which country is the *Number One* enemy, granting that they are both our enemies.)

Q. *"In general, do you think gasoline rationing is being handled very well, only fairly well, or poorly?"*

A. "I don't think gasoline ought to be rationed."

(The interviewer must express interest in the person's reply, but obtain an opinion on how well gasoline rationing is actually being handled.)

The list could be expanded indefinitely, but each of the responses listed is a good example of an "answer" which is not an answer. Study them closely. The interviewer would fail if he merely accepted these replies. It's his job to go beyond them and to get a specific *answer* to the particular question he asked—and to do this without helping the respondent to answer in any particular way. Sometimes a simple repetition of the question stressing key words will induce a satisfactory answer; sometimes the interviewer may have to spend several minutes on one question, repeating it three or four times before he obtains an opinion.

Get Complete Answers

We have said that, until an interviewer has obtained a specific and complete response to one question, he must not go on to the next question. Regardless of how you have to record the answer -whether it is to be classified by circling an answer-number or written verbatim for an open-type question, you are faced with the problem of getting a response in terms of the wording and meaning of the question.

Although you must follow the same steps in obtaining a complete answer for either an alternative-type or an open-type question, the process of recording the answer is simpler in the alternative type. Once you are satisfied that the respondent has expressed a clear preference for one alternative or the other ("Yes" or "No," "Approve" or "Disapprove," etc.), your job is finished when you have (1) circled the answer-number—a classification which is

itself complete, and (2) recorded any *pertinent* comments the respondent may have added.*

Occasionally, however, even after probing, some respondents may reply in terms which you cannot confidently place in any provided category. Any doubtful remarks or qualified answers should be written *word for word* to enable the Coding Department to make the final decision.

In the open-type question it is not only necessary to hold the respondent to the terms of the question and to overcome his preliminary "DK's" (Don't Know's) or inspecific replies; it's also necessary to record *every word he says both before and after* any probing which may be necessary. Because respondents frequently give replies (not answers) which are too vague, inspecific, or incomplete, and because these necessitate probing, every interviewer should become familiar with the theory and practice of probing.

Here are a few examples of inspecific or incomplete replies which demand probing on the part of the interviewer:

QUESTION: *"Suppose a government official were going on the radio every week to talk to the people about the war. What would you like to hear him talk about?"*

INSPECIFIC AND INCOMPLETE REPLIES:

"Oh, about the war, I guess."
"Well, it would depend on who he was."
"I'd rather hear somebody like Gabriel Heater."
"Oh my goodness, I don't know."

How to Probe

Repeating the question is the basic method of probing—the safest and most effective way of securing consistent and comparable reactions to the precise question printed on the questionnaire. The purpose of probing is to secure more complete or more specific replies when the first response has been evasive or unrelated to the question. By repeating the question, you encourage the respondent to develop his own thoughts and to express them to you in his own words. Repeating the question often brings the respondent back into the channel of thinking on the question and often crystallizes a fleeting answer. In many instances re-

*See also discussion on comments, pages 52 ff.

peating the question with emphasis on one or two words will direct the individual's attention to the real purpose of the question and lead him to answer clearly and specifically.

Let's see how probing by repeating the question works in actual practice. Here is an example:

INTERVIEWER: *"Suppose a government official were going on the radio every week to talk to the people about the war. What would you like to hear him talk about?"*

RESPONDENT: "Oh, I don't know. I guess anything at all would be interesting."

(This may be a legitimate "DK" or it may be a lazy "DK" with a real opinion lurking underneath. The interviewer tries it again, repeating the question conversationally and with more emphasis.)

I. *"Suppose a government official were going on the radio every week to talk to the people about the war. What would* you *like to hear him talk about?"*

R. "Do you think the government will really put a man on the radio that often?"

(Without altering the wording of the question, the interviewer can answer the respondent's query. The interviewer tries again for an answer by repeating the question.)

I. "Well, just *'suppose a government official* were *going on the radio every week to talk to the people about the war. What would you like to hear him talk about?'* "

R. "About the war, I guess."

(The question itself states that the official would "talk about the war," but what particular things would this respondent like to hear discussed? The interviewer probes.)

I. "Well, that doesn't quite answer the question. *'Suppose a government official were going on the radio every week to talk to the people* about the war. *What would you like to hear him talk about?'* "

R. "Oh, you want to know what I'd like to hear about the *war*? I'd like to hear how many men we've been losing over there in the Pacific. I've been hearing a lot of rumors."

(Now we're getting somewhere. But the answer is not yet complete. Perhaps the respondent has other things on his mind, and the *specifications directed* the interviewer to take down as many things as the person would like to hear talked about. The interviewer probes further.)

I. *"What* are some of the other things about the war you'd *like to hear him talk about?"**

R. "I'd like to know more about this rationing business."

(This is not specific. "This rationing business" can cover a great many specific items. What does the respondent have in mind? The interviewer probes.)

I. "What about the rationing business?"

R. "Well, is it true that they're going to ration clothes? And why don't they give us more meat for our points?"

As a result of his well-designed probes, the interviewer has threaded his way through all the early vague responses and has emerged with several very definite points that this particular person would like to hear discussed by a government official over the radio. Had the interviewer accepted the first "DK" answer, or had he failed to follow through on the subsequent incomplete or inspecific replies, the interview would have been incomplete. And if several interviewers had consistently failed to probe on this question, the results of the survey would not have shown a great many points people were really interested in hearing about —but which they just couldn't name offhand. Note, too, that the interviewer conducted his probing without in any way suggesting a possible answer.

Here are two more examples of successful probing. The weaknesses of the respondent's preliminary replies are probably self-evident:

*A good technique. "What are some of the other things?" flatters the respondent by assuming that he is chock-full of ideas on the question, but at the same time puts him at ease by implying that he need not mention them all. Had the interviewer said, "Is there anything else?" the respondent would have found it very easy simply to answer "No."

Side Glances

By Galbraith

"Here she comes again, and I know what she's going to say —according to the recent survey we ought to have plenty of pork chops and we must be hiding 'em!"

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INTERVIEWER: *"What are some of the things you like about the British people?"*

RESPONDENT: "They're nice people. My sister married an Englishman."

I. "Well, *'what are some of the* things *you like about the British people?'* "

R. "Well, you've got to admire the way they stood up to all that bombing."

I. "What else?" (In this instance, required by the *specifications.)*

R. "I like the way they don't get excited about things. They're good fighters, too."

INTERVIEWER: *"Why don't you think it would be a good idea for the United States to join a union of nations after the war?"*

RESPONDENT: "Well, I don't know. I just don't think it would be a good idea."

I. "I'm sort of interested in why you say that. Could you explain it a little? 'Why *don't you think it would be a good idea for the United States to join a union of nations after the war?'* "

R. "Well, take the last time they had a League of Nations. That didn't do any good."

I. "Let me ask you once more. *'Why don't you think it would be a good idea for the United States to* join *a union of nations after the war?'* "

R. "You can't count on those other countries. The only way for this country to stay out of war is just to keep ourselves so strong nobody will dare attack us again like Japan did."

In these illustrations you will note that the interviewer, in probing, relied almost entirely upon the original wording of the question. This practice is sound. It guarantees that responses to the probes will be in the same frame of reference as responses of other respondents to the first reading of the question. But in certain situations it may be awkward to repeat the question. Note, for example, how the interviewer probed when seeking an elaboration *by the respondent* to a very general reference to "rationing business." A repetition of the question would have served no

useful purpose; it might even have irritated the respondent. Inasmuch as the respondent himself had *voluntarily* brought up the subject of rationing, the interviewer was not suggesting an answer to him by his neutral probe, "What about the rationing business?" The interviewer merely encouraged the respondent to be more specific; he did not lead him in any particular direction; he did not encourage either criticism or commendation of rationing or a reference to any particular phase of it.

Scientific probes meet two requirements:

1. If the question is repeated, it is repeated *exactly* as printed on the questionnaire.
2. If *any* words other than those in the question are used, they will not suggest any kind of an answer to the respondent.

The following expressions, which are consistent with the second requirement, are typical of those which are permissible:

"Well, what in particular do you have in mind?"

"I'm not sure I got that last point you made. Could you explain it a little further?"

"Well, let's see now. You said . . . Just how do you mean that?"

Never Suggest an Answer

Your respondent's replies are supposed to reflect his own reactions, uninfluenced, during the course of the interview, by the interviewer or any other outside source. An answer which has been suggested to him is worse than no answer at all, and there are two obvious reasons for this:

1. If the person has no strong opinion on the issue, he will tend to "grab at" any suggestion offered. As a result, you will not be getting his opinion (which is really "no opinion") but the suggestion put in his mind.
2. As we've said before, interviews must be comparable in order to be valuable. If you suggest a possible answer to one of your respondents, this interview can't be compared equally with the others.

Sometimes it takes great will power to refrain from suggesting an answer to some inarticulate person when you feel you know what

he's trying to say. Even veteran interviewers have been known to suggest replies without realizing it. Because suggesting is so easy, so insidious, it is necessary to be constantly on guard against it.

Here are a few examples of bad interviewing—*mistakes always to be avoided.* In some of these instances the interviewer probably didn't realize he was breaking a rule:

THE QUESTION: *"Suppose a government official were going on the radio every week to talk to the people about the war. What would you like to hear him talk about?"*

Example No. 1: Interviewer anxious to get an answer.

RESPONDENT: "Oh, my goodness, I don't know."

INTERVIEWER: "Well, there are probably some things you'd like to hear him discuss. Wouldn't you like to know more about all this rationing or about how much your taxes will be?"

RESPONDENT: "Yes, I guess I would, at that. Put that down."

Example No. 2: Interviewer trying to be helpful.

RESPONDENT: "Well, let's see now. What could he talk about?"

INTERVIEWER: "Oh, he might tell us more about the fighting in the Pacific, or he might talk about the plans we're making for peace or about these new synthetic rubber tires or almost anything. What would you like to hear him talk about?"

RESPONDENT: "Say, I'd like to know about these new tires."

Example No. 3: Interviewer pities the respondent.

RESPONDENT: "Gosh, I don't know. Let's see. What would I like him to talk about? Well . . . No, I guess not. Let's see now. Etc., etc."

INTERVIEWER: "A lot of people seem to be interested in what the government's doing to meet the food situation."

RESPONDENT: "Yes, sir, that's what I'd like to know about. What's the government doing to meet the food situation?"

Example No. 4: Interviewer trying to get a more specific answer.

RESPONDENT: "Oh, I'd like to hear him talk about how the war is going."

INTERVIEWER: "You mean how we're making out in the Pacific?"

RESPONDENT: "Yeah. That's right."

In all those cases, the answers are illegitimate. It is probable that, unaided, the respondents would never have thought of these points, and they represent merely possibilities suggested by the interviewer, rather than the actual opinions of the person being interviewed.

If the person has trouble answering a question, be patient while he considers it. Repeat the question if necessary, but don't try to help the respondent out—and resist his search for hints or suggestions. If he can't answer the question—has no opinion on it—*that is precisely the information we want* and is a thousand times more valuable than a reply put into his mouth.

Sometimes an answer may be suggested by the mere inflection of your voice. Take the simple question, "Do you think the United States is doing all it possibly can to win the war?" As it stands, this is a straightforward, unbiased question. Asked in a normal conversational manner, it easily permits either a "Yes" or a "No" answer. But by the inflection of your voice, you can do all sorts of tricks with it. For example, if you emphasize the word *"all,"* you may get a higher than normal percentage of "No" reactions. If you stress *United States,* you are likely to get a high percentage of "Yes" answers.

Frequently we provide categories for alternatives not offered in the question, but which pre-testing shows to be commonly volunteered by respondents. The "Don't know" category, which accompanies almost every question, is the simplest example of this. We don't expect you to add, ". . . or don't you know?" when you ask the question. We let the person *volunteer* that response (which the interviewer will record), but the interviewer does not read this as a possible answer.

Similarly, we may ask some such question as, "Are you better off or worse off now than you were before the war?" and provide an answer-category labeled "About the same" to be used for respondents who *volunteer* that reply. Because the alternative is not mentioned in the wording of the question proper, *it should*

not be suggested. If the person volunteers the answer, "About the same," you check it; if he doesn't, you go on without mentioning it.

A last point in regard to suggesting answers is this. During the interview the respondent's replies must *not* be influenced from any outside source. Therefore, not only should you yourself take every care to avoid hints and suggestions; it is also your responsibility to see that the respondent's answers are not modified by the presence of a third person or by any other outside influence. That is one of our reasons for prohibiting group interviewing.* A third person almost invariably offers suggestions—by word, gesture, or facial expression. Similarly, it would be absurd to seek an uninfluenced answer to the question, "Who is your favorite news commentator?" and then allow the respondent to refer to the radio section of his daily paper before he answered.

"Don't Know's"

Among the people you interview, a certain number will have definite opinions and express them clearly, and a certain number of others just won't know, can't tell you which way they feel. This "undecided" group is very important to us—equally as important as the group who have definite opinions. Our research would scarcely result in an accurate report of public opinion if we ignored the vast number of undecided and uninformed persons and recorded only those who actually have opinions and information—no matter what the question may be. One of our main jobs on every survey is to determine just what part of the people are uninformed, indifferent, or truly "undecided." The interviewer must realize that a "DK" response is just as valuable in research as a carefully phrased, well-thought-out opinion.

The trouble is, however, that a large number of the "DK" responses which an interviewer receives when he first asks the question do *not* represent lack of opinion. They merely cover up suspicion, misunderstanding, or mental laziness. For example:

> The person may not fully understand the question, and, rather than ask you to repeat it, he simply says, "I don't know."
>
> The respondent may be trying to evade the issue. He may feel that his opinion is not "proper," or he may have other reasons for keeping it to himself, so he says, "I don't know."

*See page 84.

> The respondent may be the type of person who customarily prefaces all his answers with the phrase, "Well, I don't know now"—and then goes on to give a detailed answer, if the interviewer waits for it.
>
> Finally, the question may present a new issue which the respondent has not previously considered. It may seem to be too much trouble for him to think through, so he simply says, "I don't know," hoping to escape a mental job.

Beneath all these preliminary "DK" responses may be hiding genuine opinions, and it's the interviewer's job to discover them. It's important, therefore, that you be able to distinguish between real "DK" replies and stalling "DK" replies. If you think the respondent may not understand the question, say something like, "Maybe that wasn't too clear. Let's try it again"—and repeat the question, slowly and distinctly.

If you feel the respondent may be hiding his genuine opinion, stress the fact that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to these questions, that the purpose of public opinion polls is simply to give people a chance to tell how they really feel about things. If you continue to sense that the respondent is not being honest with you on the question, check him as "DK," then ask the next question. If you have this feeling on several successive questions, *discontinue the interview* as soon as possible. Evasions hide the facts, and distortions are worse than valueless.

If the person is merely stalling for time when he answers "Don't know," be patient; give him time to collect his thoughts. As a general rule to follow, do not accept the respondent's first "DK" answer. Repeat the question, perhaps prefaced by some such remark as, "Now I just want your own opinion on that; nobody really knows." If the person persists in his "DK" reply, record him as such and go on to the next question.

Occasionally you will encounter respondents who are too uninformed to answer some questions. These people will give a steady succession of "DK" answers—they have no idea whatsoever. *Be careful not to lose these interviews.* We repeat, such replies, when genuine, are as valuable as informed opinions. Therefore, do not allow the respondent to become discouraged, to develop a feeling of inferiority. Make it plain that "DK" is a normal answer, that "Quite a few people haven't made up their minds yet on some of these problems."

Qualified Answers

Most of the questions on NORC surveys either present the respondent with a proposition and ask him whether he agrees or disagrees, or else they present a choice of alternatives and ask him which one comes closest to his opinion.

When the respondent replies "Yes" or "No," "Agree" or "Disagree," or indicates the attitude which comes closest to his own feeling on an issue, the interviewer fulfills his responsibility when he has circled the answer-number designated (and recorded any *pertinent* comments added by the respondent). Sometimes, however, a respondent will give a *qualified answer:* "Yes, *if* . . .", "No, *unless* . . .", or "It *depends.*" Or he may say, "Well, there's a lot to be said for both sides. I think that first statement is generally true, but I wouldn't go quite that far; on the other hand, I can't agree entirely with the other alternative." In such cases, it's frequently difficult to decide how to classify the response accurately.

In dealing with such problems, remember that you need only circle the one answer-number which comes *closest* to a respondent's opinion. That is, he need not agree with a proposition wholeheartedly, but if he favors it more than he opposes it or favors it more than any of several other choices, he should be circled as approving that proposition. One of the well known polls recently asked the question, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Truman is handling his job as President?" Most people will be neither totally satisfied nor totally dissatisfied. Some will approve most of his policies, but disapprove others, while those who disapprove most of what he is doing will still favor some actions. It might, therefore, have been better to have prefaced the question with "On the whole," or some such phrase that would help get a reply in *general terms.*

Most "Yes-and-No" answers can easily be handled by nothing more than repeating the question, prefaced by the words, "Well, generally speaking, what would you say?" or "Taking everything into consideration, which would you favor?" If the person cannot be pinned down, if he insists he can't answer one way or the other, either his response must be recorded as "Don't know" or his qualified answer must be written down.

Remember, too, that many "Yes-and-No" answers can be avoided by holding the respondent to a strict interpretation of the question. Take the question "Do you think there is any need for mar-

"I'm from the British Institute of Public Opinion."

Reproduced through the courtesy of *Lilliput.*

ried women to work in industries?" The reply, "Well, sure, if they want to," sounds offhand like a qualified answer, but the respondent has really not answered the question at all. He is answering an entirely different question: *"Should* married women work in industries?" By repeating the question and stressing the word *"need,"* you should be able to get an unqualified "Yes" or "No" answer.

Occasionally, however, you will encounter a legitimate qualified answer. In reply to the question, "Do you think our Allies should repay us for the lend-lease material we are sending them?" the respondent might say, "England certainly should, but I don't think we ought to collect from China." That is a split answer and, unless specifications state otherwise, should be written as a qualified reply. Similarly, if we ask the question, "Should the government take people out of non-essential jobs and put them to work in war jobs?" a respondent might reply, "It depends on the person. If he's got any skill, I'd say 'Yes,' but not otherwise." That is a legitimate qualified answer.

Again in response to the question, "Would you be in favor of or would you be against a law that would require boys to take a year's military training after the war when they become 18 years old?" a number of respondents replied, "Yes, *if* the program were like the R.O.T.C.," or "Yes, *if* the boys could finish school first." These are legitimate qualified answers.

Specifications for the particular assignment usually state how to handle qualified answers which may arise on a given question.

Remember that perhaps nine out of ten of the "qualified answers" that respondents make in their first responses are *not* acceptable qualifications. Some are "hedging answers"; others are evidences of sheer mental laziness—and it is up to you to recognize them as such. You can usually sift the genuine qualified answers from the "hair-splitters" in the following ways:

1. By repeating the question.
2. By employing the old stand-bys—"Well, in general . . .", "On the whole . . .", or "Taking everything into consideration . . ."
3. By holding the respondent to a strict recognition of the question meaning.

We have two regular ways of handling genuine qualified (or "depends") answers:

1. When we are particularly interested in all the qualifications which may be brought up, we provide a space headed *"Q.A."* (qualified answer) and ask you to record such answers precisely as you hear them—in the respondent's own words. In such cases, you do *not* circle an answer-number.
2. When we are interested primarily in specific "Yes" or "No," "Agree" or "Disagree" answers, no separate category is provided for qualified answers. In such instances you should check the "Don't know" answer-number and record verbatim the respondent's reply—"It depends . . .", "Unless . . .", "If . . .", and other significant qualifications.

How to Handle Cards to Attain Maximum Uniformity

NORC uses several types of questions which we call "Card Questions." This type of question requires the interviewer to hand a card to the respondent before reading the question from the questionnaire. The card lists several possible answers from which the respondent is asked to choose the one that corresponds most closely to his own opinion.

One example of a card question, which we used in a number of surveys to accumulate a trend, was designed to discover what people in this country thought was the fundamental attitude motivating the German and Japanese people. On this question the interviewer handed the respondent the card, then read from the questionnaire:

> *"Which of the following statements comes closest to describing how you feel, on the whole, about the people who live in Germany?"*

The card used looked like this:

13. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing how you feel, on the whole, about the people who live in Germany?

1. The German people will always want to go to war to make themselves as powerful as possible.
2. The German people may not like war, but they have shown that they are too easily led into war by powerful leaders.
3. The German people do not like war. If they could have the same chance as people in other countries, they would become good citizens of the world.

The same question was repeated for "the Japanese people," using the reverse side of the card.

Another such card question might read as follows: *"Which one of these six sources of news gives you the clearest picture of what's going on—the newspapers, the radio, newsreels, magazines, movie shorts, or talking to people?"*

If an interviewer attempted to ask either question in its entirety, it's quite possible that the respondent would interrupt before he had heard the whole list, or he might forget the earlier choices and ask to have the list repeated, or, remembering only the last one or two possible answers, he might make his choice solely between them. To avoid any of these difficulties, we ask you to hand the respondent the card on which are printed or mimeographed the question and the list of possible answers, then to *read aloud only the question proper.* The respondent can take his own time to study the list himself and consider his choice of answers.

Card questions have the disadvantage of slowing up a conversational interview. And when more than one card is used on an assignment, the interviewer has the added responsibility of being sure to present the right card at the right time. Cards sometimes trouble people with poor eyesight and those who have any other reading difficulty. But on lengthy, involved questions cards do keep the respondent from becoming confused and offer the fairest means of getting his real opinion.

When asking card questions, use standard NORC procedure insofar as possible in view of the exceptional problems involved in the presentation of such highly specialized questions. We can depend on the reliability of card question results only if all respondents who respond to card questions have the same full opportunity to choose any given answer-category. On a question of another type the interviewer presents the entire question-stimulus to the respondent; all the respondent needs to do is listen. On a card question, however, the interviewer reads only the first part of the question; the respondent becomes an active rather than a partially passive participant in the process when he *reads for himself* from the card the balance of the question-stimulus. Because of the respondent's inexperience, you must take certain precautions to prevent his unintentionally limiting his own choice of answers. NORC has found the following method of handling card questions to be most satisfactory in achieving uniformity:

1. After you hand the respondent the card, ask the question *slowly and distinctly.* Be sure he understands what you are asking him to do. If necessary, repeat the explanation that "I'd just like you to read those four statements and then tell me which one comes *closest* to *your* opinion.
2. Give the respondent all the *time* he needs to read the card. Don't hurry him in any way. Watch to be sure that he reads *all* the alternatives. If the respondent merely scans the card hastily or gives his opinion after reading only one possible answer, ask him, "Would you mind reading *all* the statements? I want to make sure that I get your opinion right, and there's a chance that one of the later choices might suit you better."

3. If a respondent replies, "I like that 'A' statement best," or "Number 3 looks good to me," *read back* the answer the respondent chose to make certain that he told you the right letter or number.

If the respondent says none of the possible answers expresses his own opinion, or if he tries to select more than one statement, remind him that you want only the *one* which *comes closest* to what he thinks. If he just can't decide between two or more possible answers, you must record his reply as "Don't know." In such instances be sure to write down any comment that is made.

If you have *any* suspicion that the *respondent can't read the card* or is unable to understand what he does read, don't hesitate to help him by reading all the choices aloud—carefully and with proper emphasis. Illiterates or persons with bad eyesight will sometimes study a card for several minutes (pretending to be reading) rather than admit they can't make out the words; then, too, persons with limited reading ability are often unable to distinguish the differences in meaning among the alternatives offered.

In such instances, let the respondent hold the card, but read the various alternatives to him from the questionnaire,* explaining, "There are three ideas on the card. Now the first one says, . . ., and the second one is, . . ., (and so on). Now which one of those ideas comes closest to *your* opinion?"

When you read a card question aloud to a respondent, your purpose should be to give him an oral image as comparable as possible to the visual image received by the respondent who reads the question to himself (and who has as much time as he wishes to make up his mind which alternative comes closest to his own attitude). To achieve this desired result as fully as possible, you should *read the alternatives very slowly and distinctly so that the person you are reading to has as much time as he needs to make his decision.*

> When a respondent has had to put on his glasses to read a card and you know there will be another card question later in the interview, it is a thoughtful idea—to save the person the trouble of constantly fumbling with his glasses—to say, "Now I'm going to have another card for you to read right after these next few questions."

*Sometimes the alternatives are not printed in full on the questionnaire, in which case you will have to read them from a second card or from a copy you make for yourself.

Chapter 8

Reporting the Response

No matter how successful you've been in putting the respondent at ease, no matter how carefully you've asked the questions, and no matter how complete and specific a response you have obtained—the interview is not valuable unless the person's responses are *reported* properly on the questionnaire.

If the interviewer forgets to circle the answer-number, it's just as if he had never asked the question; if he makes a mistake and marks the wrong category, our results will be inaccurate; if he fails to take down a free answer *just as the respondent says it,* we may get a distorted view of the person's opinion. The interviewer's function in this respect is that of messenger—a *medium* through whom we in the office can listen to the opinions of thousands of persons all over the country; and if the interviewer doesn't do a good job of reporting those opinions, of making clear to us what each respondent *means,* the questionnaires can't be properly analyzed, and our research is handicapped.

Even after you have secured a complete and exact answer to the question there still remains a large opportunity for error in filling out a questionnaire. Unless you are thoroughly familiar with the questionnaire and Specifications, for example, you may ask questions which should not be asked and skip some which should be asked. If the interviewing conditions are unfavorable, if you are frequently interrupted, you may easily overlook asking a question or recording the reply. If you are too intent on obtaining the next interview, you may forget to fill in all the Factual Data on the one you have just completed.

Omissions

The most frequent type of error in reporting the response is the omission—the failure, for one reason or another, to check or to write down the person's opinion on that question. If this happens, we in the office are helpless. When you leave a question blank, we can make no assumptions as to what the answer would have been. The tabulators can't tell whether you forgot to ask the question, whether the respondent couldn't or wouldn't reply, or whether you neglected to record his answer.

Omissions have an importance far beyond the loss of one answer in an interview which may contain answers to 20 or 30 other questions. And that is because practically all questions on our questionnaires are *inter-related,* and the inter-relations of opinions on those questions play an essential part in our statistical analysis. No one question ever stands entirely by itself. Determining the total number of persons who reply "Yes" or "No" to the various questions is only a small part of the job of questionnaire analysis.

When we analyze answers in terms of the age, sex, education, etc., of the people answering "Yes" or "No," the results become really meaningful. They usually become more significant still when we compare replies with the opinions of the same people on related questions on the questionnaire. As a result, the *omission of one answer can make your entire interview almost worthless.* Here are two examples:

> On every questionnaire we ask you to record the respondent's age. We don't do this in order to find out how many people are in each age group; we know before we start. But we automatically sort every question on the ballot by age, in order to separate the opinions of younger respondents from those of older ones. Young people think quite differently from their elders on some issues, and it's important for us to know when that is the case. Now if you fail to give the respondent's age, that omission affects every question on the ballot and makes the entire interview much less valuable. Since we can't tell how old the person is, we cannot use the interview in the analysis by age.
>
> A question on a recent survey was: "Do you and your family have more money coming in now than you did last year at this time?" The fact that a certain percentage answered "Yes" isn't half so revealing as an analysis of who those persons are who said "Yes" and how their opinions on other questions differ from those who answered "No." If you had failed to record the answer to this question on one of your questionnaires, our analysis of all other questions would have been incomplete, and again the whole interview would have been worthless for many analyses.

Note, too, that if we have to put aside one of your questionnaires because of an omission, it means that you are, to all intents and purposes, one interview short in your quota and that your cross-

section is thereby inaccurate. The fact that you did not return the proper number of usable questionnaires thus reduces the reliability of some of our results.

Errors That Creep In

Just as important as omissions are the errors which are likely to slip onto your questionnaires unless you are constantly on guard.

These are some of the most common:

1. *Asking questions which should be omitted.*

   If the specifications for a question state that it should be asked only under certain conditions (if "Yes" to a preceding question, for example), leave the question *blank* unless those conditions apply.

2. *Circling the wrong answer-number.*

   The use of answer-numbers on questionnaires was introduced to decrease chances of error and to increase the efficiency of both interviewers and coders. If, through carelessness, an interviewer circles a reply different from the one actually given, that error can never be corrected.

   If answer-boxes are provided instead of numbers, we ask all interviewers to mark the boxes with "X's" instead of "√'s," because a standard system is desirable, and the "X's" seem, in practice, less likely to be placed carelessly.

3. *Circling more than one answer-number.*

   Of course, it is important to circle one and only one answer-number for each question (unless the specifications definitely include other instructions).

   Sometimes a respondent gives an answer to a question, and you circle an answer-number accordingly. Then the respondent changes his mind and gives another answer. *Before* you circle the answer-number corresponding to the respondent's *final decision* be sure to scratch out the answer-number circled for the original response. If both answer-numbers are circled, the tabulators are at a loss to know which answer represents the respondent's final opinion. Therefore, neither answer can be used.

   As bad as circling the wrong answer-number or checking the wrong box is marking the questionnaires so

that the coders can't tell which answer you intended to indicate. For example:

4. *Inserting a dash to indicate a "Don't know" or a "Refused" answer.*

   The interviewer who uses a dash instead of writing out the correct answer (believe it or not, this has been done) gives the Coding Department absolutely *no* information. It is important that the Coding Department know whether the respondent answered "Don't know" or "I'd rather keep my ideas to myself on that one." A dash cannot be coded.

How to Avoid Errors and Omissions

An occasional error or omission is bound to slip through in spite of the most rigorous checking, as many experienced interviewers have discovered to their chagrin. Yet a good interviewer can hold his average of mistakes to less than one in 20 interviews—and here is how it is done:

1. *Be familiar with the layout of the questionnaire and the Specifications before you start to interview.*

   No amount of careful inspection can correct errors and omissions if you are not aware that they exist. To avoid mistakes, you have to know what is a mistake and what isn't.

2. *Avoid unfavorable interviewing conditions.*

   You are likely to make many more errors and omissions if you interview a person on a busy street corner than if you interview him in his own home. Similarly, errors and omissions are always more likely when you are frequently interrupted, or when the presence of a third person is distracting.

3. *Inspect each questionnaire carefully* before *you go to each new respondent.*

   In other words, check the questionnaire for errors and omissions right after you finish the interview. *Don't wait until you get home.* Circle any answer-numbers you may inadvertently have forgotten to circle, correct any errors, and finish recording any free answer you didn't have time to get down in full. Clarify any handwriting which is not clear and legible. Be sure the Factual Data are completely filled in all the way down to your signature and the date. Then tally the interview on your Quota Sheet, put the questionnaire away, and forget about it.

4. *To make certain you are following the proper procedure, review your Specifications after completing the first interview and again after the second and third.*

Reporting Free Answers

Free-answer questions pose a special problem in the reporting of your respondent's opinions. On the alternative-type question you have to circle the answer-number designated; on a free-answer question you must record *verbatim* every word the person says. The reason for our emphasis on "Verbatim" is apparent when you consider how free answers are handled in the Coding Department. On a question where you circle an answer-number, tabulation of the results simply involves adding up the circled numbers. On free-answer questions it is necessary to determine into what groups the answers fall, to devise a set of code-categories defining these groups, and then to classify or *code* each free answer into one of the established categories.

Deciding whether a particular reply should be classified in one group or another often presents a knotty problem. This coding process is particularly difficult if the interviewer has been careless in recording exactly what the respondent said. If the interviewer merely gives the gist of the person's answer by writing down a word or two, the coders have little or no way of determining the respondent's precise meaning. On the other hand, if the interviewer has faithfully recorded the answer clearly and completely *in the respondent's exact words,* this answer can be classified confidently and accurately by the coders into one of the established code categories.

Here's an example. On a certain survey NORC asked people if they needed their cars for necessary driving and, if so, for what sort of necessary driving. One interviewer recorded the identical answer, "Business," on several questionnaires. The coders were puzzled. Did that word "Business" mean that the respondent drove back and forth to his work each day, or did it mean that he

used his car in delivering, selling, collecting, or other phases of actual business procedure? Or was the interviewer perhaps merely recording the inspecific answer "Business driving" to cover such things as shopping, driving the children to school, etc.? Code categories had been set up for all these possible car uses and it was important to know exactly what was meant. The answer as recorded was useless. Replies of these respondents were lost.

Now, if the interviewer had taken down those answers in full in the respondent's own words, the coders would have had no trouble. Such answers might have been, "Why, I couldn't get to work without the car. I'm three miles from the bus line," or "I have to call on dealers all day, and a car is the only way I can get around," or "My wife uses the car every day for family business; she's always picking up the kids or calling for me at the office or using it for shopping." These replies represent the respondent's complete verbatim answer to the question and allow no chance for ambiguity in interpretation at the coding stage.

Complete transcriptions of what the respondent actually said are helpful, too, to the persons who analyze the results. Many free answers are lifted bodily from the questionnaires for use in press releases, *Opinion News,* articles, and reports. Free answers often help the coders to reconstruct the respondent's pattern of thinking—the thread which runs through the entire questionnaire, to determine why a person answers inter-related questions in specific ways; the response to one free-answer question may shed valuable light on the reasons impelling the respondent to answer other questions as he did. Free answers also constitute a valuable source of suggestions for questions on future surveys.

Again, *an interviewer's performance on free-answer questions is one of the best measures of his ability.* An interviewer whose questionnaires are rich in remarks and comments and whose free answers mirror the various types of people he encounters in his cross-section is almost certain to have the informal, conversational manner which encourages respondents to "open up"—to talk freely. Such an interviewer is almost certain to be one who is not satisfied with a vague preliminary reply, one who probes until a definite answer is forthcoming. Conversely, an interviewer whose questionnaires are merely a series of circled numbers and brief, stereotyped free answers (often reflecting the interviewer's own word-patterns) either is not successful in eliciting information from his respondents or is careless in recording

the answers he does get. The questionnaire is the main basis on which we can judge the work of the interviewer in the field and his ability to continue in the specialized field of public opinion research.

What We Mean by "Verbatim"

Free answers must always be recorded in the respondent's own language. That means: listen attentively to what the respondent says—the words he uses, the way he phrases his response, and *quote him directly,* just as if you were a newspaper reporter quoting an important official.

WRITE	DON'T WRITE
"There's no sense to that policy."	"Unwise policy."
"I have a family to support."	"Supports family."
"I couldn't tell you about that."	"Doesn't know."

Don't polish what the respondent says. Take it down in his own words—bad grammar, dialect, slang, even profanity. Consider the differences in intensity and meaning between the following examples; one verbatim, the other polished:

"I don't give a damn what them rich guys says. If Roosevelt says keep 'em down to 25,000 bucks a year, that's good enough for me!"	"The President is right in wanting to limit incomes to $25,000 per year."

The answers reproduced in the right-hand column fail utterly to convey the true flavor of the respondent's reply. The interviewer has lost a colorful answer; he has missed some of the important implications of the person's verbatim response; he has even distorted the respondent's character by changing his language.

Don't summarize what the respondent says. Take it down completely, word for word. Consider the differences between the following examples; one recorded verbatim, the other summarized:

"There's been too much bickering between management and labor, between government and business. Everybody ought to realize we've got a tough war on our hands, and this is no time for any group to try to line its own pocket."	"Too much bickering." *or* "Too much bickering between management and labor."

Another example of how confusing a summarized answer can be was presented to the coders when "Absolutely" was given as the answer to the question: "Do you think the United States should be paid for the war materials we have been sending to England, or do you think her help in the war is enough payment?" The one word "Absolutely" could refer to either half of the question. Naturally the answer was lost.

We do not ask that you take down *everything* the person says during the course of the interview. Much of the respondent's talk may be repetitious and irrelevant. But on any free-answer question be sure to record the *specific reply* to that question *in full* and *exactly as the person said it.*

Never make the mistake of attempting to substitute a dash or a hyphen for a conjunction or a transitional phrase between two parts of an answer to a question. The coder is always at a loss as to how to translate the dash. In many instances the full meaning of the reply may hinge on the choice of translation: "and," "or," "also," "such as," "for example," "because of," "in order to," "for the purpose of," or what have you. Again, whether the word or words after the dash are an *explanation of* or *an addition to* the first part of the answer may determine whether the answer must be coded under one classification or under more than one. To a question regarding desirable changes in the public library, one interviewer reported the answer: "More books—branch libraries." The coders wondered whether the respondent had replied, "More books *and* more branch libraries," "More books *for* branch libraries," or something still different.

To still another question on why some people put off seeing a doctor, this answer appeared on a questionnaire: "Neglect—fear of exam.—cost—treatment." The whole meaning of this answer could be changed by the interpretation of the dashes. Was the respondent's neglect due to his fear of the examination routine, his inability to pay for medical care, his refusal to pay an exorbitant price, his fear of treatment, or all four factors combined? Did the respondent say he feared the examination *and* the cost *and* the treatment? Did he fear the cost *of* the treatment? Or were "cost" and "treatment" separate reasons, not connected with each other or with "fear"?

Getting It All Down

You don't need a knowledge of shorthand to record everything the respondent says in reply to a free-answer question. In the

first place, few of the answers you receive, even after probing, will be longer than one or two sentences. In the second place, only a few persons talk so fast that you will have trouble keeping up with them. In the third place, most respondents will be glad to give you what time you need to write down all they have just said, for it is to their interest to have their answers recorded accurately and completely.

A skilled interviewer, however, should be able to take down free answers quickly. To do otherwise is to risk losing the conversational, informal quality of the interview. And there are several little tricks which can help you become adept at speedy recording.

1. *Be prepared to write as soon as you've asked the question.*

   It is not always safe to start writing the respondent's first words of response, for some people take a few sentences to "warm up." They may begin with a remark such as, "Well, now, I was talking to my husband about that last night," or "I'm not sure this is just what you want, but the way I see it . . ." Such irrelevancies naturally need not be recorded. But when the respondent actually starts to *answer the question,* begin to write immediately. If you wait until he's all through before you start to write it down, it will be difficult to record the reply *verbatim.* You'll be tempted to summarize the answer in your own words—a mistake which marks the inexperienced or careless interviewer.

2. *Write quickly, but legibly.*

   Hen-scratching or scribbling which even experienced coders can't read is worse than useless. It wastes your time in writing it and the coders' time trying to translate it. The coders ask that interviewers distinguish between *n*'s, *m*'s, *u*'s, *r*'s, and *w*'s, which too often appear as a series of indistinguishable loops. *O*'s and *a*'s which are not closed, failure to distinguish between *t*'s, *l*'s, and other looped letters, or breaking a word in the middle too sharply can, in combination with other scribbling, make translation extremely difficult.

   Naturally we can't insist on a "fine Spencerian hand"; so long as your answers are recorded accurately, completely, and *legibly,* we're satisfied. But too often a needed answer must be discarded because coders, who are experienced readers of every variety of handwrit-

ing, are unable—even after careful study and comparison—to decipher two or three key words.*
Any illegible handwriting or undecipherable notes should be cleaned up immediately after you've finished the interview, when you're examining the questionnaire for errors and omissions.

3. *Feel free to use common abbreviations.*
There is no need, for example, to spell out the word "government." Simply write "govt." "DK" is an accepted abbreviation for "Don't know." The important thing is to get it all down.

4. *Don't erase; cross out instead.*
Crossing out takes far less time and far fewer motions than erasing. Crossing out is as neat as most erasures, and, unless you need the space, it is the preferable device on questions. *Never erase on factual information.*

Even an experienced interviewer with a gift for rapid writing will fall behind sometimes. In such cases take a moment or two before asking the next question, if necessary. If the essential friendliness of the interview has been maintained, most respondents will actually be flattered that you stop a moment to get down all they said. If the person should show any sign of impatience, make some remark like, "This is very interesting. I want to make sure I get it all down here the way you said it."

Complete recording of free answers, far from making your respondent "freeze up," usually has the opposite effect. If the person delivers a lengthy opinion and sees the interviewer record only a few key words, he is likely to content himself with monosyllabic replies on subsequent questions. On the other hand, if the interviewer seems to be making a point of reporting his opinions faithfully, the respondent can feel encouraged to develop his ideas.

If you are cramped for space on the questionnaire, use whatever white space is available including the margins.

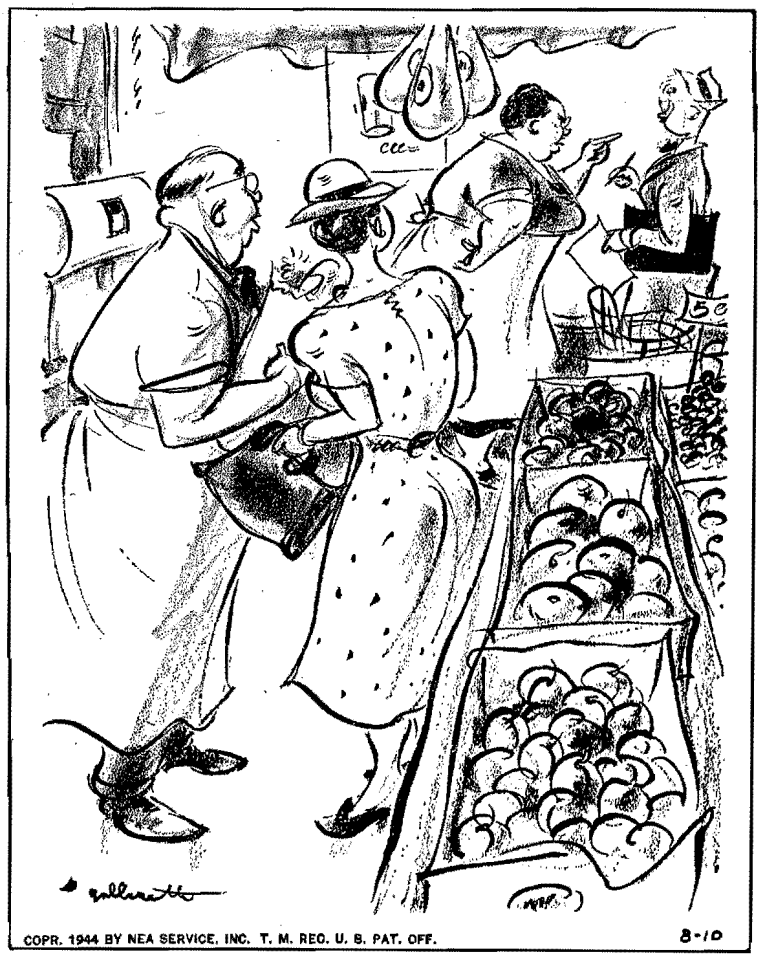
Comments

Whenever any space is provided following (or opposite) recording categories, interviewers should, in addition to circling the answer-number indicated, write down whatever the respondent

*Equally inadequate is neat handwriting, if it is made possible by the sacrifice of complete recording. One or two words culled from a respondent's meaty answer and set down in beautiful letters are as valueless as a complete but illegible recording.

Side Glances

By Galbraith



"I turn those political poll-takers over to my wife nowadays—they get more opinions from her than they bargain for!"

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says to amplify, explain, or elaborate his opinion. Whenever a category and space are provided especially for a qualified answer (Q.A.), this space may also be used for recording comments. Inasmuch as the coders must always read every longhand word on the questionnaire, they will not be confused by the alternating appearance of qualified answers and comments in this space.

> *Do not ask for comments*—simply take down whatever comments a respondent volunteers. If no comments are offered, leave the space blank.

It is important that the interviewer write down *all pertinent remarks* the respondent makes in reply to *any* question. *Don't be afraid to use your pencil.* On the other hand, don't bother taking down repetitions and irrelevancies. If you have circled the "Approve" answer-number on a certain question, it is pointless to write down the remark, "I think it would be a good idea." You have already recorded that opinion in satisfactory fashion by circling the answer-number indicated. But if the respondent says, "I should say I do approve! They should have done it long ago," or if he says, "Yes, I've lately come around to thinking it's a good idea," you will fail to record accurately the person's full and true feeling unless you record the comment *in addition to* circling the "Approve" answer-number.

If we could depend on *all* interviewers to take down *every* pertinent or interesting comment, it would be possible to tabulate comments and to report, for example, that "Of all persons interviewed on this survey about the Japanese, 38 per cent volunteered, without any suggestion whatever, that Japanese aliens could not be trusted. It is illuminating to learn that of this 38 per cent more than half—21 per cent of the entire cross-section—used the word 'sneaky' to describe alien Japanese—a fact which shows the extent to which the concept of this group is stereotyped in the American mind."

When NORC asked a question about whether or not "there will always be big wars," many interviewers included in their Interviewer's Report the comment that respondents frequently quoted or referred to the Bible in answering. Had *all* those interviewers recorded *every* such reference on the specific questionnaire—rather than merely mentioning the fact in their reports, the references to the Bible could have been tabulated to throw an interesting and unexpected light on the question.

In reporting comments, *take care that the comment recorded does not have the appearance of contradicting, negating, or seriously changing the meaning of the original answer you have indicated by circling an answer-number.* When confronted with such apparent discrepancies, coders have no way to determine whether the interviewer made an error in circling the *wrong answer number* or whether he wrote down *only part* of the respondent's reply.

On a question concerning United States membership in a world organization, for example, one interviewer circled the answer-number for "Stay out," and recorded the comment, "I really don't know." The coders did not know whether the answer should be classified as "Stay out" or "Don't know." Did the respondent change his mind after first replying "Stay out," or did he begin by saying, "I really don't know," and then decide that his opinion was "Stay out"?

Actually, the respondent may have replied: "It seems to me we ought to stay out. Well, no, I'd better not say that, for I really don't know." If this was the case, the interviewer circled the "Stay out" answer-number too quickly and forgot to change the circle after the respondent had finally organized his thinking.

Or, the person interviewed may have said, "Well, heck, I really don't know. Of course, it might not be very smart of us to let all those other countries tell us how to run our affairs. Well, remember what Washington said—stay out of entangling alliances. No, put me down for staying out." In this instance, the interviewer was correct in waiting to circle the answer-number until the respondent had made up his mind, but leaving the original "I don't know" to baffle the coders was a mistake.

On another question an interviewer circled an answer-number indicating that the respondent believed that, after the defeat of Germany, fascist ideas of government would largely *die out.* Yet this comment was recorded, "The Germans are so tricky; maybe the same ideas will spring up again after a while." The coders' dilemma: was the respondent's *final* or *predominant reaction* "die out" or "spring up again"?

Again, on still another question, although the answer-number circled indicated that the respondent believed that, after the war, the Japanese *should* be allowed to hold a free election to choose their own form of government, the comment read, "I don't think they are capable. The Allies should give them a form of government."

The Neighbors By George Clark

Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.
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"If I told that survey feller how I'm going to vote he'd have the whole town figured out. This being an average town, he could tell how the nation would go. That's why I keep quiet."

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HOW TO HANDLE AN ASSIGNMENT

Chapter 9

Quota Controls

The preceding section told you "how to get a good interview" by making a friendly approach, establishing an informal atmosphere, asking the questions properly, probing for complete and specific responses, and reporting those responses faithfully. But no matter how good the interviews are, and no matter how many of them we get, our results will not be accurate if we interview the wrong people.

We have said that all public opinion research is based on the proven fact that . . .

> *The views of a comparatively small number of persons accurately reflect the opinions of all the people—provided that the sample of persons interviewed represents an exact miniature of the total population.*

A sample of only 500 interviews, for example, will accurately reflect the opinions of the 84,000,000 adults in this country within a very small margin of error—provided that those 500 respondents truly represent all types of people in their actual proportions in the population. On the other hand, a sample of 5,000 or 500,000 interviews will give a distorted picture of the true state of public opinion if the cross-section is not accurate.* The National Opinion Research Center usually obtains 2,500 interviews on its na-

*Perhaps the best known case of a large sample's "going wrong" is the *Literary Digest's* forecast of the 1936 Presidential election. More than two million ballots were collected, and on the basis of this enormous sample the *Digest* confidently predicted Landon's election by a 54% majority of all votes cast. Roosevelt, of course, was not beaten with only 46% of the votes but re-elected by a 60% majority. The reason for the 14-point error was that the *Digest's* sample was not a true cross-section of the people of the United States. Ballots were mailed to persons listed in telephone directories, to car owners, to magazine subscribers, etc. As a result of this unrepresentative mailing list plus a disproportionate return of ballots by persons in the upper economic brackets, the *Digest* sample of over two million reflected to a large degree the political opinions of the upper socio-economic groups—those who could afford telephones, automobiles, and magazines. Within these groups, Landon was probably favored by approximately the same majority that the *Digest* predicted. But the *Digest* poll failed

tional surveys. Well-established laws of probable error due to size of sample prove that random samples of these sizes will be within 3 per cent of true opinion in 997 surveys out of any 1,000 conducted under comparable conditions. In other words, the mathematical probability is 332-to-1 that other random samples of the same size would come within 3 per cent of finding the same results. A sample of 1,250 cases, which is also used by NORC, assures accuracy of results within 4½ per cent.

If a universe which is to be sampled is homogeneous, the best procedure is random sampling—a method by which chance alone determines who or what is to be included. People, however, are not homogeneous in their characteristics, and factors such as age, sex, education, occupation, and income all influence opinions. Therefore, a random sample is not satisfactory, and some controls are necessary to assure that most of these factors are present in the sample in the same proportions that they exist in the total population.

If we did not apply such controls, NORC surveys might be conducted like this:

> We would get all our interviews from places near the Denver and New York offices in order to save the time, expense, and inconvenience of training interviewers in distant localities. We'd give each interviewer 20 or 30 questionnaires and merely instruct him to get that number of interviews. The interviewer would talk to members of his family, then stop next door and interview all the people there, and keep working through his neighborhood till he got his quota. At the end we would have 2,500 interviews, and they might be very good interviews. But they would represent the opinions only of friends and relatives of our interviewers in the area surrounding two cities. Our cross-section would be hopelessly inaccurate.

There are two conditions which any sample must meet if it is to be an *accurate* one:

1. The sampling points (the cities, towns, and rural areas polled) must, when combined, represent a true cross-section of the nation.

because it did not adequately represent the vast group of people who did not own cars and telephones—most of whom voted for Roosevelt in the election.

The apparent accuracy of the over-all figures in earlier *Digest* predictions may be interpreted as the result largely of accidental factors rather than of careful sampling, in that implicit in these predictions were less obvious internal errors and inaccuracies attributable to a constant bias—the *Digest's* failure to secure a truly random sample. Because in several Presidential elections before 1936 voting behavior seemed less conditioned by economic background, the biases of the *Digest* sample failed to affect the apparent accuracy of the several predictions.

2. The quota of interviews within *each* of these sampling points must represent the *entire adult population* of places in that population bracket, and, when combined, the nation as a whole.

The first of these conditions we ourselves can control from the office. Obviously, it is impossible to interview in every community all over the country. So, on the basis of existing statistical data,

"Golly, Mommy, you must be dumb! The lady gave you a 'D' on your test."

we choose some 100 sampling points representing all sections of the country and all sizes and types of community, and assign the correct proportion of interviews in each area. Sometimes we even instruct you to obtain a certain number of interviews in a particular suburban area, or we may make a special point of sending you to a nearby town—in order to make sure that the combination of all our sampling points will represent a true cross-section of the nation.

The second of these conditions is much harder for NORC to control. We can't give you the names of particular persons to interview, nor can we insist that each interviewer get an assigned number of interviews from persons who have attended college, persons who have gone to high school, and persons who have never gone beyond the eighth grade; from Republicans and from Democrats; from day laborers and from white collar workers; from people who own cars and people who do not—and from the hundreds of other possible groupings into which people might be sorted to explain the relation of their interests to their opinions on the issues covered in NORC surveys.

What NORC *can* do is to control the most obvious factors which influence opinions, by assigning specific quotas within the most important groupings. And we can also lay down general rules for the interviewers to follow in choosing the persons they interview, to the end that the combined quotas will be truly representative of designated areas and, when finally combined, of the United States as a whole.

The three most obvious factors which influence opinions are sex, age, and economic level—standard of living:

1. *Sex*

   Men sometimes think differently from women on an issue, and NORC surveys would not be accurate if we did not get the opinions of both men and women in their true proportions. Therefore we assign a certain number of interviews with men and a certain number with women.

2. *Age*

   Young adults sometimes think differently from older ones on an issue, and our surveys would not be accurate if we polled too many young people or too many old people. So we assign a certain number of interviews in each of two or more age-groupings.

3. *Economic level*

   A third obvious factor which influences opinions is a person's standard of living—his economic status in the community. Men and women often see eye-to-eye on an issue, and young people and old people may have the same opinions on many questions, but almost always a significant divergence appears between the collective views of the "rich" and the "poor," the "haves" and the "have-nots"—and no public opinion poll can claim to be accurate unless it includes in its sample the proper proportions from each standard-of-living grouping.

By assigning each interviewer, then, a specific quota of interviews in each sex, age group, and standard-of-living group, we *control* our sample within each community. And assuming that all interviewers, within the limits of these quotas, approach people at random, the laws of chance will operate to produce a total sample which includes the proper proportion of *all* population groups.

How to Define Standard of Living

Sex and age are factors easy to control, but the opinion research worker encounters difficulties when he tries to make sure that his sample will include the proper number of "rich" people and "poor" people. Offhand, it might seem that all the supervisor has to do is to instruct his interviewers to talk with a given number of persons making $30 a week or less, a given number earning from $30 to $50 a week, and so on. But there are two important reasons why such a procedure is not practical.

First, *up-to-date income figures are seldom available, either for the nation as a whole or for any particular community*—a fact which makes it impossible to determine just how many persons in each income group should be interviewed to secure a true sample. Second, *the standard of living which a given money income can provide depends upon the number of persons in the family and the particular community in which they live.* An income of $50 a week, for example, could provide more fully for a family of two than for a family of six or make possible a higher standard of living in a small Southern town than in New York City.

In other words, income alone is not a satisfactory criterion of economic status, because some respondents with weekly incomes in the $30-to-$50 bracket, for instance, might be classed as "well-to-do," some as "average," and some as "poor"—on the basis of the standard of living in the communities in which they live.

NORC has approached the problem of defining standard of living in two ways. First, we have set up four group classifications, called *economic levels,* which define a person's standard of living in terms of his ability to secure the necessities, comforts, and luxuries appropriate to the community in which he lives. Second, we accumulate continuously up-to-date statistics on *home rent and value* in each of the cities and towns used as sampling points in our nation-wide cross-section. Thus we are able to assign interviews on the basis of either economic level or rent. On some surveys and in some communities we instruct you to interview a given number of persons in the *A* economic level, a given number in the *B* level, and so on. In other instances, we instruct you to interview a given number of people paying rent of less than $20 a month, a given number paying from $20 to $39.99, etc.*

Under *both* methods of assignment the interviewer—on the basis of his own judgment of the respondent's standard of living—classifies each respondent into one of the four economic levels and *also* records either the amount of rent paid or the estimated rental value (in the case of owner-occupied homes).

Rental value is an objective control; economic level is subjective. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. The amount of rent paid is easily ascertainable, is closely related to the standards of living, and provides a uniform statistical basis for comparison. Economic level, on the other hand, is dependent upon the interviewer's judgment, but it takes into account *all* the factors which enter into the standard of living and thus makes for more reliable comparisons. In combination, the two controls enable NORC to obtain a reliable cross-section and to analyze group differences of opinion in the most efficient manner. Let's discuss each type of control in detail, for a clear understanding of both economic levels and rental quotas is essential to the proper handling of your assignments.

Economic Levels—a Definition

Here is a brief description of each of the four economic levels—from *A* (wealthy) to *D* (poor):

The "A" Group—"Wealthy"

Out of every 100 families in a community the two most prosperous—or wealthy—belong in this top economic group. Thus, in a

*At the present time, assignments on regular NORC surveys are made by rental groups in urban places (cities and towns of more than 2,500 population), and by economic level in smaller communities. As will be explained in a later chapter, on rural assignments neither of these controls is placed on your selection of farm dwellers.

city of 10,000 population, comprising perhaps 2,500 families, about 50 families would fall into the *A* group. Generally speaking, these *A* families have, or could have if they wished, all the necessities and comforts of life, and they can afford all the luxuries appropriate to the community in which they live. While the concrete evidences of wealth and prosperity differ from place to place, the common denominator for the *A* group is the fact that they generally can afford the luxuries which are available in the community or area in which they reside.

A persons will be found following certain occupations more frequently than others; the head of an *A* family is likely to be a business executive, a bank president, a large cattle rancher, a holder of mining interests, a lawyer, a physician, or the like. Many *A*'s have a high level of formal education; a good number will be older persons.

The "B" Group—"Upper Middle Class"

Second highest in our scale of standard-of-living groups are the 14 next-most-prosperous families out of every 100—a group which might also be called "upper middle class." Like members of the *A* group, the *B*'s can take the necessities and comforts of life for granted, but they differ from the *A*'s in that their choice of the luxuries available in their community is limited. Unlike *A*'s, *B*'s must choose which luxuries they want most.

The breadwinner of a *B* family is frequently a professional or semi-professional man, such as a dentist, pharmacist, or professor; he may be the owner or operator of a fairly successful small or medium-sized business (judged in relation to other businesses in the community), an executive below the top ranks, a highly skilled technician, or a contractor.

The "C" Group—"Middle Class"

This is the great middle class—the group to which most Americans think they belong (although only about half of them do)—comprising about 52 out of every 100 families in a community. Included is a wide range of people all along the economic scale from those not quite in the *B* group to those barely out of the *D* group. Like the *A*'s and *B*'s, the *C*'s have all the necessities and some or even all the comforts of life available in their community. Unlike the *A* and *B* groups, however, the *C*'s have few, if any, luxuries and may, in some cases, lack most of the tangible comforts connoted in the local standard of living scale.

In your community the bulk of the *C* group may be found in the following occupational categories: skilled and semi-skilled mechanical and production workers; experienced clerical employees and retail sales people; government employees—federal, state, county, and municipal; owners or operators of small businesses with limited sales volume (as compared with other businesses in the community).

The "D" Group—"Poor"

Almost a third of the families in any community—32 out of every 100—fall into the *D* group, the poor people. None of the *D* group have all, though they may have some, of the items which are considered necessary to an acceptable standard of living in the community.

When members of a *D* family have a job—if they have a job at all—they are usually in those occupations which pay the lowest wages in the community: common day labor; casual employment; types of domestic service where no skill or experience is required; unskilled and poorly paid industrial or farm labor; or certain types of clerical work. Newspaper vendors, some persons in custodial services, and certain maintenance workers also frequently fall into this category.

At the bottom of the scale—among these 32 out of every 100 families—are the destitute, people on home relief, many old age pensioners, many of the unemployed, and the unemployables.

Judging Economic Level

The classification of each respondent into his true economic level is a difficult but highly important job. It is important because, in instances when we assign you a quota of interviews from each level, the reliability of our entire cross-section depends upon your ability to judge economic level correctly; even when your assignment is in terms of rental groups, we must depend upon your judgment of economic status to enable us to report the probably divergent opinions of *A*'s, *B*'s, *C*'s, and *D*'s. Judging economic level is a difficult job because the standard of living varies from place to place, and there is no single criterion which automatically determines a person's economic level.

Naturally, the classification is easy in some cases. If a man is popularly regarded as the richest man in town, for instance; if he is president of the bank, has the biggest and best house in the

community, and lives in the best neighborhood; if he sends his children to the best schools, and so on—he is obviously an *A*. On the other hand, if you talk with a woman whose husband is unemployed, perhaps on relief, who lives in a shack in the poorest section of the city, and who is busy preparing an inadequate meal for a roomful of poorly dressed children while she answers your questions—you can be sure she is a *D*.

But few cases are so clear-cut. Particularly in areas where there have been economic shifts, it will often be hard to judge economic level. A prominent lawyer, for example, may have an annual income reduced from $25,000 to $5,000, but may still reside in a fine home. A factory worker, formerly on relief or with only a very low-paid part-time job, may be earning as much as $100 a week, yet still be living in wretched quarters. Moreover, it is often hard to draw a line at the point where the *B* economic level ends and the *C* starts, where the *C* stops and the *D* begins.

A careful study of the brief descriptions of the various economic levels previously given plus a mastery of the following analysis of the various economic factors which determine the standard of living enjoyed by an individual or a family should be of immense help to an interviewer in determining the classification of doubtful cases.

The first thing to remember in judging a respondent's economic level is that he is to be classified according to *his economic status in the city, town, or rural area in which he lives.* The *A* group in Los Angeles, for example, will differ considerably from the *A* group in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in the number of comforts and luxuries they possess—but in each city they will represent the top 2 per cent of the population in terms of standard of living.

> In every community, at all times, there will be the same proportions of *A*'s, *B*'s, *C*'s, and *D*'s. In poor communities or in hard times the standards will be lower; in wealthy communities or in good times the standards will be higher. *But at any time in any community the top 16 per cent of the population are* A*'s and* B*'s, the middle 52 per cent are* C*'s, and the bottom 32 per cent are* D*'s.*

The second thing to remember in judging a respondent's economic level is that he is to be classified on the basis of *all factors which enter into his standard of living,* but without regard to any factors which do not affect it.

The most common criteria in the correct classification of economic level are the following:

1. *Rent*

   A's and *B*'s are usually found in high-rent districts, *C*'s in medium-rent, and *D*'s in low-rent areas.

2. *Occupation*

   As suggested in our description of the various economic levels, certain occupations are fairly typical of certain economic levels. *A*'s and *B*'s seldom hold jobs which call for overalls; professional people are seldom found in *D* circumstances.

3. *Family status and size*

   Respondents are classified on the basis of the family's status. Thus, an unemployed stenographer who lives with her father, the town's leading physician, is judged on the basis of the family economic status rather than her own individual status.

   Family size is another important consideration, for a single man earning $3,000 a year at a skilled job will usually enjoy a higher standard of living than will a father of five children making the same income and working at the same type of job—even though both men may pay the same amount of rent.

4. *Income*

   Subject to the limitations previously outlined, the amount of earnings is obviously an important factor in determining a person's economic level. Earnings include both cash income and non-monetary income such as goods, services, and/or maintenance (living quarters and meals).

5. *Comforts and luxuries*

   Possession or lack of possession of such things as an automobile, mechanical kitchen and household equipment, a telephone, etc., usually has an important bearing on economic level. The amount of money spent for education, recreation, art, hobbies, and entertainment is another closely related factor.

No one of these criteria is a foolproof guide, of course, particularly in those times when normal values are upset. Rent, for instance, is one of the most reliable indications of economic status, but it is perfectly possible to find *D*'s, *B*'s, or even *A*'s occupying dwellings in the *C* rental bracket, and vice versa. Occupation, too, is normally a dependable guide, but many skilled and semi-skilled workers, customarily in the *C* group, may have advanced to *B* status in their communities under recent conditions or vice versa.

While money income also is usually good evidence of economic status, it can lead you badly astray in the case of a minister, for instance, who manages to live very well on a small salary because his church furnishes a manse or a parsonage. The same reservation applies to other employees who receive living quarters and/or board in addition to money compensation. Family possession of comforts and luxuries, usually a reliable indication of economic status, may have no significance at all in the case of a family able and eager to buy an automobile or an electric refrigerator, for instance, but unable to do so because of restrictions or shortages.

> Especially in larger cities, the presence of servants in the home may indicate a high economic level, but temporary manpower shortages have reduced the importance of this criterion.

To summarize—your final judgment of the respondent's economic level will be made in view of *all the factors involved combined*, even though several criteria may be at variance. Eight or nine times out of ten you will probably arrive at the correct classification immediately and without difficulty. In perhaps one or two cases out of ten you may be doubtful, torn between conflicting points of evidence. Yet, if you are guided by the principles here outlined, and if you are thoroughly familiar with the community in which you are interviewing, you will soon be able, by weighing carefully the factors involved, to place each respondent in his proper economic level.*

A Word of Caution

It has been consistently shown that many interviewers tend to classify their respondents into an economic level *lower* than that to which they actually belong. Most interviewers, for example, frequently include in their *D* group one or two who are properly

*In judging economic level you should disregard the respondent's ability to speak good English, the amount of education he has, the way he answers questions, and other factors not directly affecting his standard of living. While *A*'s and *B*'s are usually better educated and more articulate than *C*'s and *D*'s, you may frequently come across persons in the lowest economic bracket who have a better grasp of world affairs than those in the higher brackets, and you may encounter some *A*'s who never got beyond the eighth grade in school.

C's, in their *C* group one or two who would more correctly be classified as *B*'s, and in their *B* group a legitimate *A* or two. In other words, not enough poor people are interviewed. And when lower economic level quotas are partially filled with respondents properly belonging in the next higher level, the complete assignment is biased upwardly, or scaled too high, and an entire survey may be affected.

It is important that all interviewers should be aware of the influences which may lead them to scale an entire sample too "high" among the various economic brackets. Perhaps the most common misleading influence is the fact that individuals in the lowest economic level are usually more difficult to find and more difficult to interview than are people in the "average" or "prosperous" groups. Particularly in large cities, *D*'s may live in low-rent areas where some interviewers would prefer not to go; some *D*'s may have trouble speaking English; they are sometimes less cooperative and often less informed than respondents in the higher economic levels. It is perhaps natural, therefore, that interviewers should tend to under-represent the *true D* group in their samples.

Again, many people have an exaggerated conception of "average" economic status, and interviewers are not always an exception. Most interviewers are themselves of *B* or high *C* economic status, and they tend to judge the "average" in terms of their own circle of friends and acquaintances. This tendency may lead to interviewers' building whole quotas around an average which is higher than the true one for the community as a whole.*

Still another source of error which often results in classifying respondents too low on the economic scale is the tendency of interviewers to base their classifications on a uniform national standard rather than on the particular standard-of-living pattern of their own community at the time of the survey. An interviewer's concept of *B* status, for example, may be based on the living standards of the upper middle class group *not* in the small town where he is filling his quota, but in a booming industrial city characterized by relatively high salaries and high cost of living.

In order to counteract this common tendency to classify people into an economic level lower than that in which they truly belong, we urge you, *when in doubt as to a respondent's economic level, to classify him into the* higher *of the two economic levels in question.*

*A *Fortune* Survey question reported in February, 1940, offers interesting evidence of the tendency to exaggerate "average" economic status. *Fortune* found that almost 75% of "prosperous" people, when asked to classify themselves according to economic status, placed themselves in the "middle class."

If you are undecided whether a particular respondent is a *C* or a *D*, put him into the *C* group.* If you follow this practice consistently, your sample of *D*'s should adequately represent the opinions of the people in the lowest economic group.

Negroes and Farmers

Interviews with Negroes and farmers are seldom assigned either by economic level or by rental bracket. If any of either group are included in your quota, we merely instruct you to interview a certain number, and your selection is left largely to chance. Yet after each interview you must, of course, still classify the respondent according to his economic status.

Farmers are judged on the basis of the economic pattern of the rural area in which they reside. Among the factors to be considered in making the estimate—roughly in the order of their importance—are:

1. Number of acres owned.
2. Degree of mechanization.
3. Number and quality of farm buildings.
4. Fertility of the land.
5. Number of hired hands.**

Negroes are to be classified just as white persons are on the basis of economic standards prevailing in the entire community—white and colored. In other words, the status of a Negro respondent is judged in comparison with the standard of living of the community as a whole—not in comparison only with other Negroes. For this reason, by far the largest proportion of the Negro population will fall into the *D* economic level, though you may frequently come across Negroes who are *C*'s and even an occasional *B* or *A*.

Rental Quotas

In former years, NORC's sample of standard-of-living groups was controlled entirely by the interviewers' judgment of economic levels; every interviewer was assigned a designated number of *A*'s, *B*'s, *C*'s, and *D*'s to interview. A series of experiments showed, however, that our cross-section could be more accurately

*Even if you should err occasionally in following this rule, you will have erred in the least harmful direction.

**For more detailed instruction on classifying farmers by economic level, see Chapter 14, *Rural Interviewing*, beginning on page 121.

controlled by assigning interviews on the basis of monthly rent—leaving the distribution of economic level to chance—than by assigning on the basis of economic level—leaving rent to chance. With increasing frequency, therefore, we have been assigning quotas based on sex, age, and rent—instead of sex, age, and economic level. All NORC's sampling points have been checked for rental figures from the 1940 census, adjusted to date on the basis of information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor. Within each community, then, we calculate the number of dwelling units in each of four rental groups, and assign the upper and lower limits of rental value in each group and the number of interviews to be obtained with individuals whose family rent falls into each rental bracket.

Obviously, every person whose rent cost falls into the lowest rental value bracket is not automatically in the *D* economic level. Many *C*'s may be included in that rent group, possibly even a few *B*'s or *A*'s who prefer to live in small quarters or who are unable for some reason to find better housing accommodations. Similarly, in the top rental bracket you may find a number of persons in the *B* economic level and perhaps even a few *C*'s who manage to keep up an expensive home while reducing their other standards.

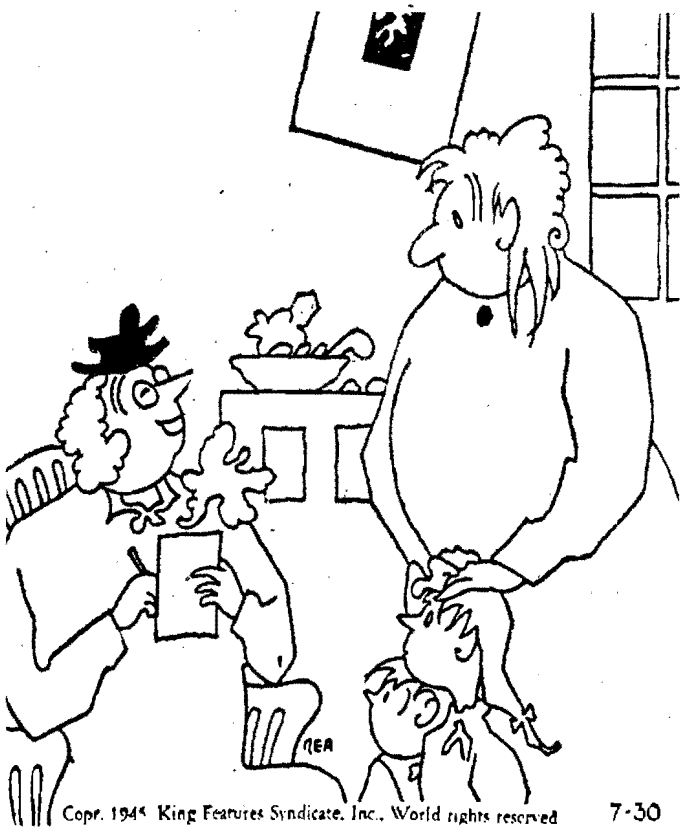
It must be remembered that economic level is to be judged on the basis of *all* factors affecting the standard of living—of which rent, while extremely important, is still only one. For this reason persons in your highest rental group will not automatically be *A*'s, nor those in the second highest group *B*'s, and so on. Yet, because rent is such an important factor in determining standard of living, some similarity will be found between rental groups and economic levels. If your assignment is by economic level, your sample should also reflect a good distribution of rental groups, and if your assignment is by rental values, your sample should reflect a good distribution of the economic levels as well.

Contract and Estimated Rent

Rental assignments are based either on *contract rent* or *estimated rent*, depending upon whether the family rents or owns the dwelling unit:

1. *Contract rent* applies to tenant-occupied dwelling units (where a direct landlord-tenant relationship exists) and refers to the actual amount of rent paid by the tenant each month, regardless of whether or not furniture, utilities, or any other services are included.
2. *Estimated rent* applies to owner-occupied dwelling units (where the family owns the home in which they live and no rent is paid) and refers to the owner's estimate of the monthly rent he could obtain for his home at the time, should he wish to rent it (unfurnished and without utilities).

Contract rent is easily ascertained, for practically every tenant knows how much rent he or his family pays each month. If the figure given seems entirely out of line with existing rents in the same or comparable neighborhoods, or if you have other reason



"Well, to be perfectly honest, I don't represent ANY poll. It's just that I'm naturally nosey."

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to doubt the respondent's answer, substitute your own estimate of the contract rent and mark it *Int. Est.* (Interviewer's estimate).

Estimated rent, on the other hand, is often more difficult to determine. At times the owner or a member of his family will have no idea of what the home could be rented for and will either refuse to make an estimate or will give a wild guess which is entirely out of proportion to the rent paid for comparable homes in the community. If the respondent cannot or will not estimate the rental value, ask the market value of the home and record this. If the respondent is unable to supply either the rental or market value, make a rental estimate based on your own knowledge of rental and/or real estate values in the community and label it *Int. Est.* Monthly rents will normally amount to about 1 per cent of the cash market value of the home. A $5,000 house, for instance, will under normal conditions rent for about $50 per month, though the supply-demand situation in your own community at any given time may make this rent estimate too high.

In filling rental assignments, keep two requirements in mind. First, aim for an accurate proportion of *owned* and rented homes at all levels in accordance with the pattern of the community as a whole. Second, endeavor to achieve a good *"spread"* of rental values within each of the four rental brackets assigned.

Over the country as a whole, about 44 per cent of all dwelling units are owner occupied, while 56 per cent are rented—but these percentages vary strikingly from community to community. In New York City, for example, a large majority of dwelling units are rented apartments, while in a small town virtually every home may be occupied by its owner. *Whatever the proportion in your community, it should be reflected in your sample.*

The rental groups assigned to you have upper and lower limits, and you are expected to achieve a good distribution within each group. If you are assigned six interviews in the $40-$59.99 bracket, for example, all six should not cluster around the $57.50 mark or any other single point; some should be paying $40, some $45, some $50, etc.

In the case of a person *living at home with his family,* be sure to indicate whether the home is rented or owned *and* to record the estimated or contract rent for the *family unit,* even though the individual may contribute to the expense of the household.

In the case of persons *renting jointly,* when the interviewer must record as the rent the proportion of the total rent for which the respondent alone is responsible. If the apartment

or house is shared by two persons, record half of the total rent; if by three persons, record one-third of the total rent for the one respondent. For example, if three working girls rent a $60 apartment jointly, each would be considered to be paying $20 per month.

Individuals who pay for room and board together are classified under *Room and Board.* They are to be asked for an estimate of the proportion applicable to *rent only* and the amount is to be recorded in dollars. In most instances respondents will be able to give a fairly accurate figure, because rooming and boarding houses have been under rent control.

Special Conditions

There are special cases in which the rent reported by the respondent does not accurately reflect the type and quality of his living quarters. These special condition cases include:

1. Ministers, apartment managers, caretakers, and servants who receive as partial compensation the use of a home, apartment, or room, and who may pay no rent at all;
2. Owners or lessees of rooming or boarding houses where the total monthly rental value is considerably higher than the amount which is directly applicable to the respondent's family quarters;
3. Store owners or store lessees whose living quarters are part of the business establishment, and whose total rent includes store rent as well as rent for the family's private quarters;
4. Families who own or rent a house or an apartment much larger than required for the family's needs and then rent out apartments or rooms within the house or rooms within the apartment.

Because in cases such as these the amount of the rent is not directly related to the amount or quality of living quarters occupied by the respondent or his family, these instances are treated as special cases and classified under *Special Conditions.* The interviewer must write in the space provided on the questionnaire after this category the type of arrangements he finds in each individual case and must then indicate the amount of rent equal to the portion of the dwelling unit used by the respondent's family only. This amount is to be estimated by the respondent, and if he is unable or unwilling to give an estimate, or if his estimate seems out of line, the interviewer is to make his own estimate as well and mark it *Int. Est.*

In tallying respondents on the Quota Sheet, the following principles should be followed:

1. A person renting jointly with others should be allocated to the rent category corresponding to the proportionate amount for which he is responsible. For example, a girl paying half of the $60 rent of a jointly-rented apartment would fall into a $25.00-$39.99 rental bracket, should such a bracket be part of your assignment.

2. Persons paying room and board combined should be classified in the rent category corresponding to the estimated amount applicable to rent alone.

3. In all other special cases, tally respondents under the amount estimated to be the actual rent value applicable to the respondent's or family's living quarters only. Do not tally the total rent for the entire building.

Chapter 10

Stratified Random Sampling

With each assignment you receive a Quota Sheet* telling you how many men to interview, how many women, and how many from each age group and economic or rent level. When these three primary factors—plus the geographic location of sampling points—are controlled, the laws of chance operate so that the over-all sample will be accurate in other respects; it will include, for example, the proper proportion of college graduates, white-collar workers, persons of English descent, Catholics, and Democrats.

This does not mean, of course, that any individual interviewer, by filling his assigned quotas, automatically achieves a miniature sample, perfect in all respects, of his community. Obviously, the small number of interviews we assign to each area makes **such** perfection impossible. But the laws of chance do insure that each individual sample, when combined with samples from other interviewers throughout the country, will contribute to a national sample (2,500 cases), which is accurate within 3 per cent 997 times out of 1,000.*

*See pages 85-88.

> The laws of chance will operate, however, only if each interviewer, within the limits of his assigned quotas, approaches people *at random*.

This basic sampling fact places a heavy responsibility upon you as an interviewer, for it means that you must do more than merely interview the number of persons assigned to you in each sex, age group, and economic or rental bracket. It means that you must *studiously avoid any conscious selection of respondents.* If you select the persons you interview on the basis of their availability, the amount of educational background they are likely to have, or their interest in polls, your sample will show a bias because the laws of chance have not been allowed to operate.

If you make a special effort, for instance, to seek out persons who are likely to have *definite opinions* on the survey questions, you destroy the random or chance nature of your cross-section and introduce a bias into your sample. You can easily find enough well-informed, articulate people of both sexes to fill your quotas in all the age groups and economic or rent levels, but such persons are likely to be highly educated, to work in professional or white-collar occupations, and to have other characteristics which influence their opinions as a group and which distinguish them from the vast number of people who are uninformed about the issues. And a sample composed largely of educated, informed persons does not constitute an accurate cross-section of the total adult population.

A conscious effort to find *"typical"* people can also destroy the random or chance nature of your cross-section. Suppose, for example, you pass up a Jewish person because you feel there aren't enough Jews in your community to merit representation in your small quota of 20 interviews. Every other interviewer in the United States, outside of New York City, might be justified in making the same assumption; yet if all interviewers refrained from approaching Jews for that reason, our final sample would lack adequate Jewish representation. Actually, chance operates so that, if all interviewers work at random, the proper proportion of Jewish respondents appears among all the questionnaires turned in.

*A sample only half as large (1,250 cases) is accurate within 3 per cent 962 times out of 1,000. See also page 58.

Or assume that you have been assigned five interviews with Negroes, and that you purposely try for a "good" distribution by seeking out, say, four common laborers and one Negro engaged in professional work. Such a selection would bias your sample, because, actually, less than 3 per cent of all Negroes are engaged in professions. If every interviewer made an effort to represent such Negroes in his quota, 20 per cent or more of our Negro sample would belong to that occupational group, and, as a result, our cross-section of colored people would be badly distorted. But when all interviewers select their respondents at random, chance operates so that our total of Negroes in professional occupations represents, within a small margin of error, the proper 3 per cent of our Negro sample.

Selective Factors

But even if you refrain from a conscious selection of respondents, undue concentration of your interviews in certain areas or in particular types of places will endanger a random sample and keep the laws of chance from operating.

You can fill your sex, age, and economic or rent level quotas precisely and take your respondents as you find them and still have a biased sample if you conduct all your interviews in one or two neighborhoods. It might happen, for instance, that most of the people living in those districts were of Russian descent or were Catholics or were employees in a nearby factory. And if Russians or Catholics or persons employed in a particular industry had pronounced views on some of the questions, your sample might seriously bias our results for your locality.

Similarly, you can fill your quotas exactly and avoid any conscious selection of respondents yet still have a biased sample if you conduct all your interviews in small retail stores. At the end of your assignment, your sample would probably be overloaded with housewives, clerks, and proprietors, while, for example, professional people, factory workers, and manual laborers would be given little or no representation.

To repeat—we do not expect each interviewer to obtain a *perfect* sample of his community. A small quota of 25 or 30 interviews is naturally subject to a great many sampling errors caused entirely by chance—but these chance errors will be canceled out when this one quota is combined with other quotas from all over the country. Where one interviewer may get too many persons of Irish descent, for instance, another interviewer may get too few;

where one happens to interview more retail storekeepers than usual, another may interview not so many. This balancing process, however, can be depended on only when interviews are collected at random.

> Whenever an interviewer's sample is heavily overloaded with any one type of person or whenever a quota shows a consistent bias in one direction, it almost certainly means that the interviewer's selection of respondents has not been a random one.

How to Secure a Random Sample

A good interviewer will always approach people *at random* within the limits of the sex, age, and economic or rent level quotas assigned. Some general rules will help you to avoid common biases and will assure a random selection of respondents:

Never interview your relatives and personal friends. You should not allow yourself a single exception to this rule except on practice interviews, which are neither included in your quota nor tabulated with the results of the survey. Not only might your close association with a person condition his reactions, but the inclusion of friends and relatives (who tend to be like oneself in circumstances and outlook), in addition to similar persons encountered truly at random, tends to bias your sample—to overload it with persons like yourself.

Obviously an interviewer who lives in a small town cannot avoid approaching people he knows. We could not get an accurate sample if he did not sometimes interview friends and acquaintances. So long as he comes across such persons at random, they are a normal part of his cross-section. However, if an interviewer seeks out certain acquaintances, in addition to those he comes across in the ordinary course of his interviewing, his sample will not be representative.

Don't seek out "good" respondents. As an interviewer, you do not know ahead of time, nor do you care, what opinions a respondent is likely to have. You must constantly guard against conscious or unconscious selection of persons merely because they look as if they would be cooperative or would have interesting opinions.

Only about 10 per cent of the people in the United States ever attended college, for example, and more than half of the adult population either never went further than grade school or never

attended school at all. Most polling agencies find their interviewers consistently including in their quotas a few too many college graduates and not enough persons with grade school education or less. This consistent bias may well be caused by the unconscious selection by interviewers of too many persons who look pleasant or "intelligent."

To avoid biases of this sort you will have to steel yourself against turning away from a person just because he looks ill-tempered or ignorant. Anyone can get the opinions of people who take a friendly interest in the survey, but a sample composed largely of such persons will seldom provide an accurate cross-section. We do not judge your merits as an interviewer by the amount of information or the number of strong opinions your respondents possess. We do judge you by the representativeness of your sample and by the accuracy with which you report the opinions of all the different types of persons you encounter. If a respondent's answers reveal that he is uninformed, you have only to record the answers given. Your job is done when the questionnaire reveals this lack of information on the part of your respondent.

> Consider the difference in our results if every interviewer passed up even one or two uninformed respondents and replaced them with persons who were well informed on the subject.

Obtain most of your interviews in respondents' homes. The best place to interview a person is right in his own home. There are several important reasons for this:

1. If you confine your interviewing to residences, you are much *less likely to get a biased sample.* You have no chance to look a particular person over and think up reasons why he might not want to be interviewed. You merely ring the doorbell and talk to whoever answers.
2. Residential interviewing gives you the *best distribution of occupations.* If you do much interviewing in stores and offices, you will automatically get too many white-collar and professional workers. If you interview in homes, you will usually run across workers in a surprising variety of occupations.
3. Unless you can see the person's home and judge his circumstances for yourself, your *estimate of his economic level* may be quite wrong in some cases.

4. "The key to successful interviewing is to *put the respondent at ease.*" A person is usually more at ease in his own home than he is elsewhere. Therefore, interview him in his own home whenever you can.

The main disadvantage of home interviewing is the fact that it is difficult to fill an age and sex cross-section by ringing doorbells during the daytime. Usually a housewife answers the doorbell, and you soon have completed your quota of interviews with women without a fair representation of those employed outside the home and, often, those in the younger age brackets. Except at lunchtime in small communities, young and middle-aged men are seldom found at home during the day.

With careful planning it is possible to secure a representative cross-section of respondents. First, *whenever you can you should do part of your interviewing during the evening or on week ends.* Second, *when a woman comes to the door, always ask, "Is the man of the house at home?" or "Does a man over 40 (or under 40) live here?"* This device will make it much easier to fill your quota of interviews with men. If the man of the house is not home, you can interview the woman anyway. If you do not need another interview with a woman, you can say, "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm working on a survey, and I wanted to interview the man of the house," (or specify a man over or under 40). If the housewife seems friendly, you might explain the situation and enlist her help. She may suggest that you call back at a certain time, or she may be able to tell you, for instance, that "the man next door is almost always home at this time of day."

Because of the difficulties occasionally involved, NORC does not insist that *all* interviewing be done in homes. But, unless you have to go into public places in order to secure an interview, otherwise unobtainable, with a person in a particular age or sex group, it is best to *stay away from stores, offices, parks, and street corners.* It's almost impossible to secure an unbiased selection of respondents in these places.

> Interviewers who fail to do the bulk of their work in residences almost always obtain samples overloaded with store and office workers, retired persons sitting in parks, and other easily accessible but not broadly representative types. By careful residential sampling you will secure a far better representation of the various population groups.

Get a good geographical cross-section of the area assigned to you. To get a truly random sample:

1. Don't concentrate your interviews in one or two neighborhoods.
2. Don't select your neighborhoods on the basis of their accessibility or of your personal familiarity with them.
3. Approach a random selection of houses within each neighborhood.

In some cities it may be possible to find in a single neighborhood homes in each of the four rental groups and persons of all economic levels, ranging from marginal *A*'s to marginal *D*'s. In such a neighborhood you can fill your quota with a minimum of traveling. But to concentrate your interviews in such a way is to destroy the random nature of your cross-section. The result may be that your sample won't contain any of the "extremes" which in a truly chance selection you would normally come across in approximately their correct proportions; your *A*'s will be very low *A*'s, almost in the *B* group; your *D*'s will be very high *D*'s, almost in the *C* group; your top bracket rents will tend to cluster toward the lower limit; your lowest bracket rents will tend to cluster near the upper limit. *It is best to choose your low economic or rent level respondents from at least two neighborhoods and your middle group respondents from at least three neighborhoods.*

Remember, too, that different neighborhoods are likely to have their peculiarities, that nationality groups, religious groups, occupational groups, and social types are often concentrated in one neighborhood. By getting too many interviews in one part of town, you run the danger of overloading your sample (beyond the chance level) with a special group which is not likely to be representative of the entire city. *In general, avoid getting more than one or two interviews in a section which has a heavy concentration of a particular nationality or occupation group.*

> A sound general guide to follow in obtaining all residential interviews is this: Never (unless directed otherwise in the specifications) get more than three interviews in the same residential block. Observance of this rule will help to insure a truly representative cross-section.

Selecting Your Neighborhoods

Your selection of neighborhoods, like your selection of respondents, must be *at random.* We can't obtain an accurate cross-section if interviewers refrain from entering certain districts or if they interview only in parts of the city easily reached from their homes. *Each street in your city should have an equal chance to be selected by you.* To achieve this end, you should . . .

1. Know your city well.
2. Select your neighborhoods with complete impartiality.

If you live in a city, there are many streets which you have never been on, whose names you do not even know—unless you are a very exceptional person. One of the satisfying things about interviewing is that it enables you to get to know your community, to become acquainted with the living habits of all the various types of people who reside there.

If you're a beginner or are starting to interview in a new place, we suggest that you first obtain a map of the city. Find out its boundaries—where it stops and starts; study its streets. Learn roughly where the poor districts are, where the middle class have their homes, where the wealthy reside. Every interviewer who works in a Metropolitan District is provided with the block statistics for his city in a book published by the United States Census Bureau. This book lists the average monthly rent for every block in the city—together with the number of dwelling units; the number occupied by owners and tenants; the number occupied by non-whites; and other information.

Interviewers living in smaller cities can telephone the Chamber of Commerce, the City Hall, or the local or county welfare office for comparable data. The more you know about your city, the better and easier your work as an interviewer will be.

It is important that you select your neighborhoods *impartially.* Don't consciously avoid a particular section for personal reasons, and don't consciously favor a section or sections. Vary the neighborhoods you select for interviewing on each different assignment, so that at the end of six months or a year you will have interviewed in every neighborhood or every part of town.

Selecting Houses to Approach

One more point to watch in securing a truly random sample is the tendency to make a conscious (or unconscious) selection of the dwellings you visit within each neighborhood.

Unless you are aware of this tendency, you may find yourself approaching neat-looking houses where you feel the people are likely to cooperate and passing by other houses, unattractive or forbidding in appearance, or difficult to reach because of distance from the road or street or location at the top of a steep slope. In deciding which bell to ring in an apartment house, you may make the mistake of automatically pushing the button for the ground-floor apartment each time or skipping apartments with foreign-looking names on the cards. You may even err in interviewing members of four or five adjacent families in the mistaken belief that you are working "efficiently."

Actually, any of these practices may distort a random sample. Unless all interviewers are aware of these problem tendencies, NORC's cross-section may become "skewed" in one of the following ways:

1. *People living in apartments may be inadequately represented* if many interviewers concentrate on single-family houses, which are easier to approach.
2. *The sample may include too few interviews with foreign-born people* if interviewers avoid houses and neighborhoods where such persons live.
3. *Certain quotas may include large blocs of respondents with similar backgrounds and opinions* if some interviewers approach too many next-door neighbors.

To avoid these errors, make a habit of approaching every fifth, or tenth, or twentieth dwelling unit (house or apartment) within the neighborhood where you are working. The exact frequency isn't important. But what is important is that you should make a habit of following some sort of system to insure a random selection of houses.

Types of People You Should Never Interview

Certain types of people are not eligible to be interviewed at all—even if you come across them at random and even if they fit into your assigned quotas. These types are:

1. *Persons who live outside the territory assigned to you.*

   When making up our cross-section we proceed on the assumption that you will interview only residents of the areas assigned to you. Therefore, interviews obtained from out-of-towners or transients cannot be counted in your quota.

   If you are ever in doubt as to a person's place of residence, ask him where he lives before you start the interview.

2. *Persons who are under 21.*

   Regular NORC surveys sample the *adult* population only. If you suspect that a person may be under 21, make certain of his age before you start the interview. This precaution may save you an extra interview later.

3. *Negroes—unless they are specifically assigned to you.*

   Since interviews with Negroes are assigned separately, interview them only when they are included in your quota.

4. *More than one member of a family.*

   A family consists of all persons related by blood or marriage and residing under the same roof. Each person interviewed represents his family in our cross-section. Your own quota is so small that two interviews from a single family might distort our results.

   This prohibition applies only to any one survey. On a subsequent assignment you are at liberty to interview a different member of the same family.

5. *The same person more than once in six months.*

   This rule must be rigidly enforced to prevent any tendency of interviewers to re-interview cooperative respondents at frequent intervals. *No exceptions can be made.*

6. *Members of the armed forces.*

   Our surveys sample the *civilian* population only, and our cross-section is constantly adjusted to that end. For obvious reasons, it is impossible to interview a true cross-section of the armed forces; rather than obtain an unreliable sample, we prefer to exclude them entirely.*

   Wives of servicemen, discharged servicemen, and members of the Merchant Marine are all eligible respondents.

7. *Persons who do not speak English.*

   Persons who do not speak English well enough to understand the questions or to answer in understandable English are not to be interviewed. *Never* translate; *never* use an interpreter. This rule does not provide an excuse for skipping persons of very low education who are illiterate or uninformed; it relates solely to foreign-language difficulties.

Don't Interview Persons in Groups

An interview conducted in full hearing of a roomful of people is worthless to us. If you can't talk with a person alone, don't attempt to interview him. The presence of even one other person may lead the respondent to change or hide his real opinions. A third person will often interrupt the interview with observations of his own, which cause confusion and waste time.

Should a third person attempt to "horn in" on the interview, make it clear that you can talk with only one person. You can say something like this, "I'm sorry, but this is supposed to be a confidential interview. Do you mind if [the respondent] gives me his ideas in private now? You can talk it over with him later." Sometimes the third person's attention can be diverted by giving him your copy of NORC's *Announcement of Purposes* to read.

*During the war, the War Department, through the Research Branch of its Special Services Division, carried on a continuous program of opinion research in Army camps all over the world. No personal interviewing was done; the soldiers themselves filled out secret ballots. In all other respects standard polling practice was followed.

Chapter 11

Materials and Preparation

Serious mistakes are inevitable if an interviewer begins work before he thoroughly understands the exact nature of an assignment. A carpenter with years of experience in carpentry as a trade must nevertheless study the Specifications for each separate job as a new problem, and, similarly, a certain amount of preparation is necessary before even an experienced interviewer can start out on a new assignment.

When an interviewing assignment arrives at your address, it usually contains the following materials:

1. *A Quota Sheet*—telling you where to interview, and assigning quotas among the sex, age, and economic or rent groups.
2. *Specifications*—detailed instructions about that particular assignment, including specific directions for handling each question.
3. *Questionnaires*—on which to record the opinions of your respondents. A few extra ones are always enclosed for trial interviews or in case any are spoiled.
4. *A Time and Expense Report*—on which you bill us for your time and your transportation expenses on the job.
5. *An Interviewer's Report*—on which you record your own reactions to the assignment.
6. Miscellaneous materials, which vary according to the type of survey. On many assignments you will receive printed *cards* to be shown to respondents on certain questions; on others, we may enclose an *Interviewer's Questionnaire*, on which to record your own opinions on the questions. This Interviewer's Questionnaire is to be returned to the office before you begin your interviewing assignment.
7. *A return envelope*, already stamped and addressed, in which to return your completed interviews.

Your Quota Sheet

Two sample Quota Sheets are shown on the following pages. The typewritten material was filled in by us in the NORC office. The longhand material was filled in by the interviewer during the course of his assignment.

NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER
University of Denver

This quota is assigned by Economic Level

QUOTA SHEET

Survey No. 250 Date mailed from here February 4, 1946

Interviewer SMITH Date received by you 2/7/46

Place of Interview Rural non-farm & farms near but outside Clarion, Iowa Date mailed back by you 2/11/46

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT	QUOTA	TALLY INTERVIEWS HERE	TOTAL

Tally each interview as you obtain it--under the proper Sex-Age column opposite the proper Residence or Economic Level category.

If you have a Metropolitan District assignment, tally if interview was made in central city of suburban section. Remember to record the total number of interviews you obtain.

Tally here all persons who refuse to be interviewed for any reason whatsoever. 11

		MEN			WOMEN		TOTAL
		21-39	40 & Over		21-39	40 & Over	
	QUOTA	RNF 6 RF 2	RNF 8 RF 2	QUOTA	RNF 8 RF 2	RNF 7 RF 3	RNF 29 RF 9 } 38
White Farm	4	//	//	5	///	//	9
Colored Farm	-			-			
ECONOMIC LEVEL: A	-			1		/	/
B	3	/	//	3	/	//	6
C	7	////	///	7	////	///	14
D	3	/	//	3	/	//	6
Colored Non-Farm	1		/	1	/		2
TOTAL	18	8	10	20	10	10	38

Fill Quota Exactly as Assigned.

The above-designated interviews are all bona fide, which I have obtained acting as an independent interviewer for NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER. According to your Basic Instructions, I will not reveal the answers of any respondent.

Signature John Smith

NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER
University of Denver

This quota is assigned by Rental Groups

QUOTA SHEET

Survey No. 250 Date mailed from here February 4, 1946

Interviewer SMITH Date received by you 2/7/46

Place of Interview Detroit M.D., Mich. Date mailed back by you 2/11/46

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT	QUOTA	TALLY INTERVIEWS HERE	TOTAL
Detroit	30	///// ///// ///// ///// ///// /////	30
Wyandotte	12	///// ///// //	12

Tally each interview as you obtain it--under the proper Sex-Age column opposite the proper Residence or Economic Level category

If you have a Metropolitan District assignment, tally if interview was made in central city or suburban section. Remember to record the total number of interviews you obtain.

Tally here all persons who refuse to be interviewed for any reason whatsoever. none

		MEN			WOMEN		TOTAL
		21-39	40 & Over		21-39	40 & Over	
	QUOTA	9	11	QUOTA	11	11	42
White Farm	-			-			
Colored Farm	-			-			
Cont. or $74.50 Est. Rent & over	1	/		-			1
Cont. or $52.50 to Est. Rent 74.49	2	/	/	2	/	/	4
Cont. or $31.50 to Est. Rent 52.49	8	////	////	11	/////	///// /	19
Cont. or $31.49 Est. Rent & less	6	///	///	6	///	///	12
Colored Non-Farm	3		///	3	//	/	6
TOTAL	20	9	11	22	11	11	42

Fill Quota Exactly as Assigned.

The above-designated interviews are all bona fide, which I have obtained acting as an independent interviewer for NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER. According to your Basic Instructions, I will not reveal the answers of any respondent.

Signature John Smith

Your Quota Sheet tells you:

1. The number of the survey. All your forms and correspondence about the particular assignment should identify it by survey number.
2. The Metropolitan District, suburb, town, or rural area in which you are to interview.
3. The date the survey was mailed from our office.
4. The quotas assigned to you for each sex, age group, economic or rent level, and size of place.

As soon as you get the assignment, mark the date you received it on the line provided on the Quota Sheet. Then study your quota. Don't take it for granted that you are to work in your home town. Some interviewers are assigned to a different territory on almost every survey.

NORC has three general types of assignments:

1. Metropolitan District assignments,
   ("Milwaukee Metropolitan District," for example.)
2. Regular urban assignments,
   ("Exeter, New Hampshire," for example.)
3. Rural assignments,*
   ("Rural non-farm and farms, near Clarksdale, Mississippi," or "Rural non-farm and farms outside Los Angeles Metropolitan District," for example.)

1. *Metropolitan District Assignments*

Metropolitan Districts as defined by the United States Census include all cities of more than 50,000 population together with surrounding territory which has a population density of 150 or more persons per square mile. A Metropolitan District comprises both a central city (or cities) and the surrounding suburban area. The large New York Metropolitan District, for example, includes not only the five boroughs of New York City proper and suburban areas beyond, but the central cities of Elizabeth, Jersey City, Paterson, and Newark, New Jersey, and extends some 40 miles west into New Jersey and 35 miles north into Connecticut.

*Sometimes your assignment may include both a quota of urban interviews and a quota of rural interviews.

The most significant fact about a Metropolitan District is that, regardless of its size, it is to a considerable extent *homogeneous* in respect to the most important factors influencing opinion formation; the people read the same newspapers, listen to the same radio stations, and are exposed to the same general economic and social climate.

If you are to be assigned Metropolitan District quotas, we will send you a small photostatic copy of the Census map which defines the boundaries of your Metropolitan District and of the central city itself. Your Quota Sheet for each assignment will tell you how many interviews to obtain from suburban residents and how many from people who live within the corporate limits of the central city or cities.

> So long as you secure the total number of interviews assigned in the city proper and the total number assigned in the suburbs, you may divide your economic or rental quotas between city and suburbs according to the standard-of-living distribution of the locality. If most of the well-to-do live in the suburbs, for instance, get most of your *A* and *B* or upper rent bracket interviews in the suburbs.

Your Quota Sheet may specify the suburb or suburbs you should cover, but if no particular suburb is listed, you are free to interview in any representative suburb or combination of suburbs shown on your Census map. The only restriction is that *all* your interviews must be obtained from people who live within the area defined on your map and that interviews be divided between city and suburban residents according to your quota assignment.

2. *Regular Urban Assignments*

Assignments in cities with populations between 2,500 and 50,000 are classified as "Regular Urban Assignments." On this type of assignment the name of the particular city is always listed on your Quota Sheet, and it is necessary only to fill your assigned quotas by interviewing people who reside within the corporate limits of that city.

3. *Rural Assignments*

"Rural" interviews, as NORC uses the term, cover residents of all places with a population of *less than 2,500* not within the limits of a Metropolitan District—in other words everyone from people

living in towns of 2,499 population to people living on farms which may be miles from the nearest village.

Rural assignments are usually divided into two types:

1. *Rural farm*—including all persons who *live on farms,** regardless of whether or not they themselves are engaged in actual farming as a vocation.
2. *Rural non-farm*—including all people in the rural areas specified who do not live on farms, people who, although they may own or be employed on farms elsewhere, *reside* in small towns, villages, cross-roads settlements, and all other places of less than 2,500 population.

These two classifications are usually combined on Quota Sheets apportioning rural assignments, for example, "Rural non-farm and farm" near a town or outside a Metropolitan District. *All* interviews must be obtained from residents of places under 2,500 population, and must include the assigned number of farm residents and non-farm residents.

Farmers to be interviewed are not assigned according to economic level or rental group. We ask you only to interview a certain number of white farmers (and possibly colored farmers, if they are available in the area where the interviewer lives); we do not *assign* you interviews with a given number of *A* farmers, a given number of *B* farmers, or a given number of farmers in a particular rental bracket. We do *expect* you to secure interviews well distributed among well-to-do, middle-class, and poor farmers, judged by the standards prevailing in the rural area in which you are working.*

Rural non-farm quotas are *assigned according to economic level or, occasionally, rent level.* That is, we do tell you to interview so many *A*'s, so many *B*'s, or so many persons in a specified rental bracket. These interviews are to be secured in small towns of less than 2,500 population or in non-farm homes along roads and highways.

Preparation for an Assignment

After noting the area in which you are to interview, *study the quotas* of men and women assigned to you within each economic or rent level and age group. *These quotas have been calculated exactly and must be filled exactly.* Any deviation from the assigned quota would distort our cross-section and endanger the accuracy of our results.

*See chapter on rural interviewing, particularly pages 122-23.

Notice the time limit of the survey. This is always stated in the Specifications. If, because of the nature of the quota or the amount of time allotted, you doubt your ability to complete the assignment as directed, *telegraph immediately* whichever office sent you the quota and *hold all materials.* We may direct you to turn over the materials to another interviewer, or, when possible, we may extend your deadline. If you do not hear from us before the deadline, it means we have reassigned the quota elsewhere; you can then return the blank materials to us.

Next, *read the questionnaire carefully.* Get a general idea of its length, of the issues covered, and of the "layout" of the questions. Then *study the Specifications.*

Inasmuch as you can hardly be expected to do an intelligent job of interviewing if you don't know why the questions are asked, each assignment has its individual Specifications which:

1. Explain the general purposes of the survey.
2. Give advice on dealing with special problems which you may encounter in interviewing with that particular questionnaire.
3. Discuss in detail individual questions, and provide instructions on how to handle almost any conceivable answer.

Because each job is different, even a well-trained interviewer cannot do a satisfactory job on an assignment without benefit of Specifications. Because good Specifications are absolutely essential to top-notch interviewing, members of the NORC staff devote a great deal of time and thought to drafting the Specifications. Experience has proved the wisdom of this effort. And we at the office can judge from an interviewer's performance whether or not he has studied the Specifications carefully.

Even after reading the questionnaire and studying the Specifications, you are still not ready to start interviewing. Your next step is to *make a practice interview or two.** You can often get the best results with friends or members of your family—for two reasons: (1) they are easily available, and (2) they will make allowances

*If an "Interviewer's Questionnaire" is sent you with the assignment, fill it out at this point in your preparation. We want your opinions *before* you have talked with any respondents.

for any mistakes or awkward pauses which may occur while you are working with an unfamiliar questionnaire.

Naturally, you are never to send in these practice interviews as part of your quota. As a matter of fact, it is not necessary even to record the answers; you may prefer to keep your few extra questionnaires to use in case you spoil one or two or in case an additional interview is necessary to cover a deficiency in a given age or economic group.

Keep your Specifications handy while you are conducting these practice interviews, and refer to them as you go along. If the questionnaire includes a complicated series of dependent questions, be careful to ask only those which apply. Particularly on long questions, emphasize the most important words—often indicated by underscoring. Finally, get complete and specific answers to each question.

The purpose of these practice interviews is to enable you to anticipate some of the problems which may arise on the assignment; to familiarize you with the Specifications (which always mean a great deal more after you have actually asked the questions); and, most important of all, to acquaint you with the wording of the questions so that you can ask them more conversationally. For, during your interviewing, the mechanics of asking questions and recording answers should be nearly *automatic*. You will probably be too busy—holding the respondent on the subject, keeping his interest from flagging, or coping with outside distractions—to worry then about which question you have to ask next. The time to familiarize yourself with the mechanics of the questionnaire is before you start.

Your Equipment

Now a word about your equipment. You will, of course, carry with you your Quota Sheet, your blank questionnaires, your Specifications, and any cards or other materials which go with the assignment. You will always take your interviewer's identification card. In addition, it is a good idea to carry a copy of NORC's printed brochure, *Announcement of Purposes,* a recent report, or a copy of some newspaper or magazine clipping which mentions NORC—in case you encounter a suspicious respondent.

How to carry this material efficiently is a problem which you can best solve yourself. Many interviewers have made ingenious folders and notebooks; for others, the envelope in which we send the

materials and a large paper clip are sufficient. We suggest an inexpensive clipboard, which can be purchased in almost any stationery store. This provides a solid backing for your writing. Blank questionnaires can be kept on top, with Specifications and brochure directly underneath, then your Quota Sheet, and on the bottom any cards which may be used during the interview. As you finish each questionnaire, tally it on your Quota Sheet, slip it off the top, and tuck it in at the bottom below your other materials.

Use a *soft* pencil in marking your questionnaires. Number 2, the preferred hardness, makes a black impression without smearing. Fountain pens frequently overflow; they run dry at inopportune moments; and, if we use mimeograph paper for the questionnaires, the ink may be absorbed to the point of illegibility. Hard pencils make such a light impression that our office has difficulty in reading the recorded answers. Colored pencils are not permitted because they are used by our coders, and dual use of the same color would prove confusing.

Chapter 12

Procedure on an Assignment

It is your responsibility to plan the work of each interviewing assignment, and you need to strike a balance between too much planning and too little planning. You cannot start without a plan, interviewing aimlessly wherever fancy leads you; neither can you plot your work too exactly, trying to decide in advance which types of persons you will interview or just which quotas you will fill first. To follow either of these procedures is to ignore the principles of stratified random sampling. Moreover, it will take you longer to fill your assigned quotas and you will probably not get an accurate cross-section if you plan either too much or too little.

Here, then, are a few general tips. If you follow them, they will help you to fill your quotas in the most efficient fashion consistent with reliable sampling:

1. *Look for economic or rent levels rather than age groups.*

Your Quota Sheet specifies a particular number of interviews from men and from women and from each age group within the

several economic or rent levels. But in planning your interviewing, you will save time by using the economic or rent levels as a base rather than saying, "I'm going to get my men here and my women there," or "First, I'll get my young people, then the older people."

If you know your town well and have a pretty good idea of where to look for persons in the various standard-of-living groups, your job of planning is simple. You have only to map out in your mind a general idea of the route you wish to follow and the neighborhoods you wish to visit, selecting them in accordance with the principles discussed under *Stratified Random Sampling.** You'll say to yourself, for example, "I'll get my upper economic groups here and my middle-class people there; for my poor respondents I'll visit these neighborhoods."

Even with such a rough plan you will have a definite idea of where you are going; you won't waste time wandering, yet your plan is elastic enough to adapt itself to any changes interviewing circumstances may make necessary.

If you are assigned interviews in a locality which is strange to you, size it up before you start interviewing. If a map of the town or city is available, you will find it a great help.** Of course you can soon judge economic levels with considerable accuracy by noticing the appearance of houses and apartments along the various streets and in the various neighborhoods.

2. *Make an effort to find your hard-to-get groups first.*

Certain types of people are generally harder to find and harder to interview than are others. Wealthy persons, for example, may be difficult to approach; poor people may be suspicious or may not speak English very well; men and younger people are less likely to be at home during the daytime. Hunting for a young man in the lowest standard-of-living group or a wealthy woman is often a discouraging experience at the end of a day's interviewing. It's a good general rule to go after the "difficult" groups first. This is not to say that you should insist on filling your *A* and *D* (or top and bottom rent) quotas or on obtaining all the men and younger people you need before you interview anyone else. But, as we suggested before, when a woman answers the door, ask first if the man of the house is at home—even if you can use the interview with the woman. Similarly, make an effort to fill the younger age group quotas first, and work on your upper and lower standard-of-living groups before concentrating on the middle bracket.

*See page 81.

**If we should ever ask you to interview in a large Metropolitan District with which you are not familiar (an occasion which is likely to occur only rarely), you will be given special instructions to cover the specific situation.

It is important to remember, too, that filling your *D* or lowest-rent quota early in the assignment will help you to avoid the tendency to under-represent the lowest standard-of-living group in your sample.* If you begin your interviewing in a middle-class neighborhood, some people you approach will probably be in the lowest economic group, but close to the borderline. If you interview them, your cross-section will be skewed upward. Your *D* quota will contain several persons who actually live in a *C* neighborhood. Such respondents are unlikely to be as truly representative *D*'s as those from a really poor neighborhood. If, on the other hand, you start by interviewing in a true *D* section and run across a few borderline *C* respondents, your cross-section will not be skewed. Your sample of the lowest economic group will remain representative, and your quota of middle class *C*'s will include some persons near the lower extreme of that large group.

3. *Interview at random.*

Remember our discussion in the earlier chapter on random sampling. Don't avoid any particular neighborhoods, any particular houses, or any particular people. More than six interviews should not be made in any one neighborhood or more than three interviews in a single block. You should make a habit of approaching every fifth or tenth house within the neighborhood in which you are interviewing.

4. *Tally your interviews carefully as you go along.*

Your Quota Sheet is also a tally sheet. As soon as you finish each interview, check the questionnaire for errors and omissions, tally the interview on your Quota Sheet, and put the questionnaire away. Tally the interview *under the proper sex-age column opposite the proper economic or rent level category.* If you have a Metropolitan District assignment, tally your interview also as part of your central city or suburban quota.* By keeping a watchful eye on your tally sheet, you can tell at a glance what types you need to complete your quotas, and you will know if you may interview, for instance, the elderly woman who comes to the door of a middle-class home.

*See pages 87-88.

It's neither necessary nor advisable to try to divide your interviews in each economic or rent level equally between the two age groups—for instance, to get half your *A* men in the 21-to-39 group and half in the 40-and-over group. A larger proportion of the wealthy than of the average may fall in the older age group, because it usually takes a man some time to achieve his maximum in earnings and savings. However, make certain that you get the total number of interviews assigned in each sex, age, and standard-of-living group.

Finding Particular Types

We have already mentioned the desirability of (1) interviewing in the early evening and on week ends, whenever possible, because it is easier to find people of all types at home, and (2) inquiring at the start for men and young people. Yet you will always find a time when you need one specific type to complete your quota—say a man between the ages of 21 and 39 in the lowest economic or rent level.

In such instances you must seek a representative of the type you need wherever you can find him. There are several efficient ways of approaching the problem:

1. *Go to the* locality *where you are most likely to find such a respondent at the* time *when you are most likely to find him*—either at his home or at a place where he is likely to be working.

   Upper middle-class men, for instance, can often be found at 5:30 or 6:00 in the evening when they arrive home from the office; men in the younger age groups can be interviewed on their lunch hours or when factory shifts change; wealthy men can be seen by appointment at their offices, while their wives will usually be flattered if you telephone their homes to arrange for "an interview."

2. *Ask other people for assistance.* A friendly respondent, aware of your problem, can often direct you to an address in the same neighborhood where you can find the type of person you seek. Policemen, grocers, and children are frequently helpful.

3. *Use your own ingenuity.* If you see diapers on the line or toys in the yard, for example, it's a safe bet you'll find a young couple living there.

If you are near the end of your assignment and need only a few respondents of definite age, rent, or economic levels, remember that if you complete an interview with a person whom you have misjudged on any of these factors you will have to secure an extra interview to make up the deficiency in your quota. For this reason, it is a good idea, when in doubt as to an individual's age, his economic level, or his rental bracket, to ask for this information after the first two or three questions or even before you start the interview. Such a procedure may save you valuable time and an interview which you can't use in your quota.

Review the Specifications Frequently

The Specifications are usually "hard reading." They are comprehensive and detailed. Even after you have made one or two practice interviews, not all the points mentioned in the "Spex" may have impressed themselves upon you. But after you have conducted three or four actual interviews with strangers, the Specifications will mean considerably more to you.

Many errors can be prevented by following this simple piece of advice: *review the Specifications after completing the first interview and again after the second and third.* These final reviews of the Specifications may answer some question which has arisen in the interview you have just obtained; it may open your eyes to some instructions which you have previously overlooked; it may keep you from repeating an error.

If you have a large quota, requiring three or four days to complete, be sure to review the Specifications again before you start the second day's work. It's unbelievably easy to fall into an error quite unconsciously and to repeat that same error throughout an entire assignment.

When You Have Finished

Never under any circumstances change, edit, or correct your interviews after you get home. If you have checked each questionnaire immediately after finishing the interview, it should be free from errors. All you have to do now is *count the number of interviews you have obtained from men and women and from each age group and economic or rent level* to be sure that the totals match the assigned quotas on your Quota Sheet. If you find you have made a mistake in tallying, it will be necessary to get an extra interview to fill any deficiency among your quotas. Remem-

ber that we have assigned you a very small number of interviews in relation to the total population of your city, and a deviation of only one interview will distort our carefully constructed cross-section.

Then *sign your Quota Sheet* on the line provided at the bottom. Payment cannot be made for your completed assignment unless your signature appears on the Quota Sheet. If two or more interviewers worked on the same quota, both or all should sign the Quota Sheet.* Record the date on which you finished, and put the Quota Sheet and your completed questionnaires in the return envelope. Then you fill out two forms: your Interviewer's Report and your Time and Expense Report.

Interviewer's Report

One of these report forms is sent you with each assignment. Its purpose is to provide a convenient way for you to give us the benefit of your experience on the survey. Filling out this Interviewer's Report is *an integral part of your job.*

On it we want you to tell us fully and frankly any criticism you may have of the questionnaire and how you would suggest improving question wordings.** Call our attention to any weaknesses you noticed in the Specifications or any unusual difficulties you had in filling your quotas. Likewise, pass along any humorous or unusual experiences you may have had during the course of your work. We often use them in the *Sampler*, monthly newsletter for interviewers.

The more alert you become to opportunities for friendly, constructive criticism, the more valuable you will be as a member of our interviewing staff. As a result of experience in the field and through academic research conducted by NORC and others, certain general rules have emerged for formulating questionnaires, instructing interviewers, obtaining a representative sample, and analyzing a survey's findings. This business of measuring people's attitudes, however, can never be reduced entirely to formulas. Judgments by individuals must be made at nearly every step of the long, involved process of making a survey, and such judgments are rarely infallible, no matter how capable or experienced the persons who make them.

*Sometimes another NORC interviewer in the same town may be authorized to help you. In certain large cities, a supervisor distributes the total quota among several interviewers.

**Please don't call us on grammatical mistakes! We frequently deviate from the best usage, but we do so purposely in order to put at ease the large number of uneducated persons interviewed in our sample.

In framing our questionnaires, for instance, we have the benefit of the combined talents of a number of staff members, all of whom have had actual interviewing experience. The questionnaire is carefully pre-tested, and every effort made to remove the "bugs." Most of our pre-testers are veteran interviewers, familiar with all the problems involved in interviewing. But usually we can't conduct our pre-test in all parts of the country, and, as a result, it could happen that an occasional question might contain a phrase not understood in your locality.

When you have just completed a full quota of interviews with all types of persons in your area, you are in an excellent position to acquaint us with some of the good points and bad points of a survey, and, when we compare your reactions with the reactions of other interviewers in all parts of the country, our knowledge of the job is immeasurably increased. The Interview Department tabulates and summarizes the Interviewers' Reports on each survey in a report which goes to every staff member concerned with the survey. Significant interviewer reactions are quoted directly in the Interviewers' Report Summary and sometimes find their way into the final reports of the study.

Be alert, therefore, to any weakness in our Specifications or questionnaires. You may find it helpful to jot down impressions for your report while you are actually interviewing. If you do this, you will be less likely to forget relevant ideas or to base your conclusions on only the last few interviews.

The Interviewer's Report, too, is the place to give any suggestions or information or to raise any general problems or questions you may have. Your report goes directly to the Interview Department, where your problems or requests receive prompt attention. Your report doesn't need to be elaborate. It should seldom take more than 15 minutes to prepare. The main thing is to set down all your impressions which may be of use to us in (1) analyzing the results of the survey, and (2) improving future surveys.

Time and Expense Report

With each assignment you receive a Time and Expense Report. Interviewers are paid equally for both interviewing and study time and may be reimbursed for other expenses, as specified in the following section.

1. *Interviewing time*
   This includes time spent in interviewing, moving from one interview to the next, looking for persons to interview, and inspecting the completed questionnaire after every interview. On assignments *in your own town* interviewing time starts when you begin your first interview and continues until you have left your last respondent at the end of the day—less time taken out for meals.
2. *Traveling time*
   This includes round-trip travel time to and from other towns or rural areas when the Quota Sheet calls for interviews outside your own town or outside your Metropolitan District.
3. *Study time*
   This includes time spent studying the assignment, conducting practice interviews, and filling out your Interviewer's Report and Time and Expense Report. Study time may vary from half an hour to one or two hours, depending on the complexity of the survey.

Because assignments vary in difficulty, because questionnaires vary in length, and because weather and chance also affect your interviewing speed, we do not establish a quota of a specific number of interviews per hour. A pace of two or perhaps three interviews per hour is about par on most NORC surveys. On some special surveys and telegraphic assignments you will be able to average four or more. Occasionally you will be hard put to average two interviews per hour, especially when you have to travel long distances to secure farm interviews or have trouble finding the last two or three respondents needed to complete a quota.

All we ask is that you work as efficiently as possible, never sacrificing accuracy or thoroughness for speed. You will find that the work goes much faster when:

1. You are so familiar with the questionnaire and the Specifications that you are never confused and proceed smoothly from question to question during every interview.
2. Your sampling is so planned that you lose no time rounding out the quotas assigned to you in the various categories.
3. Your approach is brief, and you waste no time idly chatting with each respondent before leaving.
4. You keep the respondent's attention centered on the survey questions during the entire interview.

The National Opinion Research Center also provides reimbursement for the following expenses:

1. *Transportation*
   On all assignments bill us for all transportation expenses incurred in filling your assignment except for carfare to your first interview of the day and from your last interview to your home. On assignments outside your own town, NORC pays you for both your transportation costs and your time in getting to and from the community assigned. The use of a taxi must be authorized.
2. *Car mileage*
   Bill us at the rate shown on the Time and Expense Report for any driving you do in the course of your assignment. Except on rural quotas, it should seldom be necessary to drive a car. NORC does not encourage use of an automobile, except when the area assigned to you is not served by public transportation facilities or when automobile mileage costs would be lower than time costs accumulated in waiting for and riding in public facilities.
3. *Miscellaneous expenses*
   These include such items as telephone* or postage when they are required in the course of an assignment. Any large or unusual expenses, such as railroad fare, hotel room, or meals must be authorized *in advance*. Receipts must always accompany bills for such expenses.

Keep accurate and up-to-date records of time and authorized expense so that you can record this information as soon as you complete your assignment. *Don't rely on your memory during the course of a several-day assignment.* Your time statement should be rounded off to the *nearest half-hour* in order to facilitate bookkeeping.

Since interviewers' Time and Expense Reports are permanent records, and since, on surveys made for the government, photostatic copies must be submitted to the client, we ask that you observe the following rules so that there will be no delay in forwarding your check:

*When it is necessary to telephone or telegraph either NORC office, always place such calls or wires on a *collect* basis.

1. The report should be typed or written in ink.
2. Your name—*exactly as you want your check made out*—with the proper title ("Mr.," "Mrs.," or "Miss") and your address (complete with house or box number, street, city, zone, and state) should be *printed* at the top of the form.
3. Your *signature* should appear *at the bottom of the form.*

Returning Your Questionnaires

Your report forms should be returned *with* your questionnaires. Any delay in submitting your Time and Expense Report delays the payment of *all* interviewers.

After completing these two forms, place them in the return envelope with your completed questionnaires, your Quota Sheet, and any other materials requested. Normally, you should return *all* materials (including all extra, spoiled, or unused questionnaires) *except* the Specifications for the assignment and any memos and cards. It is not necessary to arrange your completed questionnaires in any particular sequence.

*Mail the envelope promptly.** If you can possibly do so, mail your materials at a post office rather than in some outlying mailbox where pickups may be infrequent.

Your Work Is Confidential

All materials sent to you and all opinions you collect are confidential. *Guard them carefully.* Great harm could be done to the National Opinion Research Center, to the clients for whom we make surveys, and to the respondents themselves if a questionnaire or other material fell into unauthorized hands. These materials are the legal property of NORC and its clients.

Do not reveal any results of your polling nor identify a respondent or his opinions to *anyone* except NORC personnel or persons authorized by NORC. The persons you interview have a right to expect us to keep their answers as individuals in confidence; that is the price of obtaining their opinions. A betrayal of this confidence may conceivably damage not only the person whose opinions you disclose, but also NORC and the entire field of public opinion research.

Bring any problems in connection with your work to NORC. Write us, or, if it is sufficiently important, telephone or telegraph us. Do not seek the advice of family or friends or any other persons unauthorized by us.

*In order to save coding and tabulating time, we may sometimes ask you to mail immediately the results of your first day's interviewing.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS

Chapter 13

Factual Data

At the end of every questionnaire is a section usually titled *"Factual Data"*—a series of questions designed to provide NORC with personal information about the respondent. Answers to this series of questions are vital for two reasons:

1. By breaking down question results by factual data, we can make *a more complete analysis of our findings.* The bald results of a question—the percentages of persons for and against a proposition—become much more illuminating when we are able to show which groups favor each side and to reveal significant differences of opinion among persons of different ages, economic circumstances, educational backgrounds, etc.
2. These facts give us a means of *checking the reliability of our cross-section.* By tabulating the factual data we can find out whether we are getting the proper proportions of all the various population groups, particularly those *not assigned by quota*—educational, occupational, political preference, religious, and other groupings.

The number and nature of factual questions vary from survey to survey according to the demands of each particular study. On some assignments you will have to fill in only such standard information as age, sex, economic level, occupation, and education; on other assignments you may have a longer series of questions to ask.

Never be apologetic about seeking this information. Asking factual questions about the respondent himself is standard practice for all opinion polls, and the results of an interview are worthless without these data. If you make excuses or appear unduly inquis-

itive, the person is likely to think you have an ulterior motive for seeking such information about him. But if you ask the questions in an informal manner and in a matter-of-fact tone of voice, the respondent will answer them in the same way.

Don't be surprised, however, if some persons, before they answer, want to know *why* you desire such information. A great majority of the curious can be satisfied by the simple reply: "For statistical purposes, you know. I have to report whether you are a man or a woman, what city you live in, and so on." To the more persistent, you can explain that people's opinions often differ according to their occupation (or whatever you're asking about at the time), and therefore you need this information about each person you interview. Or you may go on to explain that we have to be sure we're interviewing the proper number of people in different occupations, age groups, nationalities, etc.—in order to make certain that our survey is accurate, that it fairly represents all kinds of people.

New or unusual factual questions will, if necessary, be explained in the Specifications for that particular survey. The following general instructions suggest the best way of handling the factual questions which appear on standard NORC questionnaires sent out from the Denver office.

Occupation and Employment of the Main Earner

The employment status and occupation of either the main earner of the family, or of the respondent, or of both are standard factual questions. On some surveys you will have to record only the *main earner's* employment status and occupation; on others we will ask you to record also the *respondent's* employment status and/or occupation, in those cases where the respondent and the main earner are not the same person.

On a standard questionnaire, the first occupation question ascertains the identity of the main earner of the family:

1. *"Who is the main earner of your family?"*
   1 Respondent is main earner.
   2 Some other member of family is main earner.

   .....
   (Relationship to respondent)

Whether or not the respondent is the main earner will determine the phrasing of the subsequent questions about employment

status and occupation of the main earner. When the respondent is the main earner, you ask, *"Are you employed?"* but when someone else is the main earner, you ask, *"Is he (Is she) employed?"* The main earner's relation to the labor market, and his occupation, are best determined by the following questions which are asked on standard questionnaires but not always on client questionnaires:

2. *"Are you (Is he) (Is she) employed?"*
   1 Yes
   2 No
   - A (IF "NO") *"Why aren't you (isn't he) (isn't she) employed right now?"*.....
   - B (IF "NO") *"What kind of work did you (did he) (did she) do when you were working (when he was working) (when she was working) (when he was living)?"* .....
   - C (IF "YES") *"What kind of work do you (does he) (does she) do?"*
     1 Job.....
     2 Industry .....

On each questionnaire we may print only one or two of the variations suggested above, but there will be times when you will find all these alternative wordings useful.

The respondent's answer to the question as to why the main earner isn't working at present will tell us whether the main earner is in the labor market ("unemployed") or not ("not employed").

An "unemployed" person is one who normally works for a living, has lost his job, and is at present looking for a job. There are many other types of persons who, while not employed, are not "unemployed" in the sense that they are looking for a job to make a living. Although most "not employed" persons, such as housewives, are not main earners, some of the "not employed" may be main earners.

Recipients of invalid pensions, veterans' pensions, or other payments for disability (including workmen's compensation), while not working at a gainful occupation, are nevertheless not "unemployed," but rather *"not employed."* In fact, many of them

may be unemployable. In the same category are persons who have retired from work, including those living on old age pensions or retirement annuities (either private or under the Social Security or Railroad Retirement Acts), teachers' retirement plans, or other annuity systems established by federal, state, and local governments or by private companies. "Not employed" also are women receiving "aid to dependent children" payments and persons in the armed forces, unless they are professional soldiers.

All these people are main earners if their income represents the largest part of the family's resources. Thus, even a deceased person can be the main earner of the family when his savings, in the form of annuities, other insurance payments, or income from investments, provide the largest part of the family income after his death. Other "not employed" individuals, such as housewives, normally are not main earners. Furthermore, most wives, even when employed outside the home, are not breadwinners.

When you ask the first question on occupations—to determine who in the family is the main earner, you may encounter persons, such as widows, who because of their particular situations may erroneously believe themselves to be main earners. A widow, for example, may tell you she is the main earner of the family, but when you ask her, "Are you employed?" and "Why aren't you employed right now?" she will tell you she is not working because she lives on a pension which she receives from the railroad for which her late husband worked as a brakeman.

In instances when you detect an *erroneous assumption* on the part of the respondent that he is the main earner, the appropriate question is no longer, "Why aren't *you* employed right now?" but rather, "Why isn't *he* employed right now?" In the example cited, you would not need to repeat the question—corrected for the deceased husband who is found to be the actual main earner —because the widow has already given you the answer. You would merely write the word "Deceased" on the line provided for the reason.

In such a case it is imperative that you go back and correct the answer you had previously recorded to the question regarding the main earner. In the particular instance under discussion you should first cross out distinctly your circle around category 1, circle category 2, and write "Husband" in the space provided. In addition, always be sure to check to see whether the answer you had recorded for employment status is applicable to the actual main earner. In the widow's case, this answer should need no changing, for she probably answered "No," she was not employed, an answer still correct in relation to her late husband. Next, you should fill in the answer to the question on kind of work done. On the line after *Job* you should write "Brakeman"; on the line after *Industry*, "Railroad."

A complete description of the main earner's occupation includes two items of information—both the individual's job *and the* industry *in which he is or was employed.* In other words, even if the main earner is deceased, disabled, retired, in the armed forces, unemployed, or on relief, you must report for him a particular job in a particular industry—his occupation *prior* to his death, disability, retirement, induction, or unemployment.

> The most important thing to remember is that, regardless of the answer to the question about who is the main earner and whether or not he is employed, an entry must be made on *both* the *Job* and *Industry* lines in answer either to the question, "What kind of work do you (does he) (does she) do?" or the alternative question, "What kind of work did you (did he) (did she) do?"
>
> *Both a* Job *and an* Industry *answer must be recorded on every questionnaire carrying these lines.*

No single question can, in every case, elicit a complete answer covering both aspects of information on occupation. Some persons will respond in very general terms to the original question, and follow-up questions will be needed. If, for example, a man answers, "I'm a machine operator," you know his job, but you would still have to ask, "What sort of place do (did) you work at? What do (did) they make or do there?" If a woman tells you that her husband is "in insurance," she has indicated the industry in which the main earner is employed, but you would have to follow up the first response by asking, "What kind of work does he do in the insurance business?"

> *Job* refers to the kind of work the main earner actually does (did). The answer should describe his own duties. *Industry* refers to the type of goods or services made or sold by the main earner's employer—or by himself if he is self-employed. The name of the company or employer is not necessary; we simply want to know what the firm makes or sells. As a matter of fact, the employer's name may often prove confusing. "Neustet-

er's," for instance, may be a well-known department store in your town, but if you record "clerk at Neusteter's" as a respondent's occupation, the Coding Department will not be able to tell whether Neusteter's sells ladies' hats or tractors.

Writing down only the type of work a person does will not provide sufficient information to identify fully a number of jobs which might *appear* to be clearly circumscribed by a single word. NORC's Coding Department follows the occupation classification code published and used by the Bureau of the Census. If, for example, you report "cook" without further identification, there are at least five ways of classifying the individual. According to the United States Census:

A cook is coded as "skilled" if he works in a bakery.

A cook is coded as "semi-skilled" if he works in a candy or chemical factory, an oil refinery, a packing house, a fish cannery, a sulphite mill, or a brewery.

A cook is coded under "domestic service" if he is employed in a home.

A cook is coded in "protective service" if he's in the Army or Navy.

A cook is coded under "personal service" if he works in a restaurant, school, hospital, hotel, lumber camp, or railroad establishment.

If you record "plumber" for a main earner's job, and give us no further information, there are at least four main occupation categories into which this particular person might be classified. Without having information about the industry in which the main earner works or used to work, the Coding Department cannot know under which group to enter such a vague answer.*

The following table gives examples of complete occupation descriptions as NORC wants them. Information under the *Job* column would, in most instances, be worthless without the information recorded under the *Industry* column, and vice versa.

*Other examples of classifications difficult to code unless identified by the industry category are the jobs of: "Instructor" with at least three possible interpretations; "Laborer" with five possible classifications; "Mechanic" with three; "Machinist" with four; "Diemaker" with three; "Railroader" with seven; "Repairman" with four; "Superintendent" with six; "Butcher" with five; "Nurse" with three; "Secretary" with three; "Distributor" with four; "Foreman" with four; "Filling station operator" with two; "Attendant" with five; "Checker" with four; "Stockman" with seven; "Contractor" with four. Other attempts at identification, such as "Worker," "Crew chief," "Road chief," "Railroad employee," "Government employee," or "Miner," are so vague that they cannot be given a code number. For all intents and purposes such answers give no information.

Examples of Complete Answers to Factual Question about Occupation

Job	Industry
Agent	Real estate co.
Apprentice machinist	Locomotive mfg.
Assembler	Airplane mfg.
Attendant	Gasoline filling station
Auto mechanic	Auto repair shop
Baker's helper	Bakery
Bellhop	Hotel
Bobbin boy	Woolen mill
Brakeman	Steam railroad
Bundle wrapper	Retail department store
Bus boy	Cafeteria
Car washer	Garage
Carpenter	Shipyard
Carpenter	Bldg. construction
Cashier	Bank
Cashier	Theatre
Checkroom attendant	Restaurant
Civil engineer	Dam construction
Clergyman	Baptist church
Commercial traveler	Hardware mfg.
Cook	Hotel
Counterman	Cafe
Dealer	Wholesale groceries
Delivery man	Retail drug store
Doffer	Cotton textile mill
Driller	Coal mine
Electrical engineer	Broadcasting station
Farm laborer	Cotton farm
Farmer	General farm
Fireman, stationary	Lumber mill
Fireman	Fire department
Foreman	Sewer construction
Gardener	Private family
Hired hand	Cattle ranch
Instructor	Private school
Iron molder	Iron foundry
Janitor	Apartment house
Laborer	Street construction
Lawyer	Own office
Librarian's assistant	Public library
Lineman	Electric power co.
Locomotive engineer	Steam railroad
Log cutter	Lumber camp
Machinist	Machine tools mfg.
Milling machine operator	Tool and die mfg.
Manager	Cattle ranch
Manager	Retail shoe store
Meat cutter	Retail meat market
Meat trimmer	Meat packing house
Merchant	Retail dry goods store
Newsboy	Newspaper publishing company
Physician	Private practice
Plumber's helper	Bldg. construction
President	Life insurance co.
Professor	College
Proprietor	Retail florist shop
Salesman	Retail book store
Salesman	Insurance company
Sander	Furniture factory
Secretary to official	Coal mining
Secretary	Law office
Stationary engineer	Steel rolling mill
Stevedore	Steamship company
Stitcher	Leather shoe factory
Superintendent	Copper smelter
Teacher	Public school
Traveling salesman	Electric appliance mfg.
Truck driver	Transfer company
Telephone operator	Telephone company
Trained nurse	Hospital
Truck helper	Transfer company
Usher	Theatre
Watchman	Grain elevator
Weeder	Beet field
Wringer operator	Steam laundry

Occupation and Employment of Respondent

While most of your respondents will be main earners, a substantial minority will not be. Many of those who are not main earners may be employed—earning some income of their own. In order properly to classify these respondents, we sometimes ask that the occupational and/or employment status of persons who are not main earners be recorded in addition to, or in lieu of, similar information about the chief breadwinner of the family.

In cases where the respondent is *not* the main earner but has a job or is working on his or her own account, write the respondent's occupation in the space provided on the questionnaire. Our purpose in asking this question from time to time is to find out how many of our respondents have jobs, whether or not they are the main earners. We can, for example, determine how many of the women who are not their family's chief breadwinners are working outside their homes and how many are housewives only. By tabulating this information we are able to tell whether or not we have in our miniature population an adequate sample of each group of women.

Education

The questions on education are normally asked as follows:

1. *"Do you remember the name of the last school you went to?"*
2. *"What was the last grade (or year) you completed in school?"*

On most questionnaires sent out from the Denver office and on some sent out from New York, categories for recording answers are supplied, as follows:

1	Completed college	5	Completed grammar
2	Some college	6	5-7 years grammar
3	Completed high	7	1-4 years grammar
4	Some high	8	No schooling

These eight classifications are sometimes reduced to seven, or, less frequently, to three.

Education, according to the Bureau of the Census usage, which NORC follows, refers only to years of *regular schooling* completed by the respondent. By "regular schooling" we mean either the traditional seven or eight grades of grammar school and four years of high school, or the more modern system of six years of grade school, three years of junior high, and three years of high school—plus four years of college (or their equivalent). *Trade school courses, business college training, and correspondence courses do not count.*

The first question, "Do you remember the name of the last school you went to?" is designed to put the respondent in a factual frame of mind. We have found that when some people talk to an interviewer they tend to exaggerate the amount of schooling they have had. Experience has proved that the indirect approach now used elicits more accurate information than did the direct question, "How far did you go in school?" Question 1, therefore, must *always* be asked exactly as it is worded on the questionnaire.

The name of the school, as mentioned by the respondent, will almost always tell you whether it is a grade school, a high school, or a college; and the second question, "What was the last grade (or year) you completed in school?" will tell you in which of the eight classifications to record the respondent. Enter the highest *full* grade that the person has completed; do not include half years or grades that were not finished. For a person who obtained his last years of education in night school, the approximate equivalent of full-time day school should be calculated and recorded.

If the name of the school does not tell you definitely which level of school it is, use informal questions to find out the extent of the respondent's education. Similarly, use informal questioning to determine the educational background of a respondent who can't remember the name of the last school he attended or who names a trade or correspondence school. When you encounter persons educated abroad or by private tutors or in any other unusual fashion, mark the classification most nearly corresponding to the amount of regular schooling reported.

If you feel uncertain about the correct level of schooling to be credited to a respondent, record the name of the school and all other pertinent information the respondent may give you, and the Coding Department will complete the classification.

In the case of respondents who have been educated in parochial schools, be sure to get the same information in regard to the number of years completed that you obtain for persons educated in public schools.

Remember that some respondents may let the "prestige factor" influence their answers to the question about formal schooling, so endeavor to classify every person in the educational level where he or she really belongs.

We find that at times some interviewers return quotas which include a too high proportion of college and high-school educated people. You may want to remember for your general guidance that, according to the 1940 Census, only about one out of every ten persons in the United States has any college education at all, only one in three completed a year or more of high school, and out of every hundred Americans, about three had no formal schooling whatsoever.

Age

On every interview *ask* the respondent's age. *Do not try to estimate it.* Experiments have shown that the average interviewer is fooled often enough to make estimates of age quite unreliable for purposes of accurate sampling.

The best way to ask a person's age is to say: *"May I ask your age?"* You will find that very few people object to giving you this information. In instances when you receive such a reply as "Over 21" or "I don't see what that has to do with it," it's a simple matter to explain that opinions sometimes vary according to age, and that you are asked to get this information from every person you interview.

In the rare event that the person flatly refuses to answer, or gives you an obvious fib, make your own estimate—and *label it "Estimate."*

> On some surveys you will be asked simply to mark the general age group into which a person falls. On other surveys it will be necessary to record the respondent's exact age. In the latter case, you must write down a specific age—"27," "69," or "43." Answers like "Over 40" or "30-40" can't be tabulated.
>
> A person "over 40," for example, may be 41 or 91, but the tabulators have no way of knowing whether most of the "over 40" respondents are also over 60—or under 60, for that matter. If too many respondents are over 60, of course, the sample is not representative of all persons over 40, many of whom are in the 40's and 50's as well as in the 60's, 70's, 80's, or even 90's. NORC must often check to determine whether or not the sample it gets accurately represents all age groups, those into which the "over 40" group may be divided, as well as that group as a whole.

Age is one of the most important control factors in determining the distribution of our sample. We know from Census figures how many people in our cross-section must come within the various age groups in order to make the sample really representative. Age is used, therefore, as one of the bases for quota assignment. So that the office may ascertain whether the quota has been correctly filled, it is important that each interviewer record the age of each respondent. Whenever an interviewer neglects to ask or to report a respondent's age, we have less assurance of the representativeness of the sample.

Names

On some surveys you may be asked to secure each respondent's name at the end of the interview. There are two reasons why we sometimes ask you to record this information: we may want to have you call back on the same persons with a different questionnaire at a later date, or we may want to be able to furnish a client with additional proof that the interviews were actually made as reported. When we need the names of respondents, the Specifications for the particular survey will so inform you.

> If a person asks you why you need his name, tell him it is to furnish proof that you have done your job, and assure him that the information will be held in confidence.

If the respondent refuses to give you his name, don't insist on it; just write "Refused" in the space provided. You may promise the skeptic at the beginning of the interview that he doesn't have to give his name if he'd rather not. Even though you may know a person's name or can easily find it out, don't record it without his permission.

Addresses

On practically every questionnaire we ask you to record the respondent's home address. This information is essential because we need it to check on our coverage of the various neighborhoods in your area. If necessary, you may explain that "We can't make a good survey unless we interview people in different parts of town."

To record the address, you do not need the respondent's permission. When you interview him in his home, simply jot down the address without asking. Should you interview a respondent away from home, *ask him* for his home address. On some surveys we may ask you to record also the address of the place where you obtained the interview.

If by chance you come across a person who flatly refuses to reveal his address, and if there is no other way of securing this information, write "Refused" on the appropriate line.

Place of Interview

We frequently need to know in what types of places your interviews are being made—what percentage, for example, are obtained in respondent's homes. So on some surveys we ask you to record one of the following classifications at the bottom of each questionnaire:

Interview obtained:

1	In the home (or on farm)	4	In a park
2	On the street	5	Where respondent works
3	In a store	6	In a public building

Interviews secured in the respondent's yard or on his porch are to be recorded as "In the home"; those obtained in parked cars should be marked "On the street." Interviews made in gasoline stations, barber shops, bowling alleys, and similar places of business should be marked "In a store"; those made in outdoor places of amusement should be designated as "In a park." "Public buildings" refers to libraries, railroad and bus stations, lobbies of office buildings, and similar places. Unless a respondent works at home or in a store, interviews made at his place of work—an office, factory, mill, railroad yards, etc.—should be recorded as "Where respondent works."

Home Rent or Value

In the chapter on Quota Controls the method of ascertaining and recording rent levels has been described in detail.* On NORC's

*See pages 69, 70, 72-74.

own questionnaires the question about rent reads, usually, something like this:

> *"Do you or your family rent or own the place where you live?"*
>
> 1 Own
>
> 2 Rent
>
> 3 Room and board
>
> 4 Special conditions.....
>
> A (IF "OWN") *"May I ask about how much you think your house would rent for, unfurnished and without utilities?"*
>
> $.....
>
> B (IF "RENT" OR "ROOM AND BOARD") *"May I ask about how much rent you pay each month?"* $.....

Remember that, regardless of whether your quota is assigned by rent levels or by economic levels, you are to ask these questions of *every respondent.* The only exceptions are respondents in rural-farm quotas, that is, persons who live on farms. For these respondents a special category, "rural-farm quota respondent," is provided on each questionnaire.

To the subquestion for persons who *rent* the places where they live, respondents should, and normally will, answer in terms of "contract rent," which is the actual amount of rent paid each month, regardless of whether or not furniture and/or utilities are included in the rental. In the subquestion for persons who *own* their homes, the respondent is asked to estimate what the rental would be for the dwelling unit unfurnished and without utilities.

Income

On some surveys it is necessary to secure information on the average weekly income of the respondent and his family—to enable us to check the accuracy of our cross-section from this standpoint or to sort opinions on some of the questions according to respondents' incomes.

Data on income are usually obtained by using a card. The respondent is shown a card on which is printed a scale of five or six income groups, each one lettered or numbered, and he is asked to call off the letter or number of the group in which his family belongs. The exact income is not asked—only the group within which it falls.

Unless otherwise specified, these income groups refer to *total family income;* that is, they include wages plus other sources of income such as professional fees, dividends on investments, pensions, etc.—and they include not only the respondent's income, or the chief breadwinner's income, but the *combined* income of all members of the family living under that roof.

Unless otherwise specified, this question is to be asked of *everyone except farmers.* For them a "Question does not apply" category is provided.

Should the respondent refuse to designate his income group even when you explain the purpose of the question, write "Refused" and go on to the next question.

Other Factual Items

Under Factual Data you will find, either regularly or occasionally, questions on still other items of information:

1. *Political preference*

   In analyzing our questions, it is frequently important to know how respondents of various political preferences differ in their opinions. For this reason we usually try to find out how the respondent voted or whom he favored in the last Presidential election preceding the survey.

   After the questions covering this point, the names of the two leading candidates are listed. Categories are usually supplied for persons who voted for minor candidates (such as Norman Thomas), who did not vote, who can't remember whether or how they voted, who refuse to tell how they voted, or who were too young to vote.

2. *Religion*

   Information about the religious affiliation or inclination of respondents is requested only on surveys where these data will prove particularly useful. The questions usually read:

   1. *"How often do you go to church or religious services?"*
   2. *"What denomination do you consider yourself?"*

   It is not sufficient to find out from the respondent that he goes "regularly," "occasionally," or "once in a while." Try to get an answer in terms of a given number of times a year, a month, or a week. If the respond-

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ent indicates that he is unable to attend services, but is under the direct influence of a church or synagogue through regular calls by a minister, priest, or rabbi, or through regular listening to religious radio programs, this information should be written in the space provided for recording frequency of attendance.

3. *Nationality*

It is not standard NORC practice to ask respondents about their citizenship, nationality, or nativity. On surveys where this information is needed, the following question is usually used:

"In what country were you born?"

A (IF "U. S.") *"In what country was your father (mother) born?"*

"U. S." is sufficient identification for native-born respondents or parents; you need not record the town or state. In recording data on the foreign-born, always write in the name of a specific country; don't accept such replies as "Central Europe" or "South America." Use the name of the country whose area, as of January 1, 1937, included the place of birth.

4. *Veterans*

On forthcoming surveys NORC may want to separate the opinions of those men or women who served in the armed forces during World War II from the opinions of those who did not serve in uniform. Sometimes we may even wish to ascertain the views of those who served overseas for comparison with the opinions of those who did not leave the United States.

The factual question will probably read as follows:

"Did you serve in any of the United States armed forces during World War II?"

A (IF "YES") *"What was your branch of the service?"*

1	Army	3	Marines
2	Navy	4	Coast Guard

B (IF "YES") *"Did you serve overseas?"*

If a woman says that she served in the WAC, record her answer as Army; if she says WAVES, circle the number opposite Navy. SPARS belonged to the Coast Guard.

5. *Union membership*

We sometimes ask, under Factual Data:

"Are you (Is the family's breadwinner) a member of any union?"

A (IF "YES") *"Is that CIO, AFofL, or independent?"*

1	CIO	3	Independent
2	AFofL	4	DK

6. *Marital status*

This question reads: *"Are you married or single?"*

Categories are usually provided for those who volunteer the information that they are widowed, separated, or divorced. When definite categories are not provided, mark such persons as single.

7. *Telephone ownership*

The usual questions are:

"Do you happen to have a telephone in your home?

A (IF "YES") *"Is it listed either in your name or your family's name?"*

The phone, to be recorded for our purposes, must be paid for by the respondent himself or by a member of his immediate family. Telephones used primarily for business and pay telephones in rooming houses do not count.

8. *Car ownership*

To secure needed information on this point you will ask:

"Do you happen to have a car in your family?"

Trucks, motorcycles, and automobiles used chiefly for business purposes do not count.

9. *Size of family*

When we ask for this information, we expect you to include in the figure you report the respondent himself, and other members of his family related by blood or marriage who live under the same roof. Servants, roomers, or family members not now living at home are not to be counted.

Data Ascertained without Asking Questions

The following items which are included in the Factual Data can be reported automatically without asking any questions of the respondent.

1. *Sex*

   Indicate whether the respondent is a man or a woman.

2. *Economic level*

   Estimate this yourself, of course. Never ask the respondent. Mark *A, B, C,* or *D* on every questionnaire. Always estimate *economic level* for Negroes and farm residents, even though on your Quota Sheet you tally these groups as *Colored* and *Farm* only.

3. *Race*

   Check either *White* or *Colored.*

   "Colored" refers only to persons who obviously have some Negro blood and live as Negroes. English speaking Mexicans or Spanish-Americans are considered as whites. Since members of the red, brown, and yellow races constitute too small a percentage (0.4%) of the total United States population to be statistically significant, separate quotas are not assigned for these groups. If ever you chance to interview a member of one of these minority racial groups (red, brown, or yellow), classify him as *White* rather than *Colored.* Such cases are too few to effect any percentage shift in the larger of the two racial groups.

4. *Size of town in which respondent lives*

   On questionnaires sent out from the Denver office the interviewer is not ordinarily asked to indicate this item of information. On forms from the New York office, however, the interviewer must note the size of place. Suburban interviews should be recorded in the size-town category corresponding to the central city. But on the Quota Sheet a respondent living in a suburb is tallied in the suburban group.

5. *Place and state*

   On every interview we need to know the city or town in which the respondent lives. On the *Address* line you have recorded his street address, his post office box number, or his rural route and box number. On the following line you complete his address by recording *in every instance* the name of the community where he resides and the name of the state. If he lives outside a town, write "Outside of ....."—the place where he gets his mail.

6. *Interviewer's signature*

   All completed questionnaires must be signed by the person who made the interview. If you shared your quota with another NORC interviewer, that person should sign his completed questionnaires and you should sign yours—even if the quota is listed entirely in your name.

   Sign your *full name;* do not use just your initials.

7. *Date of interview*

   Record this item of information on every questionnaire. You may use abbreviations, such as 11-4-45 to represent November 4, 1945.

8. *Time of day interview started*

   Circle the hour closest to that when you began to talk with the respondent. If the hour is one which could be either a.m. or p.m., such as 9 o'clock, be sure you have circled the correct number.

Chapter 14

Rural Interviewing

One-third of the population of the United States live in rural areas. In order to give this large group its full weight in our sample, many NORC interviewers work almost exclusively on rural assignments outside their home towns. Sometimes even interviewers who live in big cities are assigned rural quotas outside their Metropolitan Districts. This chapter is devoted to tips on the most efficient way of handling such assignments.

First, it must be remembered that all rural quotas, whether farm or non-farm, must be filled by interviewing persons who live outside the limits of Metropolitan Districts and towns of more than 2,500 population. Once outside these limits, you are in rural territory, and there are no restrictions on your choice of area unless specifically stated.* You are not bounded by state or county lines or by the limits of small towns of less than 2,500 population.

*In certain areas, where NORC employs several interviewers, boundaries may be established for each interviewer to prevent duplicate calls. Also in those few instances wherein state boundaries are also boundaries for Census divisions—such as the Oklahoma-Kansas state line—interviewers may not interview outside their own division unless given a specific assignment.

Rural-farm refers to all persons in such areas who *live on farms,** regardless of their own particular occupation. Thus, farmers' wives, the farmer's daughter who has a job in town, even the wealthy lawyer who lives in the country on a farm which is managed for him—all fall within a farm quota because they *live* on farms.

Rural non-farm refers to all people in these rural areas who do not live on farms, even if farming happens to be their vocation. Thus, all persons who live within the limits of a town of less than 2,500 population fit the rural non-farm classification (provided, of course, that the town is outside any Metropolitan District). Persons living in isolated houses (which are not farmhouses) along roads and highways are also rural non-farm residents.

Rural assignments generally include quotas of both farm and non-farm residents—a certain number of "rural non-farm and farm" interviews near a town or outside a Metropolitan District. Sex and age quotas are assigned separately for farm and non-farm residents; economic level quotas are assigned only for non-farm respondents. Farm residents are classified separately and are *tallied on the Quota Sheet* merely as "White farm" or "Colored farm," and not according to their economic level.

Rural Cross-Section

We don't assign economic level quotas for farm interviews for several reasons, the most important of which is that reliable data on the subject are difficult to obtain and to interpret. By getting small random samples of farm residents from many different localities, we simplify our procedure and still get a reasonably accurate cross-section of the entire farm population.

But, although you are not bound by economic level requirements, it is nevertheless your responsibility to secure interviews at a true cross-section of farmhouses in your particular rural territory. In other words, when you are assigned 12 farm residents to interview, you would not get the entire 12 from the *C* standard-of-living level but would seek proportional representation from well-to-do, middle-class, and poor farm residents alike. Similarly, you would get as good a balance as possible between farm owners and farm tenants, and, if several different types of farming are

*A farm, as defined in the U. S. Census, is an area of three or more acres devoted to the raising of plant or animal life (excluding lumber); or less than three acres, if it produces at least $250 worth of produce annually. There are fox farms, dairy farms, truck farms, chicken farms, greenhouses, apiaries, and mushroom cellars, but not fish, frog, or oyster "farms."

carried on in a locality, you would obtain an adequate number of interviews from each.

It is not necessary, of course, for an interviewer to drive miles out of his way to include a particular type of farm in his quota, but he should exercise the same unbiased selection of respondents which we have advocated for urban assignments. You must avoid an undue concentration of farm residents of any certain type; you should not get too many farmers who have dairies, who are well-to-do, or who are of German descent, for instance. You should scatter your interviews over at least three different roads and highways; you should not get all your interviews on the main highway or on hard-surfaced roads. You should try calling automatically at every third or fourth farmhouse in order to obtain a random selection; you should not pass up a particular farm because there's an ugly dog in the yard or because the place looks otherwise uninviting.

Rural non-farm interviews should be similarly scattered. It would be undesirable for you to get your entire non-farm quota from a single village when your sample is intended to represent the total non-farm population of the area. In so concentrating your interviews, you might be overlooking other villages and small towns, where opinions could be very different. Similarly, your interviews should represent isolated houses (not farmhouses) along the roads and highways as well as small established communities.

Rural Economic Levels

Though farm residents are not *assigned* according to economic level and are tallied on the Quota Sheet only as "White farm" or "Colored farm," we stress again the point that the economic level of each respondent interviewed must be recorded on his questionnaire. Normally the over-all appearance of the farm is sufficient evidence on which to base your classification. But, although the same indexes of standard-of-living level apply to both farm families and city families, there are certain differences.

In determining the economic level of a farmer, you look at his home, of course, but you take other factors into account also. The appearance of a farm home is a less dependable guide to economic level than is the appearance of a city house or apartment. You will need to size up *all* the farm buildings. Are they neat—well kept and well painted, or are they run down and badly

in need of repair? Is the barnyard littered with junk, or is it clean and orderly?

Remember that the acreage and productivity of his land have as much influence on a farmer's standard of living as the city-dweller's occupation has on his. How does the farm compare with others in the same locality? Is it above or below average? The careful interviewer will not hesitate to ask the farmer questions about his place: "Nice farm you have here. How many acres are there?" or "Fine-looking cattle. How many head do you have?" There is nothing a farmer likes to talk about more than his land and his stock. A few well-directed questions, and you should have a pretty clear idea of a farmer's economic status. But do not be misled by the farmer's attire, because he probably won't wear his best clothes to do the chores.

The economic level of both farm and rural non-farm residents should be judged in relation to the general economic level of the rural area in which they live. That is, the farm resident's standard of living might be *"C"* if he were compared with urban or non-farm residents in the nearest city or town, but, if his economic level is considerably above the average of other farm residents in the area, he should be classed as *"A"* or *"B."*

Within the same rural territory there may be a "low-class" community and a "high-class" community. A typical non-farm respondent in the low-class community must be rated *"D"* because his standard of living is below the average for the whole rural non-farm territory, even though he is "average" in relation to his fellow townsmen. Similarly, the average respondent in the high-class community is to be classed as *"B"* even though he is no better off than his immediate neighbors in the same village. In order to be a *"C,"* a respondent must be representative of the "average" of the *entire rural area,* not just of the little community in which he lives.

Transportation

A car is a virtual necessity if you are to reach a good rural cross-section. You may, in an emergency, travel by train or bus to a nearby town of less than 2,500 inhabitants for rural non-farm interviews and fill your farm quota by approaching farm residents who live right at the edge of town or by interviewing other farmers when they come to town to shop or sell their produce. Particularly on Saturdays, farmers can be found at farm implement

or grain and feed stores, at the local creamery, at grain elevators, or on street corners where they visit with friends and exchange news.

But rural interviewing of the type described can be authorized in rare emergencies only—if an interviewer's car is temporarily out of service and we cannot conveniently reassign the quota; or if all but two or three interviews have been completed, and time does not permit another trip into the rural area. Interviewing farmers in towns, as a regular practice, would seriously weaken our rural cross-section in that some selective process may be operative in their presence. For instance, probably a higher proportion of farmers with good cars than of those with poor cars will be in town—or more of those with money to spend than of those living on marginal income.

If your completed quota consists exclusively of rural non-farm interviews in a nearby town accessible by bus or train, it won't be representative of other non-farm dwellers in other towns in the area or in scattered houses outside any established community. If all your farm interviews are with farm residents living near the edge of town, your sample may not be representative—those who live farther out may have different opinions on such matters as cooperative buying, highways, and rural electrification. Moreover, on an interview with a farm resident, your judgment of economic level is seriously handicapped if you are unable to size up the farm for yourself. For these reasons, we expect all rural interviewers to have the use of a car.

Interviewers who have a car should not forget to check their gas, oil, and tires before starting an assignment. Any carelessness in this respect can result in hours of lost time, serious inconvenience, and perhaps the loss of interviews through failure to make the deadline.

Since you are reimbursed by NORC for necessary car mileage, it is necessary for you to check the speedometer when leaving home and again immediately upon return. Of course, if you make any calls for yourself, you will deduct that mileage from the amount you charge NORC.

It is probably even more important for an interviewer to know the territory when doing rural interviewing than when working in a city. Without knowledge of the territory, you can easily drive

for many miles yet secure only a few interviews. On the other hand, if your route is reasonably well planned, you will rarely need to drive beyond a radius of 30 miles from home.

Before starting, therefore, it's wise for you to have a general idea of where you're going and which roads to take. If feasible, plan to travel in a circle rather than far out one road and then back again. You'll secure a better cross-section and at the same time be able to finish your assignment nearer home.

How to Approach Farmers

Since "a farmer's work is never done," it matters little when he is called upon, except that, when his work *is* done, he usually goes to bed. Any evening interviewing, therefore, had better be done early.

At certain times of day you can almost always find a farmer in certain places. Very early in the morning, or in the evening, he will probably be in the barn doing the chores. This is not a particularly bad time or place to interview him. You must be prepared to spend a little more time here, because the farmer may not stop his work to talk but will give his opinions as he milks the cow or throws the hay down from the mow. It is well to remember that farmers have good reasons for being particular about gates and doors, so always leave them the way you find them; be sure to close them if they were closed and leave them open if you find them that way.

During some months of the year the farmer spends most of the daylight hours in the fields—working. But, if you get the farmer's attention and state your business briefly, he will usually be accommodating and take time out to answer your questions.

The farmer's wife can usually be found in the kitchen. You can save time by going directly to the kitchen door. As you know, in many farm homes the front door is used only on rare occasions.

Finally, make a special attempt to be friendly when you are interviewing farmers. They are by nature hospitable and expect a warm and friendly attitude from callers. You will find that friendliness pays big dividends.

Chapter 15

Telegraphic Surveys

It usually takes a week or two to get a regular full-length questionnaire into final form, two to three weeks more before the office receives the last completed questionnaire, another week or two to code the results and transfer them to punch cards, and anywhere from one week to a month to tabulate and percentage all the final figures and breakdowns. In other words, a period from six weeks to three months is required from the time we start work on a regular survey until the data is ready for final analysis and reporting.

While this schedule can be accelerated somewhat when there is a particular need for speed, it sometimes happens that NORC or a client is eager to learn *quickly* the public's reaction to certain questions. To meet this occasional demand we have set up a system whereby interviewers accepted for telegraphic assignments are allotted standard quotas to use on *all telegraphic surveys.* On such a survey we telegraph the interviewers the questions we want asked. After completing the assignment (in accordance with their pre-assigned quotas), the interviewers wire back to us their totaled results. By means of this technique we are able, when occasion arises, to report results of a survey within a week—sometimes within 48 hours—from the time the questions are framed.

Because time seldom permits any advance notice of telegraphic surveys or any reassignment of quotas if any interviewer is unable to do the job, and because the time allowed is usually very short—just a day or two—only interviewers who are able to handle quotas on such a basis can be accepted for telegraphic assignments. Not all interviewers who say they would be available for this special type of work can be used immediately. NORC usually prefers to assign telegraphic quotas only to experienced interviewers who have already proved themselves to be reliable and consistently superior in their work.

If you have been placed on NORC's list for telegraphic assignments and have received your telegraphic quota, remember that we count upon you to be available for such interviewing *without*

notice. When we send out a telegraphic survey, we don't have time to ask if you can do the job; we assume that you can. For this reason, you have a responsibility to keep us informed *in advance* of any periods when you will be away from home or otherwise unable to complete an assignment.

Telegraphic surveys are usually short. Your quota is probably only 15 or 20 interviews, and normally there are only a few brief questions to ask. The important thing is that the work be done *immediately,* for, while we can usually give you two full days to complete your quota, it may occasionally happen that you will receive a telegraphed assignment in the morning and be asked to wire us your results that same evening.

Because of the extra responsibilities imposed by telegraphic assignments, and because of the need for maximum speed, skill, and accuracy, telegraphic surveys are paid for at a slightly higher rate than regular surveys.*

Telegraphic Materials

Interviewers on the telegraphic list are given a supply of the following materials:

1. A standard Telegraphic Quota Card
2. A supply of Telegraphic Interview Forms
3. A sample Telegraphic Interview Form
4. Time and Expense Report and Interviewer's Report Forms

Telegraphic surveys, which are designed to provide merely a quick check of national opinion, with no elaborate breakdowns or cross-tabulations, require a smaller number of interviews than regular surveys. At the present time NORC uses a standardized cross-section for all telegraphic surveys.

All interviewers accepted for telegraphic assignments are sent a Quota Card for the standard telegraphic cross-section. These Standard Telegraphic Quota Cards are used over and over again. They should always be kept on hand, never returned to us with an assignment.

*On your Time and Expense Report, simply cross out the regular hourly rate and compute your time at the special rate.

NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER

T E L E G R A P H I C Q U O T A

Interviewer_____

Place of Interview_____

	MEN				WOMEN				
	QUOTA	21-39	40 & over	QUOTA	21-39	40 & over	TOTAL
White Farmers									
Colored Farmers									
ECONOMIC LEVEL: A									
B									
C									
D									
Colored Non-Farm									
TOTAL									

Telegraphic *Interview Forms* are the equivalent of questionnaire blanks. Sample forms are reproduced on the following pages. One form (labeled "last page") provides spaces for recording the factual data and the answers to two questions. Whatever the number of questions included in a telegraphic assignment, you will always use one *factual form*. The other form provides recording space for *four questions*. You will use as many pages of the four-question form as you need to record the number of questions in a given telegraphic survey. For a survey containing only two questions, for example, one factual form would be sufficient to record the data needed. A survey of from three to six questions would require one four-question form and one factual form; for a survey of from seven to ten questions you would need two four-question forms and one factual form, and so on.

A Sample Telegraphic Assignment

To see exactly how a telegraphic assignment should be handled, let's follow the experience of a typical interviewer whom we will call Clara Clipboard. When Clara filled out her NORC application blank, she answered "Yes" to the question, "Would you be able to complete assignments sent without advance notice, that would have to be done within 24 or 48 hours?" After demonstrating her interviewing ability on several regular assignments, Clara one day received from the Denver office a letter announcing that she was being placed on our list of telegraphic interviewers and directing her to study carefully the special instructions on telegraphic surveys—Chapter 15 of this book. Enclosed with the letter were a Telegraphic Quota Card with the pre-assigned quota of 20 interviews, which she was to follow on all telegraphic surveys, a supply of Interview Forms, and certain other materials.

Then, early one Wednesday morning Clara Clipboard received the following night letter from her local Western Union office:

> SURVEY T-100. USE STANDARD TELEGRAPHIC QUOTA. TELEGRAPH RESULTS TO NEW YORK OFFICE NIGHT LETTER BEFORE TEN PM TONIGHT, WEDNESDAY. FIRST QUESTION: WHERE DO YOU GET MOST OF YOUR NEWS – FROM THE RADIO OR THE NEWSPAPERS? REPORT: RADIO,NEWSPAPERS, BOTH, NEITHER, DK. SECOND QUESTION: DID YOU HAPPEN TO HEAR THE PRESIDENT'S TALK ON THE RADIO LAST NIGHT? REPORT: YES, NO. THIRD QUESTION: IF YES TO SECOND QUESTION: WHAT DID YOU THINK WAS THE MOST INTERESTING THING THE PRESIDENT SAID IN HIS TALK? REPORT BY MAIL. MAIL INTERVIEW FORMS TO NEW YORK OFFICE TONIGHT. IF ANYTHING NOT CLEAR OR IF YOU CANNOT MAKE THIS SURVEY AS SPECIFIED, TELEGRAPH NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER, 280 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY COLLECT.

The instructions allowed Clara only one day to complete her assigned quota, but, since there were only three brief questions, she anticipated no difficulty in obtaining within a few hours the 20 interviews assigned to her. Her first step was to prepare her Interview Forms.

Taking one of the four-question forms which had been sent to her several weeks previously by the Denver office, Clara typed (or wrote in pencil) in the left-hand column the specified questions, exactly as worded and in the same order. She was careful to number each question. Clara indicated the possible answers to each question by writing them, one below the other, in the "answer box" column, then divided this column and the following numbered columns for answer-recording by drawing horizontal rules across the page. Since there were five possible answers to question 1, Clara divided the recording and answer columns into five sections; for question 2 she needed to divide the space into only two sections. (See sample form.) Because the third question was a "free answer" type for which answer boxes could not be used, Clara planned to record the responses on the reverse side of the same page. To the four-question form she attached a factual form on which to record the factual data.

Now Clara was ready to begin her interviewing. In the column labeled *1* she recorded the answers made by her first respondent; in the column labeled *2* she recorded the replies of her second respondent; and so on. By examining the sample form you will see that the first person interviewed said she got most of her news from the radio and that she had heard the President's speech the night before. Clara wrote the word-for-word answer to question

SAMPLE

TELEGRAPHIC INTERVIEW FORM

Survey No. T 100
Date of Interviews: 2-29-44

NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER
University of Denver

Name: Clara Clipboard
Place: Denver, Colo

QUESTIONS	ANSWER BOXES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	TOTALS
(Ques. 1) Where do you get most of your news --from the radio or the newspapers?	Radio	X		X	X			X	X					X		X			X		X						9
	Newspapers		X				X				X	X					X	X		X							7
	Both									X			X		X												3
	Neither					X																					1
	D K																										—
(Ques. 2) Did you happen to hear the President's talk on the radio last night?	Yes	X	X	X			X		X		X	X			X		X	X	X		X						12
	No				X	X		X		X			X	X		X				Y							8
(Ques. 3) IF "YES" TO Q. 2 What did you think was the most interesting thing the President said in his talk?	Write answers on back																										
(Ques.)																											

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Name: Clara Clipboard

NORC -- TELEGRAPHIC INTERVIEW FORM -- last page

Survey Number: T-100

	QUESTIONS	ANSWER BOXES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	TOTALS
	(Ques.)																											
	(Ques.)																											
FACTUAL DATA	EDUCATION Name of last school? Last year completed?	College				X			X	X							X	X		X		X						3
		High school			X		X				X		X	X	X				X		X							10
		Grade or less	X	X				X				X				X				X								7
	AGE	21 - 39	X	X	X		X	X			X	X		X					X		X							9
		40 - up				X			X	X			X		X	X	X			X		X						11
	RENT Own or rent your home? Rental or Est. Rent?	7240 up							X																			1
		5750 - 7240															X											1
		2840 - 5719		X	X			X			X	X	X	X	X			X				X	X					11
		2849 or less	X			X	X			X						X			X	X								7
	ECONOMIC LEVEL	A							X								X											1
		B																										1
		C			X	X	X	X		X					X	X		X	X	X		X						11
		D	X	X							X	X	X	X							X							7
	RACE	White	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						20
		Colored																										
	SEX	Man		X	X	X		X				X			X						X	X						8
		Woman	X				X		X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X									12
	PLACE	Non-Farm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						20
		Farm																										

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3 on the back of the form—after indication by the numeral *1* that it was the reply of the first respondent.

1. "I liked the part about Russia's cooperating with us in settling the Dardanelles issue."

Factual Data

On the factual form, space is provided to record seven items. To secure three (in some instances only two) items of this factual information you ask the respondent direct questions. The other recorded items are based on your own observation and judgment. The respondent's *educational* background must always be ascertained by using the two questions which are standard on all NORC surveys. (As a reminder, these questions in condensed form are printed on the factual record sheet.) You will ask, "Do you remember the name of the last school you went to?" and then, "What was the last grade (or year) you completed in school?" You will never record on the Interview Form the answer to the first of these two questions; as you know, we ask it only to reduce the likelihood of exaggeration on the part of the respondent. On the basis of the individual's answers to the two standard questions, you should mark a cross in the answer square opposite the most appropriate listing of the three indicated on the form. The *"college"* category includes all persons who have completed high school and who have had *some* college education. *"High school"* refers to those who have completed eight grades of school and have had *some* additional formal education. (In some school systems this may mean eight grades of grammar school and some high school training; in other systems this may mean six years of grade school plus more than two years of junior high and/or high school work.) *"Grade or less"* applies both to persons who have attended school but have never gone beyond the eighth grade and to those who have had no formal schooling at all.

The questions about *rent* are asked if your Quota Card assigns interviews in terms of rental brackets, but these questions are skipped if your Quota Card assigns interviews in terms of economic levels. While for some time all urban assignments were made in terms of rent, and rural quotas were apportioned by economic level, NORC may assign some surveys entirely in terms of economic level. Thus, if you are filling a rural telegraphic quota you will leave the "Rent" categories blank and go directly from "Age" to "Economic Level."

For interviewers who have urban quotas and must ascertain the respondent's estimated or contract rent, condensed versions of the two standard questions are printed as reminders. The first rent question is, of course: "Do you (or your family) rent or own the place where you live?" If the answer is "Rent," the interviewer asks, "May I ask how much rent you pay each month?" If the answer is "Own," the interviewer puts the question, "May I ask about how much you think your house would rent for, unfurnished and without utilities?" Opposite "Rent" in the column below the heading "Answer Boxes," you must copy the four rental brackets listed on your Quota Card so that you can count each respondent in the appropriate category. When you encounter "Special Conditions,"* place the individual in the rental bracket equivalent, in your judgment, to his particular situation. The respondent's *age* is asked in the standard manner—i. e., "May I ask your age?" Simply check the appropriate category: "21-39" or "40-up."

The remaining four items of Factual Data--Economic Level, Race, Sex, and Place—can be filled out on the basis of the interviewer's observation. While you need not record occupation, you will normally ask about it as a helpful index in determining economic level.

Turning to the factual form on the sample assignment (see page 133), we see that Clara Clipboard had an urban quota and that she filled in opposite "Rent" under the "Answer Box" heading the upper and lower limits of the four rent brackets listed on her Quota Card. By reading down column *1* on the factual form, we can see that Clara's first respondent has only grade school education or less, is under 40, pays less than $28.50 monthly rent, is in the *D* economic group, white, a woman, and does not live on a farm.

Telegraphing Results

After completing the quota of interviews specified on her Quota Card, Clara's next step was to total her answers. On questions 1 and 2 she simply added her X marks opposite each answer box and recorded the total in the extreme right-hand column of the form. On each question she checked to make sure that the sum of the totals for all categories combined matched the total number of interviews assigned to her. On question 3 Clara turned to

*See pages 72-74.

the reverse side of the form and made sure, *first,* that the number of verbatim answers recorded there coincided with the number of "Yes" answers recorded for question 2, and, *second,* that each free answer was designated by the number of that particular respondent. Next she totaled the *X*'s in each horizontal line of the Factual Data, again making sure that the total on each question added to the 20 interviews assigned to her. Then, in the proper spaces on the four-question and factual forms, she filled in the number of the survey (specified in our telegram), the interviewing date, her name, and the interviewing area (specified on her Quota Card).

Now Clara was ready to file her return telegram to the New York office. (At this point she checked the original telegram carefully to make doubly sure to which office and in what type of telegram she was to wire the results.) Working directly from her completed Interview Forms (see pages 132, 133) Clara composed the following night letter:

NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER, 280 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY COLLECT. SURVEY T-100 COMPLETED TWENTY INTERVIEWS. FIRST QUESTION: RADIO NINE, NEWSPAPERS, SEVEN, BOTH THREE, NEITHER, ONE, DK NONE. SECOND QUESTION: YES TWELVE, NO EIGHT. THIRD QUESTION: REPORT AIR MAILED. CLARA CLIPBOARD.

Clara's night letter, along with those of all other interviewers working on the survey, reached the New York office early Thursday morning. All the totaled results sent in by Clara and the other interviewers were transcribed onto tabulation sheets, added, and percentaged. The final results for the entire survey were available within a few hours.

To facilitate this tabulation, it is important that all return telegrams follow exactly the same pattern. These three points are essential:

1. The total number of interviews completed must be specified at the beginning of the wire.
2. If you receive no replies in terms of one of the possible answer categories (as with "DK" on question 1 above), you must report "NONE." *Never omit a category.*

3. You should always designate the questions as "*FIRST* QUESTION" or "*SECOND* QUESTION"—not "QUESTION ONE" or "QUESTION TWO." You will thus avoid confusing the question designation with answer reporting in terms of "ONE," "TWO," etc.

Having sent her return telegram, Clara's final step was to fill in her Time and Expense Report and her Interviewer's Report and to mail these together with the completed Interview Forms to the same office to which she wired her results—in this case, New York. She mailed these forms *immediately,* and, since she lived more than 500 miles from New York, she used *airmail,* for she knew that the office staff was eagerly awaiting the Interview Forms in order to code and tabulate responses to the "free-answer" question 3.

To Summarize

Your procedure on a telegraphic survey, then, will normally involve these six steps:

1. *Review* these *instructions* before starting work.
2. *Copy the questions* onto your Interview Form.
3. *Obtain your interviews,* following the sample assigned on your Telegraphic Quota Card.
4. *Tabulate your answers,* carefully checking the totals to make sure they add up correctly and match the total number of interviews.
5. *Telegraph* the results to us, following the sample form given in these instructions.
6. *Mail* to us your Interview Forms, your Interviewer's Report, and your Time and Expense Report.

While telegraphic surveys are normally assigned and reported by wire, it frequently happens that time permits us to use the mails instead. For example, if we wanted to measure immediate public reactions to some future event whose date we could predict, we might *mail* you mimeographed questionnaires and Specifications and direct you to obtain the interviews specified on your Telegraphic Quota Card the day after the event and to *telegraph* us your results. In such a case, you would follow only steps 3, 4, 5, and 6 itemized above.

Or, it might happen that we would want to interview a cross-section of the public immediately after some event which oc-

curred unexpectedly, but that we could afford to wait several days for the actual results of the interviews. In such an instance, we might *wire* you the questions we wanted asked but direct you to report your results by *mail*. On a telegraphic assignment of this nature, you would carry out only steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 outlined above.

Similarly, we might send you 10 or 15 questions and ask you to telegraph the results of only four or five of them and send us the rest of the results by mail. Or, in rare instances, we might telephone you the questions or ask you to phone rather than telegraph the results to us.

Finally, we might use the mails both ways—on occasions when we wanted results more quickly than usual, but not quickly enough to justify the use of the telegraph. Procedure in such an instance would be just like that on a regular survey, except that you would receive no advance notice, you would follow your Telegraphic Quota Card in securing the sample to be interviewed, and the time allowed would be only two or three days instead of the usual five or six.

Chapter 16

*Pre-Testing**

Most NORC questionnaires are pre-tested by full-time staff members, with the assistance of local interviewers in Denver and New York. For many obvious reasons, it is both impractical and unnecessary to get the views of the entire interviewing staff on every survey before it is sent into the field.

On a number of occasions in the past, however, we have found it helpful to send an early draft of a questionnaire to a cross-section of interviewers with the request that they try the questionnaire out on a small local sample and report the reactions to us. Interviewers are most often asked to help pre-test questionnaires when:

*Material contained in this chapter is designed solely for instances in which we ask you to pre-test a questionnaire for us. You may profitably read it for the information it contains about this phase of the work, but it must be emphasized that, as the aims of pre-testing differ from the aims of ordinary interviewing, so do the techniques and procedures differ. Nothing said in this chapter should be construed to nullify the general principles of interviewing previously set forth in this Manual.

1. *The subject matter of the survey is new to us, or is of an especially complex nature*, and we want to test our questionnaire even more thoroughly than usual before going ahead.

   For example, we once had to prepare for the Office of War Information a survey designed to find out how much people knew about inflation, and how aware they were of its dangers and what they could do to prevent it. The subject was a difficult one, and, while we had pre-tested the questionnaire carefully in Denver and New York, we felt we should try it out in the rural South and in other parts of the country before actually starting the survey itself.

2. *We are experimenting with a new technique* and are eager to get the reactions of a cross-section of interviewers before putting the new method into practice.

   For instance, we were once asked to ascertain what aspects of the war people wanted more information about and what subjects they were most interested in. Free-answer questions elicited too many vague, indifferent responses. After compiling a list of the subjects most frequently mentioned in the pre-testing, we conceived the idea of printing each of these subjects on a separate small card and then asking the respondent to sort through the deck (series of cards), pulling out the cards listing subjects of special interest to him. Whether or not this technique was a practical one for interviewing all types of respondents was something we couldn't decide until we had the reactions of a number of interviewers in different parts of the country.

3. *We want to accumulate more than the usual number of pre-test cases in order to discover "how the answers are falling."*

   For example, when testing a free-answer question we sometimes find most responses falling into two or three main categories. We may consider changing the question from the "open" type to one which offers the respondent a choice of the two or three alternative attitudes which have appeared most frequently in the pre-testing. If we based our decision only on test interviews obtained in Denver and New York, we might—by limiting the answer-choice to the two or three attitudes most prevalent in those two places—later discover that we had made no satisfactory provision for still other attitudes equally prevalent in some other parts of the country. To avoid such a situation, we would try out the question on a nation-wide scale by sending brief pre-test assignments to a number of interviewers scattered throughout the country.

4. *We want a small "pilot study"* to tell us which questions (of a group being considered) can be eliminated, what additional ones need to be asked, what interviewing techniques can best be used, or even whether or not a large-scale survey on the subject is worth making.

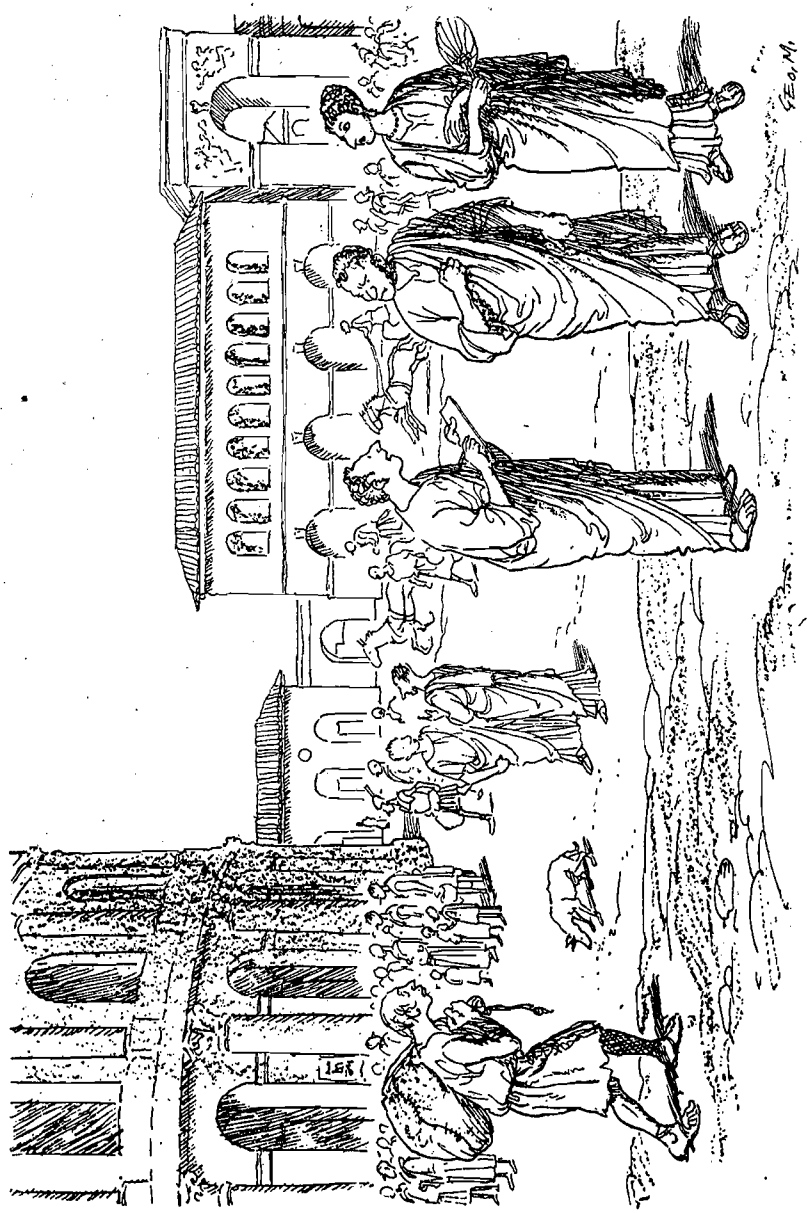
   Such a pilot study, based on 100 or even 200 interviews from various sections of the United States, would serve to guide us in preparing the final survey. In one instance, NORC made a nation-wide survey among small businessmen to discover their chief problems and complaints and their suggestions for improvement. Before we could go ahead with final plans, we felt the need of a "pilot study" to determine the best way to approach a small business man for an interview, to find out whether a single questionnaire could be made sufficiently adaptable to cover the problems of all types of small business, and to discover any weaknesses in general survey plans and methods.

A Pre-Test Assignment

As previously explained, we ask our interviewers to help us pre-test a questionnaire only on exceptional occasions, and even then we call on only a small number. The odds are, therefore, that you will never be asked to do this type of work. On the other hand, there is always the chance that you might!

A pre-test assignment is usually a rush affair. Unless the job is a pilot study, conceived in advance, the decision to ask our staff for pre-test assistance is likely to be a last-minute one, made under the pressure of a deadline. Quotas, of course, are small, generally a matter of 10 or 12 pre-test interviews to be completed in a day or two—without any advance notice—the questionnaires and your report to be airmailed back to Denver or New York. Therefore, pre-test assignments are usually sent only to those interviewers who have indicated their ability to accept telegraphic quotas.

Because no advance notice is sent, because the time allowed is short, and because a detailed report is required, pre-test assignments are paid for at the telegraphic rate. All such assignments are designated by the survey number followed by the letter "*P*": Survey 224-*P*, Survey S-62-*P*, etc. A "*P*" assignment is treated as a job by itself, separate from your subsequent assignment on the final survey, and you bill us for your work on a separate Time and Expense Report.



"Excuse me, I'm from the Roman Institute of Public Opinion—which part of the government policy do you prefer, *panem* or *circenses*?" (Bread or circuses)

Reproduced through the courtesy of *Punch*.

On a pre-test assignment the questionnaires sent you are not printed. Sometimes they may be in very rough shape: crude preliminary question wordings, no answer numbers to circle, listing of only the essential Factual Data, etc.

Usually no Quota Sheet is enclosed. Specifications or a covering memo tell you how many interviews to get and what general types of people to interview.

Specifications are devoted mainly to an explanation of the purpose of the survey in general and of each individual question, rather than to precise instructions on how to handle the questionnaire. Pre-test Specifications are intended primarily to help you understand what we are trying to accomplish, so that you can criticize each question intelligently after you have conducted your test interviews.

The Pre-Tester's Objectives

The aim of a survey is to find out what people think. The aim of a pre-test is to discover *how* to find out what they think. The pre-tester, therefore, has less interest in the actual opinions of his respondent than he has in the respondent's reaction to the individual questions and to the questionnaire as a whole. When you pre-test, your main objective is to learn whether the questionnaire does what it is intended to do and to explore ways of improving it.

In order to pre-test a questionnaire intelligently, therefore, it is essential that you know what we seek to learn through the survey and how each question fits into the general scheme. Without this knowledge, you are working in the dark. You may find, for example, that a particular question arouses little response and seems to contribute nothing to the survey, but it's entirely possible that that question has a definite mission to perform and that the lack of response to it provides a key to respondents' attitudes toward the whole subject of the survey.

Thus, you should spend more time than usual, rather than less time, in studying a pre-test assignment. You should fix the larger purpose of the survey in your mind and should endeavor to see how each question is designed to help fulfill that purpose. Then you should conduct your interviews *critically,* with an eye to whether or not each individual question, as well as the survey as a whole, actually does what it is intended to do.

Specifically during pre-test interviews you should be intent on obtaining answers to questions like the following:

Length of the questionnaire:

1. How long does the interview take? Can the interest of most respondents be held throughout the interview?
2. Does the questionnaire seem repetitious? Are there any questions which appear to duplicate one another?
3. Does the questionnaire cover the subject, or are there additional questions which should be asked to get the person's full opinion?

Order of the questions:

1. Is the first question "a good opener," or does it frighten the respondent, make him feel apologetic or ignorant? Would any of the other questions serve better to open the interview?
2. Is the order of the questions satisfactory, or are there difficult transitions in subject matter? Do the questions seem to "skip around"?
3. Does the position of certain questions seem to influence the answers to later questions?

Wording of the questions:

1. Is it necessary to repeat any of the questions several times in order to "get them across"? Would the substitution of simpler wording make a question more readily understandable?
2. Does any question mean different things to different people? Do all respondents answer the question from the same viewpoint or frame of reference, on the basis of the same assumption, or do replies come in terms that aren't comparable because they are based on different assumptions? Do persons with entirely opposite points of view tend to use the same words in answering a question?
3. Do people easily choose one or the other of the alternatives suggested, or do they frequently say "Neither," or "Both," or qualify their replies? How can this difficulty be avoided?
4. Do any of the questions seem biased or leading?
5. Do the questions seem to elicit the respondent's true opinion, or do they appear to be drawing dishonest answers? Why?

Pre-Testing Procedure

It is vitally important for the pre-tester to have an open mind about the questionnaire he is testing. If you have already made up your mind, after a brief perusal of the questionnaire, that certain questions are sound or that certain other questions should be re-phrased or omitted, your prejudices will not permit a fair appraisal of the results of your test interviews.

When a pre-test questionnaire reaches you, it has already gone through at least one preliminary draft—probably more—and it deserves a fair trial as it stands. Your first few interviews, therefore, should be conducted exactly as if you were working on an actual assignment: questions should be asked just as worded, in their planned sequence, and without any explanation or elaboration.

It's a good idea to get these first few interviews from two or three informed, articulate people, on the one hand, and from two or three uninformed, inarticulate people on the other. A good pre-tester can learn more about his questionnaire from these two extreme types than he can from the average "*C*" housewife.

Well-informed, well-educated persons are often critical of the best questionnaire, and they will be the ones to point out that a particular question doesn't give them a fair chance to express their opinions or that a particular word or phrase can be interpreted in more than one way. Interviews with poorly educated, inarticulate people, on the other hand, will often serve to point out words and phrases which are not universally understood or reveal certain questions which assume too much knowledge on the part of the respondent. It is a pretty safe bet that if a questionnaire works satisfactorily with both extremes—the best and the least educated—it will cause no great trouble among the general run of the population.

As you conduct your pre-test interviews, it is important to note on each questionnaire during the interview any difficulties or misunderstandings which arise.* If, at the conclusion of your assignment, you try to sort out your reactions without benefit of any notes, you're likely to overlook several minor stumbling blocks in the questionnaire which should be corrected. On the other hand, if you have a pretty good record of each respondent's reactions to every question, you can determine which objections

*It's a good idea to carry along several pieces of blank paper for extra note-taking.

turned up most frequently and therefore should be mentioned in your report and which objections are not worth noting.

After interviewing half a dozen people on the questionnaire as it stands, you may be conscious of certain definite weaknesses in it. During the remainder of your test interviews, it is perfectly permissible for you to experiment with various ways of overcoming those weaknesses.* For example, if a respondent doesn't understand a question, you may repeat it in different words in order to clarify it. If the opening question seems to get the interview off to a bad start, you can try out other questions as openers. If a particular question doesn't seem to be eliciting the respondent's true opinions, experiment with other ways of putting the issue. Feel free at all times to ask your respondents about any difficulties they may have, in an effort to discover what causes their trouble and how it can be eliminated.

Don't hesitate to test any ideas you have for improvement—*but keep a record of the changes you make.* If you vary the order of the questions, number them on the questionnaire as you asked them of the respondent; if you changed any of the wordings, write in the question as you actually asked it. Unless you keep a record of these variations, you are likely to find yourself hopelessly confused when you come to write your report, and we in the office will not be able to analyze properly the answers of your test respondents.

Your Report

After you have obtained the specified number of interviews from the specified cross-section on a pre-test assignment, it is your job to study those interviews and to write a report criticizing the questionnaire as it stands and suggesting any ideas you have for its improvement. This report may sometimes be written on a regular Interviewer's Report form, but more often we will ask you for a free expression of your reactions to be written or typed on ordinary paper.

Your report will be most helpful to us if you discuss the survey question by question, listing your reactions to each one. If the questionnaire has gone through several preliminary drafts in our office, you may find that it's in pretty good shape and that you have only one or two minor suggestions to make. On the other

*However, if the purpose of our pilot study is merely the collection of enough cases to give indicative results, we may instruct you to interview exactly as you usually do—with absolutely no changes in wording or order and absolutely no explaining.

hand, if the questionnaire was sent to you still in a rough stage, you may have recommendations to make about virtually every question and you may feel that a complete overhauling is needed. In any case, do not worry about appearing too critical. Most pre-testers err in not being critical enough. Unless requested to do so, don't bother to let us know what your respondents' opinions are on the issues, but do concentrate on telling us whether or not each question fills its purpose and, if not, how it can be improved. Here are two final words of advice on writing your pre-tester's report:

1. *Keep constantly in mind the objectives of the survey and the purpose of each question.*

   These cannot be changed, and any alterations you suggest in the interests of clarity or brevity cannot be considered if they conflict with the purposes of the study. Review your Specifications to be certain you understand just what we're after in the survey as a whole and the various individual questions.

2. *Beware of placing too much reliance on the reaction of a single individual who may not be at all typical.*

   No questionnaire can ever satisfy everybody, and a change made to meet one objection may promptly elicit twice as many different objections from other respondents. Before deciding that a question is unsuitable, on the basis of a specific difficulty which you have encountered, ask yourself, "Is this difficulty likely to recur in a substantial proportion of interviews, or is it a problem which will come up only on rare occasions and which can be handled satisfactorily in the survey Specifications? Can a better question be devised, which will fill the same purpose and which will meet not only the objection encountered but other problems as well?"

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More specialized articles on various aspects of sampling appear from time to time in such journals as: *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics, The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, The Journal of the American Statistical Association; The Journal of Applied Psychology, The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, The British Journal of Medical Psychology, The Journal of Social Psychology, Social Forces, Sociometry; Sociology and Social Research, American Sociological Review, Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science, The Harvard Business Review, Market Research,* and *The Journal of Marketing.*

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1 . . . to establish the first non-profit, non-commercial organization to measure public opinion in the United States. Through a national staff of trained investigators, representative cross-sections or samples of the entire population are personally interviewed on questions of current importance.

2 . . . to make available to legislators, government departments, academicians, and other individuals and organizations a staff of experts in the science of public opinion measurement and a highly trained nation-wide corps of interviews.

3 . . . to analyze and review the results of surveys made by other polling organizations.

4 . . . to create a research center to discover, test, and perfect new methods, techniques, and devices for ascertaining the status of public opinion.

5 . . . to provide the University with a graduate department devoted to the newest of the social sciences, public opinion research.

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