

Interview Formats

Sociology

Structured to unstructured, and what you trade at each step.

Comparability falls as depth rises. Choose which you need.

Format	Control	Trade-off
Structured	Fixed script and order	Comparable, shallow
Semi-structured	Guide plus follow-ups	Usual compromise
Unstructured	Topic only	Rich, hard to compare
Life history	Whole biography	Depth; recall error
Focus group	Group interaction	Norms surface; some dominate

Interviewer effects are real: age, gender, race and class of the interviewer shift what respondents say.