

## DEFINITIONS

**Closed  
Questions**

**VS**

**Open  
Questions**

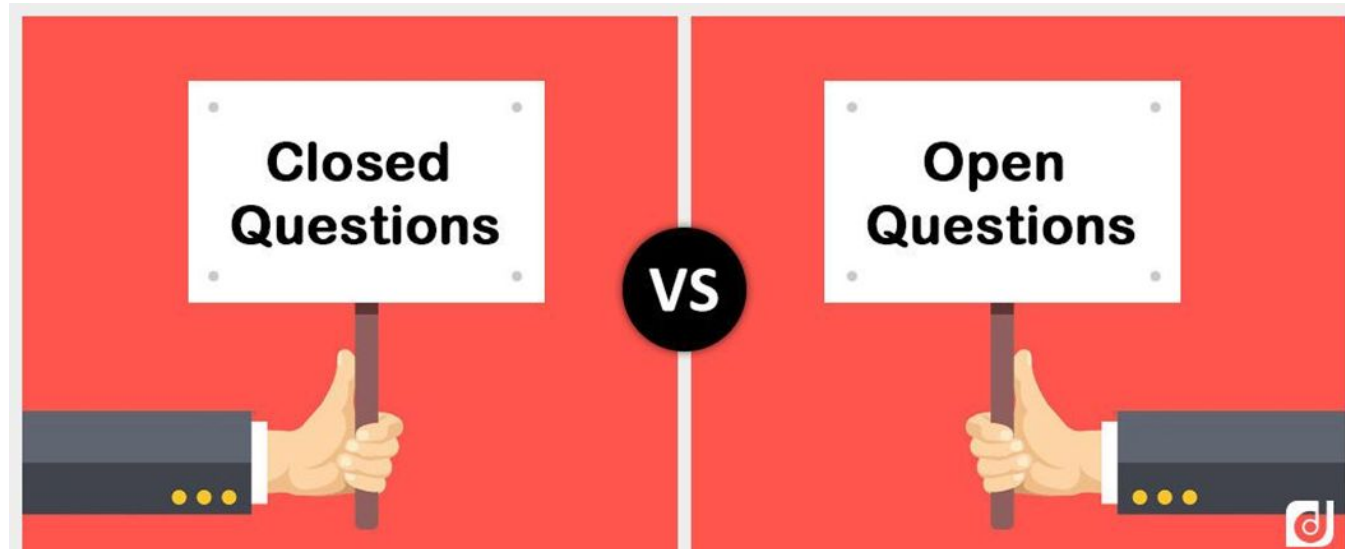
Closed-ended questions can be answered with a short or one-word answer. A verifiable fact. They usually provide evidence or data, and are often quantitative.

Open-ended questions **require an explanation** and cannot be answered with a “yes,” “no,” or with one-word. They often start with how, what, why.

The following slides show examples of closed and open questions.

**Both kinds** are needed when doing research. They work together.

Closed questions help you gather the data/evidence you need to help answer your open questions.





**Closed  
Questions**

**VS**



**Open  
Questions**

- Do all states have community colleges?
- What is the cost of attending community college vs. a 4 year college in NJ?
- What is the average family income of community college students?
- What percentage of community college students are working full-time?
- Are there more evening classes on average at NJ community colleges than at NJ 4-yr colleges?

**Why do many students choose to attend Community Colleges?**



**Closed  
Questions**

**VS**



**Open  
Questions**

- What percentage of high school students play video games?
- What is the best-selling multi-player video games for high school students? What are their characteristics?
- Are there any correlations between the number of students who a) receive detention, b) have GPAs over 3.5, c) play sports, and those who play video games?

**How does playing multi-player video games affect the social behavior of players at school?**

## Closed Questions

VS

## Open Questions

- When did the Internet become widely available to college students?
- How much time do current college students spend online--on social media, vs. on schoolwork?
- How much time did college students spend watching TV in the 1960s?
- How much reading/studying was typical for college students in the 1960s vs. today?

**How is the Internet affecting the reading habits of college students?**



## Closed Questions

VS



## Open Questions

- What is current rate of melting of the polar ice caps?
- What was the ice cover in 1960 vs. 2020?
- What was the population of polar bears in the Arctic in 1960 vs. 2020?
- What was the population of penguins in the Arctic in 1960 vs. 2020?
- If Arctic species are endangered today, when did they become recognized as endangered?

How is the melting of the polar ice caps affecting Arctic wildlife?



**Closed  
Questions**

**VS**



**Open  
Questions**

- How many people use Twitter daily (in the USA)?
- What percentage of tweets are negative vs positive?
- Are there any cases where tweets may have influenced the judicial process, medical decisions, consumer behavior?

**How has social media affected what it means to be human?**

Slides prepared by D. Scharf, New Jersey Institute of Technology as part of the Question Formulation Technique curriculum.

Please let me know if you add more examples; I can include them here.  
Contact [scharf @ njit.edu](mailto:scharf@njit.edu)

[Link to this presentation](https://researchguides.njit.edu/researchroadmap/qft) and more materials on asking good questions at <https://researchguides.njit.edu/researchroadmap/qft>

