



Qualitative and quantitative data?

This activity will help you to...

- Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative data
- Consider advantages and disadvantages of each type of data

Two types of data

Data come in two basic types:

- **Quantitative data:** these are numerical measurements of quantity or amount.
- **Qualitative data:** non-numerical data. They are usually in textual or narrative form (e.g. descriptions of objects, situations and events) but may also be e.g. pictorial.

For each of the situations described below, state whether qualitative or quantitative data would be obtained.

An experiment in which researchers record participants' reaction times when presented with different types of stimulus.	
Solomon Asch describing the reactions of his participants when the confederates gave the wrong answer.	
Solomon Asch recording how often participants would go along with the confederates.	
Asking participants to rate their football skills on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is very poor and 10 is very good.	
Asking football fans how they feel when their team wins or loses.	
Observing stress in teachers by counting how often they raise their voices, complain or act irritably	

If you were investigating the following questions, what sort of data would you try to obtain? Why?

- **Do women of different ages have different attitudes towards abortion?**
- **How does a woman make the decision to have or not have an abortion?**

What precautions would you take to maximize the validity of the data you obtained?