



# How to Plan Good Projects

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## How to Make Sense of Your Results

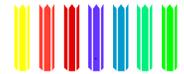
Every good project gives you a lot of information. You need to make sense of it to be able to show people if your project met its goals. Each method used to find things out gives you different kinds of information to make sense of.

### Ask people.

When you ask people how they feel, you can use multiple choice or open ended questions or both. To make sense of answers to *open ended questions*, look for “themes.” A *theme* is a topic or idea or feeling that can be summed up in a word or two. Sometimes many people will say the same kind of thing, even if they use different words.



To do a “thematic analysis,” read over what everyone said. Look for ideas that come up often. Take a separate piece of paper and write down words that sum up each different theme. Then take coloured pencils or highlighter pens and give each theme a different color. Then go back over what each person said and mark whatever fits a theme in that theme’s colour. Sometimes a single answer may have more than one theme in it. You can count up the number of times you used a colour to tell you how important that theme is to people.



There are two ways to make sense of how people answered *multiple choice questions*. If you used rating scales, give the worst rating on the scale a score of ‘1.’ Each step better is the next higher number. If your rating scale answers were ‘bad,’ ‘fair,’ ‘good’ and ‘great,’ then

- ‘bad’ would get a score of ‘1’
- ‘fair’ would get a score of ‘2’
- ‘good’ would get a score of ‘3’ and
- ‘great’ would get a score of ‘4.’

For each question with a rating scale, count up the number of people with a score of ‘1,’ then do the same for people who gave a score or ‘2’ and so on. You can make a table of numbers or a bar chart for each question with a rating scale. Or you can get the *average* or *mean* for each question if you add up all the scores for the question and divide by the number of people who answered the question. Averages make it easy to compare how people felt about the topics in different questions.



Sometimes one multiple choice answer is not better or worse than another. They are just different categories. To make sense of these questions, count up the number of people who picked each answer. Change the numbers to percents. The 'percent' is the number out of every 100 that gave the answer. With percents, 0% is always none, 50% is always half and 100% is always everyone. This makes it very easy for people to compare results. To get the percent, divide the number of people who gave that answer by the number of people who answered the question.

If people can only pick one answer for the question, you can put the results in a table of percentages, or a bar chart or a pie chart. But if people can pick 'as many answers as apply,' you can not use a pie chart because the answers will add up to more than 100 percent.



## Watch and listen.

When you watch and listen, you must have a plan to code the data. This means that each time you see an action or hear a sound or certain words, you put a mark on your paper. To make sense of these results, add up the number of marks in each coding category. You can put the results for all the things you observed in a table of numbers or a bar chart.



If you kept track of how long it took for people to do something, such as how long each person spoke at a meeting, you can add up the times and then get the average. These kinds of results can also go in tables or bar charts.



## Do a test.

When you do a test, each person ends up with a score that tells you how much they know or what they can do. The score may be the number of answers a person got right or the amount of time it took to do a puzzle or other task. If you gave the test to two groups or to a group before and after an event, you can compare the two sets of scores. Get the average score for each set of tests, and see if they look very different.



You can also find out which questions on a test were the hardest and which were the easiest for people. This is called an "item analysis." For each question, add up the number of people who got the answer right. You can even look at which wrong answer got picked the most for hard questions. This tells you what people are confused about and what they are clear about.

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