

3 Psychological investigations

Self-report

Learning outcomes

- a knowledge and understanding of **rating scales**
- an understanding of **open and closed** questions
- the **strengths and weaknesses** of each
- **identify strengths and weaknesses** of the **technique**, both in general terms and in relation to source material

A knowledge and understanding of rating scales

- Rating scales (for example, Likert scales) enable the participant to give a numerical value to their opinion/feelings, e.g

I feel very stressed by exams.

Strongly agree

Slightly agree

Slightly disagree

Strongly disagree

1

2

3

4

Open and closed questions

- **Closed** questions have a limited set of answers, e.g.
 - Do you feel stressed?

Yes/no
- **Open** questions allow the participant to answer question in own way, e.g.
 - Tell me about your stress.

The strengths and weaknesses of open and closed questions

	Open question	Closed questions
Strengths	Rich data, less ambiguity Less frustration by participant	Easy to compare and analyse data
Weaknesses	Difficult to compare and analyse data	May miss out on data because it falls outside of the allowed responses

Identify strengths and weaknesses of rating scales

- strengths
 - can be used many times, and is seen as objective, scientific measure of behaviour
- weaknesses
 - scores only have meaning compared to other people's responses on that scale

A typical exam question

- A researcher wants to find out about students' opinions of their college. She wants to use a Likert scale.
 - Give an example of one question and the scale for the response a researcher could use.
 - Give one strength and one weakness of this type of question.