

Six Simple Questions Pre-Testing

The Beginner's Guide

Step One: Let people know you want their feedback on “some material” or some other vague reference to what you are testing. Try to tell them as little about the material as you can (your main goal is just getting them to participate). This way, you can find out a lot more about what people get from the material itself. Remember: Once you mass-produce the material, you won't be there to explain anything to the target audience. They have to get everything from the material.

Step Two: Ask the six questions below. As they speak, you need to listen AND watch VERY CAREFULLY. They may not explicitly tell you what you need to know, but you may be able to extrapolate a lot from their tone of voice, how they frame their explanations and how they react physically. The main thing you want to understand is how they are thinking about the subject and what conclusions are they drawing from the materials.

Step Three: Write down everything you can. The more you can get down in their own words the better. It will help you explain it later to others.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>What to listen for</i>
1. What is the main thing this is trying to tell you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You want to make note of the main messages people are getting from the material.
2. What is it asking you to do? Why do you think that?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You are looking for whether people can translate the content into a behavioral “ask.” ○ The answer to the follow-up question can help you pinpoint what parts of the content are connecting.
3. On a scale from one to ten, how likely would you be to tell a friend or colleague about this? Who would you tell and what would you tell them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This will tell you a little about how useful or interesting people think the material is. ○ The follow-up tells you something about who they think the perceived target audience is. ○ The follow-up will also tell you something about what they find interesting or useful.
4. What, if anything, do you like most about this? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Listen here for information about content, not so much design.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>What to listen for</i>
5. What, if anything, do you dislike most about this? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Same thing here. You care more whether something is confusing than if they don't like a color or the placement of a copy block.
6. What seems to be missing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is ALWAYS going to be something missing. You need to be okay with that. This question can show you if you forgot something more important than what is there already. ○ The main reason for this question, though, is to help you think about how this material needs to be supported by other materials or messages.