

# KK04 — Methods for collecting data to determine needs and requirements

Analysis & Design · Comprehensive exam study guide

## STUDY DESIGN — YOU MUST KNOW

- interviews
- observations
- surveys
- reports

To determine requirements you gather information. Know each method, when it suits, and one advantage/disadvantage — ‘which method and why’ is a frequent question.

### The four methods

| Method      | Best for                                | Advantage                                  | Disadvantage                                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Interview   | Deep, detailed views from a few people. | Rich, can probe/clarify answers.           | Time-consuming; small sample.                            |
| Observation | Seeing how a task is actually done.     | Reveals real behaviour, not just reported. | People may act differently when watched; time-consuming. |
| Survey      | Quick views from many people.           | Large sample; quantifiable.                | Limited depth; low response rates; fixed questions.      |
| Report      | Existing documents/records/data.        | Fast; uses established information.        | May be out of date or incomplete.                        |

## Key definitions to memorise

|                    |                                                                                                |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Interview</b>   | A one-to-one (or small group) discussion to gather detailed information and clarify responses. |
| <b>Observation</b> | Watching users perform tasks to understand how a process actually works.                       |
| <b>Survey</b>      | A set of fixed questions distributed to many people to gather data quickly.                    |

## Exam technique

### EXAM TIP

- Choose by sample size and depth: many people quickly → survey; deep detail → interview; real behaviour → observation.
- Justify with one advantage AND acknowledge a limitation for top marks.

### COMMON MISTAKES

- Recommending a survey when depth is needed (surveys are shallow).
- Listing a method with no advantage/disadvantage when the command word is ‘evaluate/justify’.

## Quick revision checklist

- I can describe the four methods with an advantage and disadvantage of each.
- I can recommend a suitable method for a scenario and justify it.

## Exam practice — questions & model answers

**Q1. State one advantage and one disadvantage of using a survey to gather requirements.**

State · 2 marks

Model answer

- Advantage: reaches a large sample quickly and gives quantifiable data (1).
- Disadvantage: limited depth and possibly low response rates (1).

**Q2. A developer needs to understand how staff actually complete a complex paper process. Recommend a method and justify it.**

Recommend/Justify · 2 marks

Model answer

- Observation (1),
- because watching the task reveals how it is really performed, including steps staff might not mention in an interview (1).