

Checklist for a good research question

If you include all the points listed, you are likely to have written a good research question.

A good research question includes a prediction. It:

- identifies the dependent variable
- describes any patterns in the way the dependent variable changes
- suggests what might be causing these changes (a 'causal factor')
- explains how this would affect readings at the monitoring site
- predicts what will happen to the dependent variable as the causal factor increases or decreases
- mentions any variations that might be caused by uncontrolled variables.

ACTIVITY 3.2: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

An example of a good research question

Research question: What is the effect of wind direction on levels of air pollution?

Prediction: When air pollution is blown in from other parts of the country where there is industry or there are large cities, the air pollution levels will be high. This is because the level of pollution depends on how much pollution is carried from the sources to the monitoring site, and this depends on the wind direction.

There will be cases when the wind direction is from a direction of low pollution yet the pollution is high. This is because using wind direction assumes that the air travels in straight lines, whereas in reality winds blow in curves.