# Market Research Scales

Many market research surveys have questions that respondents answer on some form of scale. The type of scale will impact the data and our ability to analyze it further.

**A Quick Overview of the Question Scales**

Here are the four commonly used scales in questionnaires:

| Name of Scale | How it Works | Example Question | Example Answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Nominal** | Simply assigns labels | Did you pass or fail the exam? | Passed |
| **Ordinal** | Places in order | Where did you come in the exam, from highest to lowest? | 12th out of 30 students |
| **Interval** | In order, and how far apart | How many marks were you better than the next person? | 2 marks more than 13th and 10 marks less than the top mark |
| **Ratio** | A real number | What was your percentage mark? | 68% |

You should note that we are essentially capturing the same information – about a student's performance in an exam. However, as we progress from a nominal scale to a ratio scale, we are able to undertake further analysis.

For example, if we ask the top question in the table (which is on a nominal scale), then we can tell how many students passed and how many failed – but that's all. We don't know any of the marks and we don't know the average or range of the marks.

But when we use the bottom question (which is on a ratio) scale, not only do we know how many passes and fails, but we know averages, the order, the ranges of marks and so on.

In other words, with a ratio scale, we are given all the information that comes from the other types of market research scales.

However, while from an analysis viewpoint, a ratio scale is usually superior, there are many questions that can only be asked using a nominal scale – such as, in what city do you live.

**Your Task**

In this activity, you need to classify the following questions by the type of scales they are relying upon.

Questions to Classify

1. When you go shopping, how many cans of baked beans would you buy at one time?
2. What are your three favourite brands of baked beans, starting with your most favourite?

3. Where would you rank your preference for baked beans, as compared to toast, eggs, noodles, and soup?
4. How many cans of baked beans have you bought in the last three months?
5. Approximately how long has it been (in days) since you last ate some baked beans?
6. What brand of baked beans did you last purchase?
7. If I told you that Heinz Baked Beans scored 6/10 for taste, how would you score Campbell's Baked Beans?
8. Do you eat baked beans more than once a month?

Classify into one of these Market Research Scales

- Nominal
- Ordinal
- Interval
- Ratio