

**Observation** means exactly what it sounds. It is a method of data collection based on watching a process or skill and systematically recording the events.



Observation Is a Means  
of Data Collection

For example you may record what a field ranger does as he is counting migratory birds for the quarterly survey.

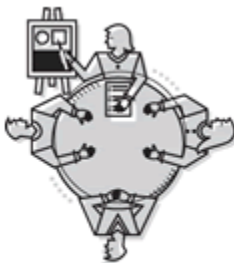
**Interviews** means one or more series of active interchanges between two or more people. They can be conducted either face to face or via technology.



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Interviews can be conducted via telephone, video conference, or even on-line via the web.

A **focus group** is an interactive exchange between a interviewer/facilitator and a group of people. Typically the discussion is guided by the facilitator according to a preplanned set of questions.



Focus Group =  
Interactive Exchange

You might be familiar with focus groups by some other term such as roundtable discussion.

**Oral surveys** are an interview where closed questions are used in order to elicit "yes" or "no" answers to a set of preselected questions.



Oral Surveys =  
Asking Set of  
Prewritten Questions

Read a list of questions from a survey form and fill in the answers the participants give you

**Questionnaires** are a survey instrument through which individuals respond to printed questions.



Sample of Questionnaire

You've seen these in many different varieties and used for many different types of input.

Review of **existing data** mean looking at information already gathered by the organization. Records, Reports and Files.



Many Types of Documents  
Can Be Reviewed

By existing data, we are referring to existing information in the form of reports, work samples, historical data, planning and budget reports, organizational structure charts, evaluations, career development reports that can be reviewed and analyzed.

A **test** means simply an exam that assesses knowledge or skill level.



Tests Can Be a Good Tool

Testing your target audience will give you a good idea of the knowledge gaps that exist.