- Interpretivists see questionnaires as lacking validity as respondents may lie or exaggerate.
- They also believe they lack depth and meaning and don’t allow respondents to voice their true opinion.
- May contain leading questions e.g. asking if they agree with something so might make them answer a particular way, lowering validity.
- Impose the researchers’ meanings and values by choosing the questions.

Links to education:
- Pupils may not understand concepts.
- Child may forget to return it to school.
- Parents may influence response if done at home.
- Schools are required to follow rules of confidentiality so may prevent info from being used in research.

Postal questionnaires
Advantages:
- Cheap, quick and can access large numbers.
- Maximum privacy may mean higher response rates.
- Large geographical areas can be covered.
- Entries into prize draws may encourage response rates.

Disadvantages:
- No researcher present to clarify misunderstandings.
- Low response rate.
- Cannot ensure the intended person responds.
- Only those with strong views may respond lowering validity.

Interviews
Types of interviews
Structured interviews
- Using a standardised format, each person asked same question the same way.

EXAMPLE: Young and Willmott: life in East London end
- Researched how people’s contact with extended family had changed over time.
- Circled answers from a list read to respondent.
- Short replies, each between 10-30 mins.

Practical advantages:
- Training for interviews is simple.
- Large number of people can take part.
- Results easily quantified and easily spot trends.
- Response rate usually high as quick so increases representativeness.

Theoretical Advantages:
- Positivists favour this as large amounts of quantifiable data to spot trends from.
- High in reliability as easily repeated.

Practical disadvantages:
- Inflexible so prevents them from gaining meaningful data.
- Unsuitable when investigating sensitive issues.

Theoretical disadvantages:
- Researcher decides what to ask, not enough freedom for interviewee.
- Has to choose from list so may not truly reflect their thoughts.

**Unstructured interviews**
- Interviewer guides convo but more discussion based.

EXAMPLE: Dobash and Dobash 'battered wives'
- Studied 109 wives who were victims of domestic violence who were staying in a women's refuge in Scotland.
- Talked to victims who opened up about their experiences.

Practical advantages:
- More relaxed approach means more of a chance for rapport and honesty and therefore more valid.
- More flexibility so more likely to gain useful info.

Theoretical advantages:
- Interpretivists favour this as data more in depth.
- Validity is higher as interviewees can discuss what they want.

Practical disadvantages:
- Time consuming so fewer people take part which limits the information and lacks representativeness.
- Interviewer must have more specialist background knowledge and training takes time and money.
- In group interviews, a couple of people may dominate the discussion so not as representative of whole group.