

SAMPLE VIVA-VOCE QUESTIONS

1. How did you come up with the idea for this project?

If you're asked to explain how you came up with the idea for your project, you want to show the viva panel that you were able to consider all possible options for your research before picking the one that would make the best use of your time and resources. To do this, include details about your consideration process, why was an idea rejected in favour of another option and what lessons you were to learn from exploring each possibility. This allows you to show how you were able to narrow down options based on factors such as feasibility.

2. How are you going to measure the effectiveness of your research?

To demonstrate to the viva panel that you were able to measure the effectiveness of your research, consider using qualitative and quantitative measures. Qualitative measures include surveys and other forms of data collection that allow you to get to the root causes of problems. They're ideal for determining what people think and feel about a topic. Quantitative measures are numbers used to compare data taken across time periods or locations, such as sales figures. They're great for getting an overview of how something performs over time, showing the panel full consideration for the effects of your research.

3. What is the future of your research area?

When answering this question, remember that your research area is not just about the current state of things, it's also about the future. This means you can't just talk about what's going on right now because this makes it seem as though you don't have a good grasp of things. Instead, try to give a more thorough answer by talking about what you see as the future of your research area, how that relates to the current state of affairs and why this matters.

4. What are some limitations of your thesis?

If you're asked about the limitations of your thesis during your PhD viva, be as clear and concise with your answer as possible. To do this, think about what could potentially come across as a limitation of your work. Then, write down answers to the following questions:

- Why is this a limitation? What would be better or more effective?
- How can I fix this issue? Are there changes I could make to my research design or data collection methods?
- What are some things that could potentially improve this problem?

5. Is this work original or have other people done similar work before?

When answering this question, provide a distinction between what you've done so far that's original and what has come from research. Then, go into greater detail and explain how you were able to build on someone else's research to put forward your own ideas. If there aren't any original aspects, ask yourself if there are some aspects of your research that aren't yet published but could be further developed. For example, maybe there's some aspect of your study design that isn't fully developed yet. This would give the panel a sense of which new ideas might lie in your research.

6. What is the benefit of this research to society?

To answer this question, think about what you're trying to achieve with your research. The aim is to demonstrate to the viva panel that you have a clear and well-defined goal in mind and are able to articulate how your research is going to help you reach that goal. For this, you may want to consider how your research could impact society as a whole and/or how it could be either used or adapted by other researchers or scientists who are working on similar problems.

7. What are some limitations of your research design?

When answering this question, be honest and acknowledge that every research design has limitations. No matter how well-designed your study is, there are always going to be ways to improve or alter it. Point out any limitations and then explain how they were either addressed or minimised in your study. If your research design was particularly strong, then you might want to talk about how it was able to produce such results. Alternatively, if something about your study didn't go as planned, use this information as evidence of a flaw in your hypothesis.

8. Do you think it would be better for your research if there was more data available about your topic?

To answer this question, start off by conveying to the panel any limitations found within your research. This is because it allows you to discuss whether additional research would have either prevented or minimised this outcome. For example, you might decide to tell the panel that additional data relevant to the research topic may have been beneficial because then you could test the hypothesis again by running the same tests in other communities. Then you could see if the result was the same with a different audience. Though, this may have resulted in a changed hypothesis.

9. How has your research challenged or changed the way we think about the topic?

Try to give an answer that's concise but also conveys the importance of your research. Think about how your research has either changed or challenged the way you think about a topic in an academic context. Mention a specific concept or theory that you've changed or talk about a paradigm shift you've caused. The easiest way to explain the effects of your research on the way people think about a topic is by talking about what you did in your study and what the results were. Then you can address any changes.

10. Do you think other researchers would be able to replicate your results?

The question of whether other researchers would be able to replicate your results is one used by the viva panel to decide whether your research is good enough to be seriously taken by others in the field. One way to approach this question is to think about what makes your study unique and/or different from other studies done before. If you identify some unique aspects of your study, give a clear response about how those elements would make it easier for other researchers to replicate your results.

11. Are there any alternative explanations for what you found in your research?

Asking this question is a way for the viva examiners to check your ability to critically evaluate your own work. First, review the literature and determine whether there are alternative explanations for

what you found in your research. If so, explain them. If not, explain why they don't exist/aren't relevant to your findings. It's also important to show consideration for these alternative explanations as they help the viva panel to understand why your findings are important.

12. Based on what you found in your research, what would be a suitable next step for someone else to take in this area?

When it comes to answering this question, think about what kind of research you're doing. This allows you to look back at the research completed and the conclusion reached to see if this ties in with the hypothesis. If there are any gaps, explain what they are, why they're there and what they mean. Using this as a further point of study, you could talk about what your next steps would be as a student investigating the gap.

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