



Appendix 4

Choosing the right question for your class

Choosing the right question for your randomised trial is both exciting and challenging.

These award-winning questions from past competitions might inspire your class:

Physical activity questions:

- Does 10 minutes of ambulatory activity affect the speed and mood in 10-year-olds?
- Does having a physical goal to work towards increase participation in fitness activities and therefore improve fitness levels?

Learning methods questions:

- Do children learn better from a teacher or from each other?
- Do extra maths games improve test scores?
- Can interactive spelling games improve spelling test results?
- Does writing in coloured pen when learning spellings and tables improve learning and concentration?
- Can cartoons, comics, and visual aids help children achieve better results in their tests?

Attention and focus questions:

- Do you learn more when working in groups or doing independent work?
- Does being on a device before bed affect your sleep?
- Music: Our memory's friend or foe?
- Does watching TV while doing written homework cause you to lose concentration?

Wellbeing questions:

- Does homework make children feel stressed?

These trials are all available on [START Competition • Resources](#).

By exploring topics that resonate with their curiosity, children are more likely to feel engaged in the design and conduct of their trials.



Appendix 4

How Other Schools Selected Their Questions

Looking for a process to help your class choose a question? Here's how previous winning schools did it:

Scoil Mobhí, Glasnevin, Dublin (2nd place winners in 2017):

"It was difficult selecting one single trial question. Everybody in the class had different ideas and opinions. We made a mind map on the whiteboard and gave each pupil in our class a chance to give their idea for the trial. We then narrowed it down with a vote."

St. Joseph's National School, Kinvara (1st place winner in 2018):

"To choose a question we worked in small groups and posted our ideas on a Padlet. The Padlet let us all collaborate and write down all of our ideas so that they would all be in the same place. We discussed our ideas in our group and then as a whole class we picked a few of the best ideas from the Padlet and then decided whether it was possible to test them in school or not. There were a lot of good ideas, but we narrowed it down to around 15 ideas. Then our teacher made a Google Slide presentation with all of the options so that we could look at all of them and discuss them."

Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada, Tullamore (2nd place winner in 2019):

"Our first step was to brainstorm questions that we would be interested in investigating. We created a Jamboard to put all our ideas in one place. Next, we organised our ideas using colour codes:

- In **green** were ideas we thought could work well.
- In **yellow** were ideas that were interesting but we weren't sure about; we might run into some problems.
- In **Pink** were ideas that we had to rule out due to time restraints or due to Covid restrictions that were in place at the time."

