

# Study Questions for Esterberg's Chapter 6: Unobtrusive Measures

1. What are **unobtrusive measures** and why should we be interested in them? What do they offer that other categories of methods don't?
2. Distinguish between **erosion** and **accretion** measures. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these types of measures?
3. Esterberg says that the **analysis of material artifacts** is "far more complicated than analyzing written texts."
  - a. So what's so complicated about them?
  - b. What can you do about that? What are some principles that should guide you in the analysis of material artifacts?
4. Distinguish between **primary and secondary sources**. Is a particular source of information always one or the other; is it possible to be both? How?
5. Esterberg treats "**media accounts**" as a unique information source. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using them?
6. The Digital Revolution and the advent of the World Wide Web has had a huge effect on all types of research, including qualitative research. One of the challenges in this vast and constantly evolving area is simply to keep up with all the technological change that occurs and the opportunities that arise from it. The treatment of these issues in books is often obsolete by the time a book is published, and Esterberg's discussion is no exception (remember that this edition was published in 2002, which is ancient history as far as the digital world is concerned). You will be getting an update on these developments and some of the issues associated with them when we discuss **Computer-Assisted Social Research** in class, and one of the things I will be asking you to pay attention to is what has changed since Esterberg wrote her chapter. In the interim, however, what, from her perspective, are some of the doors that have been opened via the internet? And what advantages and disadvantages does she describe in relation to doing research on the internet?
7. In her section on **historical research**, Esterberg notes that, "One of the main challenges in using historical materials is evaluating them." What are some of the elements that she suggests you should consider?