Prune, tune, postpone, explain

Four ways to make shorter, better forms
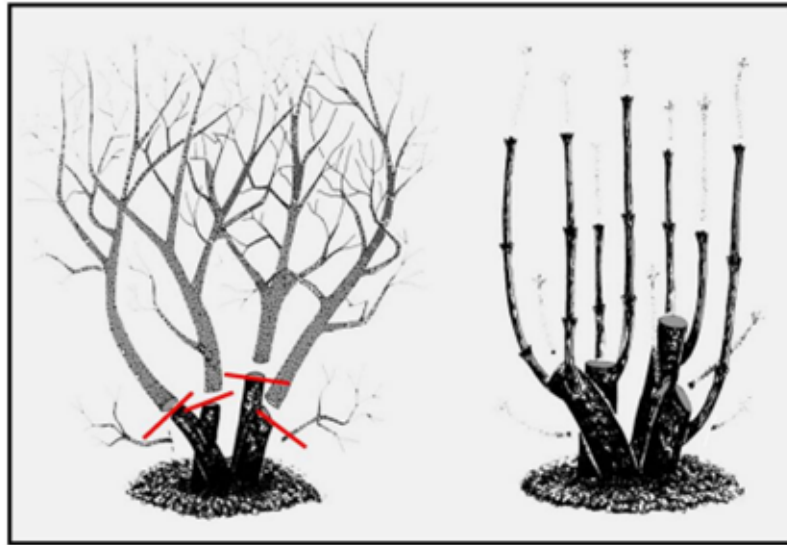
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If you've ever thought

"I'd prefer a longer, more horrible form"

then please raise your hand

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Prune: remove questions you don't need

Figure 11.
REJUVENATION PRUNING: DRASTIC

Image credit: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CAES/DOCUMENTS/Publications/Fact_Sheets/Plant_Pathology_and_Ecology/PRUNINGANINTRODUCTIONTOWHYHOWANDWHEN0415Rpdf.pdf

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Use a question protocol

A question protocol is different from the form itself, because it's about how you use the answers. It lists:
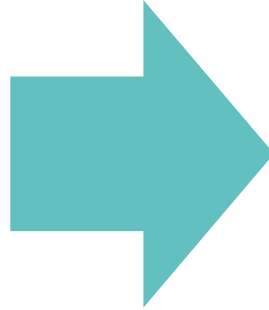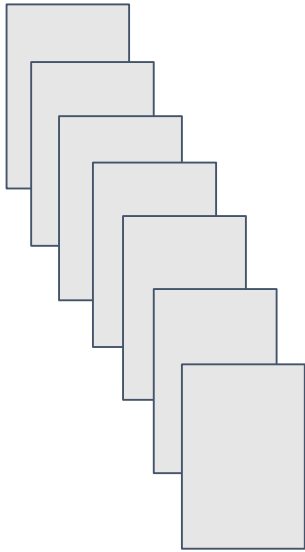
- every question you ask
- who within your organisation uses the answer to each question
- what they use the answer for
- whether an answer is required or optional
  - if an answer is required, what happens when someone enters any old thing just to get through the form.
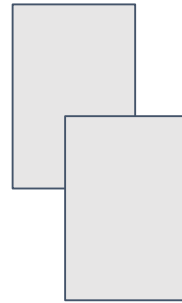
Example of a question protocol:
Designing the child funeral fund service – Adam Silver
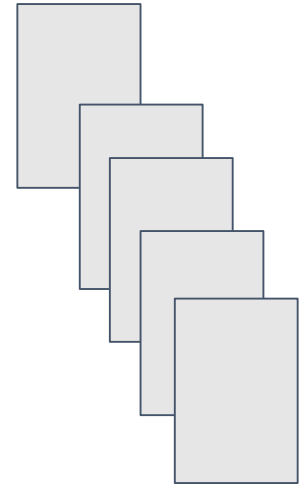
Caroline Jarrett @cjforms   (CC) BY SA-4.0   https://www.effortmark.co.uk/question-protocol-make-sure-every-form-field-necessary/

Postpone: save questions for later

"Everything we need to know"   "Get started"   "As needed"

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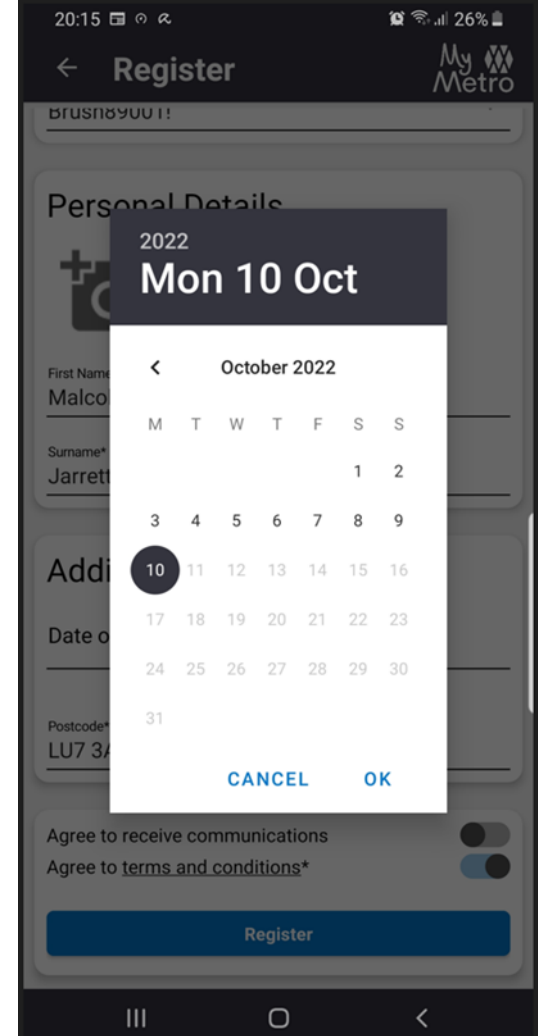
Tune: make questions easier to answer

Easier to:

- give your answer
- find the answer
- understand why you have to answer

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"Why does it ask for my name twice?"

Borrower Information

First Name

Middle Initial – *optional*

Last Name

Former Last Name – *optional*

Enter any other last name you may have provided to the U.S. Department of Education.
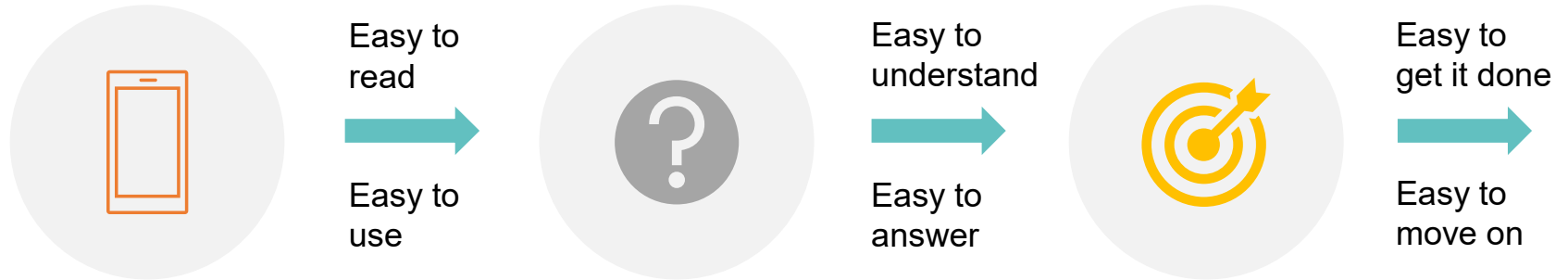
Social Security Number (SSN)

First Name

Middle Initial – *optional*

Last Name

https://studentaid.gov/debt-relief/application (only available in USA)

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Explain: say why this question is important

Easy to
read

Easy to
use

Easy to
understand

Easy to
answer

Easy to
get it done

Easy to
move on

Content design
Conversation

Prune, tune, postpone, explain

Prune   **get rid** of questions you don't need at all

Tune   make questions **easier to interact with** and answer

Postpone   only ask **when** you need the answer

Explain   say **why** you need the answer

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