# What to do when you’ve only got an hour

The bad news is that when you’ve only got an hour, you simply don’t have time to do all seven steps in the survey – but I’m hoping that you have made some progress on your survey already. If so, try using that hour to do at least one of these:

**If you haven’t yet identified your Most Crucial Question (MCQ)**: Review the questionnaire to see which question(s) are candidates for MCQ. Think about the decision(s) you plan to make on the basis of this survey. Is there a clear relationship between the decisions and the questions in the survey? Note: this may mean that you find out that a survey is not the right method at this point. That’s OK: the effort going into drafting the questionnaire isn’t wasted; you can use it as the basis for some interviews.

**If you haven’t yet got a questionnaire:** Do a couple of interviews with people in your defined group on the topics you want to cover. I’m allowing 20 minutes of the hour to set them up, and 20 minutes each for the interviews. You’ll learn a lot about how people think about the topics and you’ll find question writing is a lot easier.

**If you’ve got a questionnaire**: Testing! Find two or three people in your defined group and get them to try answering the questionnaire. If you don’t have time for separate cognitive interviewing for the questions, followed by separate usability testing of the questionnaire, then you can combine the two by asking people to ‘think aloud’ during the usability test.

If you can’t find anyone in your defined group, then you will get some value by asking anyone who hasn’t been involved in creating the questionnaire to usability test it for you. It’s not quite as good as asking someone from the defined group, because they won’t necessarily know how people in your defined group think about the topics, but at least you’ll get independent feedback.

**When you have responses and need to deal with them**: Get a random sample of no more than 100 of the responses. Do as much cleaning, coding, and thinking on that sample as you can in the hour. Now you have an estimate of how long it will take you to do the entire dataset, so you can decide whether the effort is necessary, or maybe you can go ahead and make the necessary decisions.

**When you’ve dealt with your responses**: Look back at the decisions that you or your stakeholders want to take. Did you get enough from your responses to make the decision now? Have you made sure that the initial hoped-for decision is in the report?