



**Sampling**

A sample is a small proportion of the people who belong to a target population. **For example**, by studying a representative sample of football fans it should be possible to say something about the characteristics or behaviour of all fans in the target population.

**Target Population**

A *target or general population* is everyone in the group we're going to research.  
**Examples** of target populations might be: UK football fans, all doctors and nurses in Dorset; the students in a school.

**Sample**

**Concepts**

**Frame**

**Size**

Size is not particularly important; what matters is whether or not a sample is representative

A way of identifying everyone in a target population so an accurate sample can be drawn.  
**Examples:** school and electoral registers, employment records.

**Representativeness**

This relates to the question of whether the characteristics of the sample accurately reflect the characteristics of the target population. If the sample group is representative then anything discovered about them can also be applied to the target population.

**Access**

Access to records may be denied for reasons of:

**Legality**

A school, for example, may not give a researcher access to their registers.

**Secrecy**

Religious groups, political parties and criminal gangs may not want to be studied.

**Generalisation**

If a sample is representative we can generalise the behaviour of this group to our target population - we can make statements about a group we *haven't* studied (our target population) based on the behaviour of a group we *have* studied.

**Confidentiality**

A business organisation may not give a researcher access to their payroll records.

