

# Simple Piping: Display Previous Answers in Your Survey

## Leading Practices and FAQs

Want to see how to take projects from good to great? Check out our [Leading Practice & FAQ Home Page!](#)

Piping allows you to repeat previously collected data later in the survey. In this tutorial, we'll cover *simple piping*. Using simple piping, a.k.a merge codes, you can display a single answer from a previous question *on a later page*. This is typically used in the question title or in a text/instruction element.

2. You said you primarily commute via **Public Transit (Bus or Train)**. Do you occasionally use any other mode of transit?

Yes

No

Here is a sample survey with simple piping (aka merge codes):

<http://survey.alchemer.com/s3/2581125/Merge-Code-Demo-Survey>

OR

Add this survey to your [US](#) account, [EU](#) account, or [CA](#) account to see how merge codes are setup!

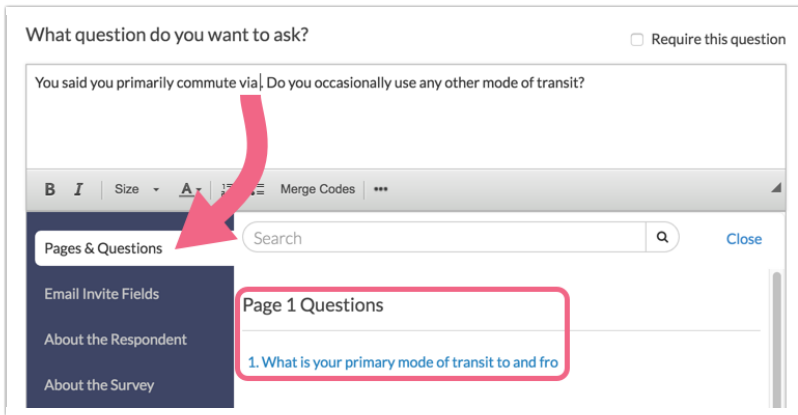
## Setup

Any time you wish to pull data from the answers your respondent previously provided (or their contact record in an email campaign) you can do so using merge codes. You can find a Merge Code helper on the editor toolbar available in text fields like question titles and [text / instructions](#) as demonstrated below.

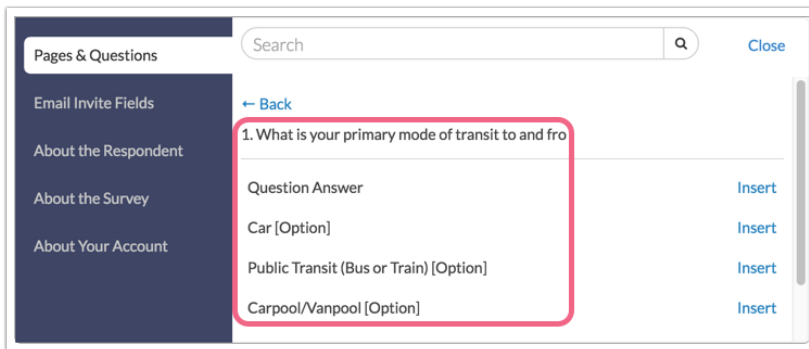
To use merge codes:

1. Place your cursor where you would like to pull in the data from your previous question.
2. Click the **Merge Codes** dropdown menu on the editor toolbar.
3. Within the **Pages & Questions** tab, click on an available previous question whose data you wish

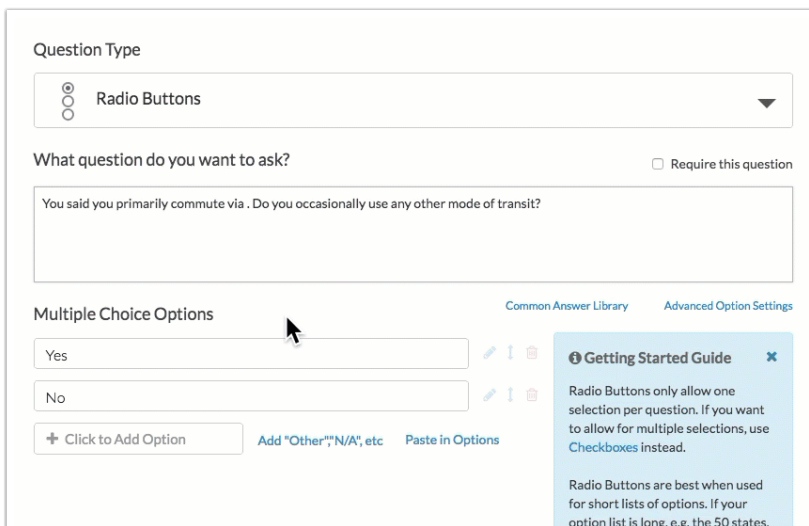
to pull.



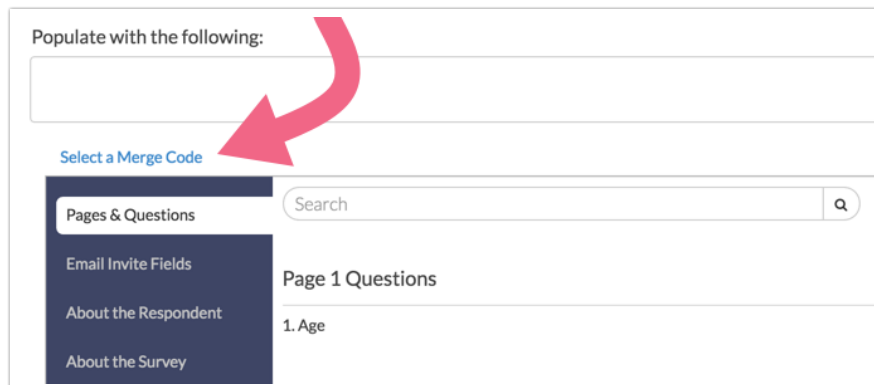
4. After clicking on the question, you will be presented with the available merge codes for that question. This includes merge code for referencing the respondent's answer (most commonly used), as well as merge codes for each answer option. Answer option merge codes will be identified with: [Option].



5. Click on the merge code that you want to select and the merge code will be automatically inserted at cursor!



In other places, like [Hidden Value Actions](#), [default answer fields](#), and [Email Campaigns](#) look for the **Select a Merge Code** link below the text field to bring up the **Merge Code Tools**:



*Questions from previous pages* will be available for you to select. After locating the items/merge code that you want to use, click the **Insert** link located to the right of the item to insert it.

If are using [Reporting Values](#), you may find that you need to customize your merge code a little. If your merge code looks like this:

- `[question("value"), id="3"]` or `[question("option value"), id="2"]` - these are interchangeable and pull the [Reporting Value](#) for the answer selected.
- If you wish to pull the answer option that displays to the survey respondent instead, you'll want to change the merge code like so: `[question("option title"), id="2"]`; this will pull the answer option. If you are not using Reporting Values, no need to worry, all of these merge codes will work to pull the selected answer option!

This is the simplest form of piping. If you are looking for more piping options such as repeating questions and pages based on selected answers check out our other piping tutorials:

- [Question Piping/Repeating](#)
- [Page Piping/Repeating](#)

## Compatible Question Types: Simple Piping

The source question for simple piping can be one of the following question types:

- [Radio Buttons](#)
- [Dropdown Menu](#)
- [Image Select \(single\)](#)
- [Textbox](#)
- [Essay/Long Text](#)
- [Contact Form](#) (single text field within group)

Merge Codes are available for other question types, such as checkboxes, however, the output for

multiple-select questions will often not be a single answer and will be displayed as an array. Please see the [Merge Codes Tutorial](#) for further examples.



### Best Practice Tips

- **Test, Test, and Test again** - It is always a good idea to test your surveys particularly when using more advanced features like piping and merge codes.
- **Make sure to [require](#) your merge code source questions** - When a merge code has no data to pull, which can happen if the question was left unanswered, it will display a merge code.
- **Understand the data you are collecting** - Check out our [Understand Piped Data Tutorial](#) for more info!

## Troubleshooting

Are you having trouble selecting a question as your source question? There are two possible reasons as to why your question would not be showing up as your source question:

1. **The question you are trying to pipe from is not compatible.** The only compatible question types for source questions at this time are:
  - Radio Buttons
  - Dropdown Menu
  - Image Select (single)
  - Textbox
  - Essay/Long Text
  - Contact Group (single text field within group)
2. **Your source question is not on a previous page to the question you're trying to pipe to.** Any question you are trying to pipe from must be on a previous page.

Related Articles