Outline and explain two reasons why sociologists might choose self-completion questionnaires over interviewer present questionnaires (10)

One reason why sociologist might choose self-completion questionnaires over interviewer present questionnaires is due to social sensitivity. One of the main advantages of self-completion questionnaires is that respondents can complete the questionnaire at their own leisure. This allows them to think about their responses without being hurried as in an interviewer present questionnaire. However, a further advantage is that they may be able to answer potentially sensitive questions without fear of judgement, especially if they are able to do this anonymously. Some topics, such as their economic position, employment status, parental styles or attitudes to issues such as immigration, gender equality and racism might elicit a different response from respondents if there was an interviewer present. Using a self-completion questionnaire therefore reduces the interviewer effect and allows for respondents to give honest and truthful responses.

A second reason sociologist might choose self-completion questionnaires over interviewer present questionnaires is due to costs. Self-completion questionnaires are relatively cheap to administer as they can be sent out via post, or emailed to participants. In contrast, interviewer present questionnaires would require hiring additional staff in order to obtain a large enough sample, training those staff and paying them for their time. Furthermore it would take additional time and manpower to collate and interpret the results. Self-completion questionnaires on the other hand, if quantitative, could be collated by an independent source, such as Survey Monkey. This would provide the researcher with cheap and reliable data. However, a limitation of this would be if the researcher were to choose qualitative questions, they would be quite time-consuming to collate and analyse the responses.