

# STUDENT TOOLS FOR WEBQUESTS

## *How to conduct an interview*

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An interview is more than just asking someone a list of questions. Interviewers need to work before, during, and after the actual interview takes place in order to come up with a useful article, research report, or other information-based product for readers and viewers.

The following interview tips come in part from Ha Thi Lan Anh's Tips for Youth Journalists (visit <http://www.takingitglobal.org/express/article.html?cid=453&pnn=> for more information).

### **Before the Interview: Prepare Yourself**

- What is the purpose of the interview? What do you want to find out?
- Who is the audience for your story (young kids, adults, etc.) and how will you deliver your story (TV, recording, print, presentation)?
- What kind of message would you like to deliver? Do you want to inform your audience, persuade them to do something, encourage them to participate in some activity, etc.?
- Who will you interview? Is the person an expert in his/her field? Does the person know a lot about your topic? Why would you choose this person over someone else?
- Have you contacted the person you will to interview to arrange a time and location for your meeting?
- Have you briefed the **interviewee** (the person you are interviewing) about the purpose of the interview and what you would like to find out?
- Have you informed the interviewee of your intention to record what they say?
- Have you conducted research on the person you will interview?
- Have you prepared relevant questions in advance? Questions should be direct and straightforward. Be sure that your questions answer the 5 Ws and 1 H: who, what, where, when, why, and how.

### **During the Interview: Conducting with Care**

- Introduce yourself, your project, and the reason for the interview.
- Ask the person again if he/she minds being recorded, videotaped, etc.
- Ask your prepared questions and encourage the interviewee to elaborate on their answers where necessary.
- Take notes as the interviewee answers questions. Notes will serve as a backup if your recording fails, and they will also help you come up with new questions as the conversation progresses.
- Avoid interrupting your interviewee, correcting him/her, rushing him/her, arguing with him/her, or pressuring him/her to answer questions he/she is not comfortable with.
- Avoid asking simple "yes or no" questions.
- Try to stick to a time limit to avoid taking up too much of your interviewee's time.

- Check the facts the interviewee gives you (i.e. make sure you have dates, names, and other information correct before you leave)?
- Ask the interviewee where you can get more information about your topic or if there is anyone else you should speak to.

### **After the Interview: Final Steps**

- Follow-up with your interviewee with a thank you note or phone call.
- Do a final round of fact checking?
- Put your story together in an interesting way that will generate interest.
- Clearly explain your topic.
- Identify intriguing or perplexing issues, and/or significant implications about your topic for your audience.
- Include personal reflections and/or opinions where warranted.
- Include interesting quotes from your interviewee in your presentation.
- Remember that your report should be more than just a **verbatim** (word-for-word) account of the interview.
- Make sure that your delivery of your story is professional. If you are presenting your story to a group, make sure your presentation is clear and interesting for your audience. Your presentation should appear smooth and effortless. If you are submitting a written report, ensure that it is free from spelling and grammar errors, and that it is written at an appropriate level for your audience.
- Relate your presentation or report to projects, activities, and/or readings you have undertaken as part of your class work.