

How to Conduct a Good Interview

- 1. RESEARCH.** Research the person you're interviewing and any related themes in advance. Then go do some more research. You've got to do your homework and familiarize yourself with the subject and background information.
- 2. LOCATION.** Make sure you find a space that's calm, fairly quiet and convenient for you and the person you're interviewing. If you can't meet in-person, such a phone call or a Zoom call (with permission, you can even record your interview). Your goal is to make your subject feel comfortable and at ease, so pick a location that can help with that.
- 3. PREPARE.** Write down your questions in advance. A list of 15 questions is a good amount. Most of your questions should be open-ended – questions that require "yes/no" answers don't lead to a good interview. Make sure you have your questions written down and in front of you on a piece of paper, computer or even on your phone (just make sure to let the person you're interviewing know, so that they don't think you're busy playing on your phone).

"Prepare notes with facts and statistics on the subject that you can use to debunk any misinformation." – James O'Hagan

- 4. RECORD.** Make sure you record your interview, so that you can go back to it later, get direct quotes and verify information. There are different ways to record, with apps on your phone, or recording devices. Test out your equipment before the interview to make sure it will work! As a general rule, always check with the person you're interviewing if it's ok with them to record the interview.
- 5. LISTEN.** Actively listen to the person you're interviewing. Start with easier questions (it will help your interviewee relax), before going asking the more complicated or sensitive ones. Take notes of important points (even if you're recording) so you can come back to it or ask new questions that come up during the interview. If you don't understand something, make sure you ask. A good interview is one that feels like a conversation.

"Always listen carefully to the answer and be ready to improvise another question if they say something unexpected." – James O'Hagan

- 6. PROFESSIONALISM.** Be polite. Be on time. Make sure you're organized. Introduce yourself and explain what the purpose of the interview is and how you plan to use the interview material. Be curious, open and positive and the person you're speaking with will probably reflect this too. Keep an eye on the clock – be respectful of your interviewee's time and try to keep the interview to under 45 minutes). If you're really nervous, bring a friend and conduct the interview together – just make sure you let your subject know in advance.

If you're nervous about conducting an interview, try practicing with friends or family in advance. The more you practice, the easier it will get. Remember, in the end, you're just getting to know someone better through a nice conversation.

Reference: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/how-conduct-journalistic-interview/>