



## INTERVIEWING TIPS

### **Come to the interview prepared.**

Research your source before you start your interview. Make sure you can speak knowledgeably about the subjects you will be interviewing your source about.

### **Make a list of questions before you start.**

Figure out what you want to learn from the interview before starting. Make a list of all the questions you want to ask. You will probably only ask a few of these questions but make sure to check back you're your original questions before the interview is over to make sure the source gives you the information you need.

### **Pick a meeting place where the source can feel comfortable.**

Choosing a spot that your source is familiar with, or is relevant to the story you are writing about can make your interviews a lot more powerful. This is especially important for film and audio interviews, where noises and background images can add context to your story.

If you are interviewing someone in a home or office, take note of the source's personality and things. Ask them about pictures, or other personal objects. They may tell a whole different side to your source's personality.

### **Keep your conversation natural.**

Switching topics too quickly or interrupting too much will make it hard for your source to feel comfortable.

Be yourself, people will respond better if they see you as a person instead of "a journalist."

### **Don't be afraid to ask silly questions.**

You are interviewing your source because he or she is an expert in something, but you are not an expert in their field. If you don't understand something that your source is talking about or need some extra context, don't be afraid to ask.



## INTERVIEWING TIPS

### **Make eye contact as much as possible.**

You may be taking notes or using a camera, but don't forget to look at the source while conducting the interview! They want to talk to a person, not a piece of equipment.

### **Think ahead during the interview**

What quotes will be perfect for your piece? How can you get your source to complete your article with key quotes? How will you connect what they are saying now to the next question you will ask?

### **Ask open-ended questions.**

BAD: Do you think South Africa will win the World Cup this year?

GOOD: How do you think South Africa will do in the world cup this year?

### **Talk less. Listen more.**

Ask short questions, make sure you don't answer for your source.

Sometimes you can get caught up in "conducting the interview." Make sure you don't just ask the questions, pay attention to what the source is saying.

### **Ask hard questions last.**

Easing into difficult conversations will make your source feel more comfortable.

Once they feel they know you a little better, they will be more likely to answer questions that are more challenging for them to speak about or that they had planned not to speak with you about.

### **If you don't get an answer to a question, try asking again.**

If a person is avoiding your question or not really answering it, try rephrasing it or asking it in a different way. Don't be afraid to do this several times.



## INTERVIEWING TIPS

### **Don't be afraid of long silences.**

Sometimes, people need time to think about what they are going to say. Let them have time to organize their thoughts.

When people get uncomfortable with long silences, they may fill the silence with answers to questions you didn't ask. If you're lucky, you can get more information by saying nothing at all.

### **Make sure you get your source's full information during the interview**

Have your source spell out his or her name

Find out any necessary details, the source's age, where the source lives, his or her job title, or area of expertise.

Get additional contact information for double-checking facts later (phone number, e-mail address, street address)

### **At the end of every interview, ask your source "Is there anything else you want to say?"**

Many times, the most important question is the one you haven't asked. Give your source a chance to provide you additional information that you haven't asked them about.