

Preparing for the interview:

1. Prepare a topic and generate a list of possible people to interview.
2. Establish a purpose for the interview and write down questions you would like to ask.
3. Contact the person, introduce yourself, and describe the purpose of the interview.
4. Provide sample questions you would like to explore. Check whether the speaker is working on a voluntary or a fee-for-service basis.
5. Fix an interview date and time at the convenience of the interviewee. Explain how many people will be attending and the approximate time available for the interview.
6. Determine together what the agenda will be (e.g., a 15-minute talk on the topic, followed by 30 minutes of questions and answers, followed by refreshments).
7. Check with the person whether they have any special needs or requirements for equipment or materials.
8. Check ahead of time whether the person will permit photographs or video or audio taping, and if he or she can be quoted in a publication (e.g., school newsletter). Ask whether the person would prefer to have all questions in advance.
9. Once the topic and format are confirmed, finalize your questions in the light of what you know about the person.
10. Prepare a note-taking outline to help you take notes efficiently.

During the interview:

1. Introduce the speaker to the people who will be participating or listening, and announce how much time is available and the format to be followed.
2. Always be courteous and attentive to the speaker, making eye contact and actively listening throughout the visit.
3. Follow your interview outline but remain flexible according to the situation and the speaker.
4. Expect that the speaker will sometimes go beyond what you have asked in your questions. Never restate a question that the person has already answered as part of an earlier response.
5. Do not pose questions of a personal nature. Stick to the types of questions you gave the interviewee ahead of time.
6. Begin with factual questions that may be answered briefly, then proceed to more complex questions.
7. As much as possible, pose open-ended questions rather than yes/no questions (e.g., Why..., What do you think of..., Could you tell us a story about...).

Following the interview:

- Formally thank the person, making direct reference to what he or she has shared with you. Offer a card or a small token of appreciation on the part of your school or class.
- If you will be printing words or photos of the person in a school assignment or any other publication, send a complimentary copy to the person as soon as it is completed.

