

How to Conduct an Interview

Brief: When collecting support material for a speech, an interview with an expert on the speech topic can be an excellent way to supplement research.

Learning Objective: Demonstrate how to conduct an interview.

Key Terms:

- **Interview:** A conversation between two or more people in which questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit facts or statements from the interviewee.

What is an Interview?

An interview is a conversation between two or more people in which questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit facts or statements from the interviewee.

Interviews are used for purposes that range from evaluating job candidates to collecting market research and creating news stories. When you're collecting support material for your speech, an interview with an expert on your topic can be an excellent way to supplement your research.

Interview Preparation

To prepare for your interview, you'll need to know what questions you want to ask. First, you can make a list of talking points. These serve as a guide for main points you want to make sure you hit over the course of your interview. Then, you can come up with a set of questions that are focused to help you to get the information you need.

As an interviewer, you may use closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions typically require a yes or no answer, or some kind of definitive fact. Open-ended questions are those that are open to interpretation and experience.

You should always do some research into your interview subject. It'll be important to establish rapport right away with your interview subject. Knowing something about them can help to make your communication more genuine and let them know that you are sincerely interested in what they have to say.

During the Interview

Participants should feel comfortable and respected throughout the entire interview; interviewers should avoid interrupting interviewees whenever possible. Interviews require more focus than what is typical in normal conversation. Therefore, it is often helpful for interviewers to record the interview (with the interviewee's permission) or to take notes while the interviewee responds to questions.



Respect Boundaries

It's essential that while the participant is being interviewed they are being encouraged to explore their experiences in a manner that is sensitive and respectful. They should not be pressured to answer questions that make them feel uncomfortable.

Avoid Leading Questions

Leading questions are questions that suggest or imply a particular answer. While they are often asked innocently, they risk of skewing the validity of the responses obtained, as they discourage participants from using their own language to express their sentiments.

Citing the Interview

Once you have completed your interview, you will want to consider how to cite or credit your source. Because the results of your interview are usually not published, they will be considered personal communication.

Generally, you will indicate the person, date, and manner of data collection. Here are some examples:

Personal Interview face to face—Expert, A. (2018, May 2) Personal Interview.

Personal interview by telephone or chat—Expert, A (2018, May 3) Telephone (chat) Interview.

Personal interview by email—Expert, A. (2018, May 4) Email Interview.

From Concept to Action

Ask a friend or family member if you can interview them, as a way to practice your interview skills. Just as you would in a real interview, choose an area of interest to focus on and prepare a set of open-ended questions. During the interview, listen carefully and ask some good follow-up questions to draw out more information. If possible, make an audio recording of the

interview. When you're done, take some time to listen and reflect. Did you ask good questions? How could they have been better questions? Did you miss any the opportunities to ask follow-up questions? What will you do differently next time?

OER IMAGE SOURCES:

Hurst, Matthew. "Interview questions." Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/skewgee/6092105212/in/photolist-ahkCCL-3oU8Lz-bjYGTT-3oYyjL-4BGcem-3oTVJi-83frGC-3oTYZP-4yVphm-bGJAdK-btPNZY-3oYDVy-49FFFw-e8SXa-5PqJcY-3oUiPX-e8TXK-e8UbZ-2UCAvs-9kUynE-9kUypl-4caQa7-EqNcaa-ekVFut-A6JYuz-nFqD2D-axxaF7-Dt6PkY-9yTTFu-EqQb2z-Dt8a4d-EqNAbF-9kRuV6-21RFJsW-DSjoDz-4MADcb-82pj1H-3Pasa8-EqPUv4-MAVjQ-UtRfUV-DSjVG6-9kUyoL-EqPFyn-EhzwGg-Eov1b3-b6wq9a-2Yndi4-Dt6hgo-Dt4NEU> Accessed 20 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 2.0]

OER TEXT SOURCES:

"Interviewing." Lumen Learning. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-communications/chapter/interviewing/>. Accessed 20 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 4.0]