

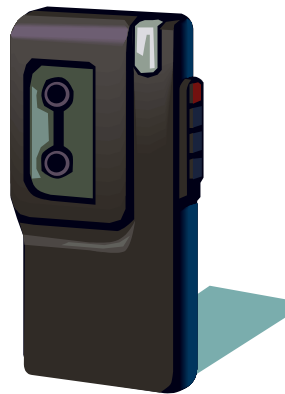
INTERVIEW INFORMATION

TIPS AND CHECKLISTS

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Why do a pre-interview?

A great way to break the ice and to make the interview more successful and enjoyable is to conduct a pre-interview with your interviewee (or “narrator”). Ideally, the pre-interview should happen a week prior to the official, recorded interview, and it should take about twenty to forty-five minutes.

A successful pre-interview will:

- Introduce the interviewer (you) to the narrator (the person you’re interviewing) and go over the purpose of the interview.
- Create familiarity and trust between the interviewer and narrator
- Confirm basic biographical information of the narrator (birth date and city, correct spelling of name, etc.)
- Introduce specific topics of interest to or knowledge of the narrator; things that the interviewer hopes will be discussed during the recorded interview
- Clarify how the interview might be used in the future (Will the interview appear in a book or documentary? On a website? As a citation for a class project?)
- Provide a setting for the interviewer to have the narrator agree to the interview and sign the interview release form
- Identify special needs of the narrator (Is the narrator hard of hearing? Do they need to be accompanied by a third party?)

Pre-interview form



1. Your name: _____

2. The person you intend to interview: _____

3. Interview topic: _____

4. Date, time, and location of official interview: _____

5. Has the narrator agreed to sign the release form and be recorded?

Yes _____ No _____

6. Did you explain the purpose of this project/interview to the narrator?

Yes _____ No _____

7. Biographical data of interviewee:

Year and place of birth: _____

Places lived: _____

Married: Yes _____ No _____

Children: _____

Education: _____

Work experience: _____

Nationality: _____

Interests: _____

Possible interview topics to cover during the official interview:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Lakeside School Interview Project

14050 1st Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98125-3099

Interview Release Form

Narrator (interviewee)	Street	City/State/ZIP
Telephone	E-mail	
<p>I, the undersigned narrator (interviewee), hereby convey and donate to the Lakeside School French IV Interview project (2010) this recorded interview (both audio and/or video), and any subsequent transcriptions, subject to any special conditions stated below.</p> <p>These materials may be freely used by the students of French IV toward the completion of their French IV Interview project assignment. In order to encourage full use of my interview, I have dedicated all of my rights in this interview to the public domain.</p>		
<p>Special Conditions:</p>		
Interviewer 1	Telephone	E-mail
Interviewer 2	Telephone	E-mail
<p>I, the undersigned narrator, do hereby relinquish all rights to the tape(s) and transcript described above.</p> <p>Narrator's signature: _____ Date _____</p> <p>We gratefully acknowledge your gift and agree to abide by the above conditions.</p> <p>Interviewer's signature: _____ Date _____</p> <p>Interviewer's signature: _____ Date _____</p>		

Created by Leslie Schuyler, archivist, 10/12/2010



Before the interview checklist

- Develop a set of topics or questions
- Do any research required to be prepared for discussion about these topics
- Gather any “props” that might aid with the discussion (photos, maps, newspaper clippings that will help jog memories)
- Turn narrator into a “partner” by doing a pre-interview, explaining the purpose of the interview, being open to interviewee’s ideas
- Gather biographical information on the interviewee
- Plan the interview(s):
 - How many interviews?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - For how long?
 - What kind of recording equipment?
- Get to know your recording equipment



Interview setting checklist

- Wall sockets? (if you're using a wired recording device)
- Chairs?
- Decent lighting?
- Comfortable temperature?
- Water for you and the narrator?
- A way for you both to view props? (if you brought them)
- A setting free of unwanted noise or interruptions?
 - Close doors and windows
 - Unplug/turn off phones and loud clocks or other noisy devices
 - Put a sign on the outside of the door that reads "Interview in progress, please do not disturb"

Ask open-ended questions:

- “How did your family come to live in the Pacific Northwest?”
- “Would you give me an example of that?”
- “Describe for me your first day at [company/organization]. What were you feeling?”
- “Can you give me some additional details about _____?”
- “You said that you were [happy/sad/disappointed/angry] about _____. Can you talk a little bit more about that and why you think you felt that way?”
- “I loved your description of _____, why do you think you have such a clear memory of that?”

take notes and ask appropriate follow-up questions.

Avoid:

Closed-ended questions:

- “When did _____ happen?”
- “How many people lived in Seattle at that time?”
- “What year was that?”

Questions that simply ask for confirmation:

- “Everyone in this area was _____, right?”
- “That happened in May of that year, right?”
- “But you were glad that happened, right?”
- “I bet you were sad about that, weren’t you?”

Interrupting a story. Let your narrators finish their thoughts and respect the direction they steer the conversation.

Judging or contradicting. Remember, the interview may be filled with factual errors, but your responsibility is to fully document those errors.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Ask one question at a time
- Bring a notebook and pencil, and be ready to take notes
- Allow topics to be explored thoroughly
- Bring an interview back on track with a thoughtful question:
 - “A little while ago you were talking about_____. I’m sorry I interrupted you before you were really finished. What happened after_____?”
- Don’t be afraid of silence. Don’t be afraid of emotion

MENTAL TIPS

- Be ready to be there
- Be alert, be relaxed; the narrator will respond to your mood
- Be ready to work; you’ll be making transitional hooks, disguising “interrogation” with conversation
- Be encouraging and reassuring (smile, laugh silently when appropriate)
- Be alert for fatigue or discomfort in your narrator; it might be time to stop the interview if you detect signs of fatigue, discomfort, or impatience

BODY LANGUAGE TIPS

- Maintain eye contact
- Uncross your arms
- Try not to fidget

WHAT IF...

- ...the narrator asks to have the recording device turned off?
 - Turn it off, then talk about it. Don’t pressure the narrator to continue if he/she’s uncomfortable. Suggest a new direction for the conversation.
- ...the narrator says something libelous or defamatory?
 - You can always redirect the conversation (if the comment is relatively benign) or you can stop the interview (if it makes you uncomfortable or is upsetting). You can stop an interview simply by saying “thank you so much [name]. _____, it’s been wonderful hearing your memories of this.”
- ...the narrator says something you know to be mistaken?
 - Continue with the interview. It’s not your responsibility to correct. You may make note of this later on.

Recording an interview checklist



- Set up a time and place.**
- Know how to use your equipment.** Practice recording a conversation with a friend or family member so that you are comfortable with the process. Speaking clearly and precisely helps. Make sure the volume/sound level is O.K.
- Write up a list of questions.** Use questions that require more than a yes/no answer. E.g. What was the neighborhood like when you were growing up? Start with general questions and then look for specific information E.g. How did the war affect your life?
- Arrive for the interview on time.**
- Bring all the equipment needed (batteries/charger/power cord) for recording.**
- Always treat the person you are interviewing politely and with respect.** Speak clearly. Do a practice question to make sure your device is recording correctly.
- Always start the tape/video by stating your name, the narrator's name, the time, and the date into the recorder.** Don't forget to rename your electronic file for easy access later.
- Understand that your list of questions is only a guide.** Sometimes the person being interviewed has a specific memory he or she would like to tell. Ask directly. E.g. Do you have a specific memory you would like to have recorded? Would you share it with me?
- Keep your recording session to about 30-40 minutes.** It can be very tiring for you and your narrator. Take note of signs of fatigue or discomfort.
- Make sure you thank your subject when you are finished.** Remember, you could not do the project without their cooperation and generosity.
- Send a follow up note a day or two after the interview thanking the narrator for their time and willingness to share.**

Adapted source: Youth Source, Alberta, Canada

http://www.youthsource.ab.ca/teacher_resources/oral_specificq.html

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Childhood:

What was life like for you as a child growing up in _____?

Do you have a specific memory associated with your home town?

Describe some of the family members or friends you spent time with as a child.

Describe a typical school day in _____.

Did your family have any specific traditions that you remember participating in?

Immigration:

Can you talk about why you moved to the United States?

Please describe how you felt about moving here.

When you moved here, did you do so with other relatives or friends?

Who did you stay with when you first arrived in this country?

Describe how you felt, what you saw, and some experiences you had shortly after your arrival.

Was the United States how you expected it would be? Please explain.

Life in the United States:

What kinds of occupations did you have when you first arrived in the United States?

What kinds of organizations, churches, or other groups did you belong to?

How was the United States different from where you came from?

How did people treat you when you were still new to this country?

What did you miss most about your home country after you moved to the United States?

What did you like about the United States?

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