

INTERVIEWING EFFECTIVELY

Before The Interview

1. Find out as much as you can about the place you're visiting before the interview. Often, a published bulletin or website is available. If you call first, the office may have information to send you. Also, check the library.
2. Make a list of questions you can use if you need them. They should be open-ended, requiring more than a "yes" or "no" answer.
3. Find the people who are most involved in what you want to know. Make an appointment with an individual, if possible, and reconfirm it the day before you go.

During The Interview

4. If you take a tape recorder, ask if you may use it. If you're planning on taking notes, take a while to chat first, not asking specific questions. Don't walk into an interview with a notepad out, ready to write. This approach can be intimidating.
5. Dress appropriately, act confidently, and show your best manners. Be an attentive listener, watching your interviewee's facial expressions.
6. If the conversation is going well, leave it alone. If your interviewee strays off the subject, and you like the new direction, follow him and forget the questions. If you don't like the new topic, ask a question to redirect the interview towards your interests.
7. Most people don't resent an outsider who seems eager to listen to them. You can ask questions about someone's profession without being nosy, so be assertive but tactful.
8. If you're taking notes, you can politely ask your interviewee to stop speaking for a moment so that you can catch up with what she said. As soon as the interview is over, fill in all the missing words you can remember. When you get home, copy over or type your notes, marking the colorful or most important quotations.

After The Interview

10. As a courtesy, send the interviewee a thank-you note and a transcript, if appropriate.
11. When using quotes in your research paper, you can cut the interviewee's words if you follow two rules: brevity and fairness. You can also use the quotes in any effective order. Ellipses (. . .) are not necessary, as they would be in a written text.
12. Explain and connect the interviewee's ideas with words of your own. Don't rely on direct quotation.

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