

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

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Who Should I Interview?

Identify your interviewee. Determine who you would like to interview and why they would be a valuable source. Obtain their correct email address and contact information.



Face-to-Face Interviewing

Make an appointment over the phone or by email. Explain your visit's purpose, why you are requesting an interview with them, and how long the interview will take. Set an exact date and time. Be sure that you have the correct address, phone number, and directions to the site.

Confirm the interview appointment. A day before your visit, call or email the person to confirm the time.

Be on time! Add at least 15 minutes to your estimated travel time so that you will not be late. If your interview is by phone, make sure that you have a quiet place without interruption to make the call at the agreed time.

Look presentable. People make judgments based on how you look and act. Be sure to dress appropriately.

Rehearse the interview with a partner. Go through the introduction, questions, thank you, and goodbye. Speak clearly.

Prepare your questions in writing. Make sure that your questions cover everything that you need. Know something about what you are asking. Research the topic if necessary.

Cover each point before going on to the next. If you do not understand something, ask for an explanation.

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Take notes. Keep your written notes brief so you can remain attentive to the speaker. Afterward, fill in any missing information in your notes. If you want to record on a digital device during the interview, ask for permission first.

Ask for literature and names of other experts. Be sure that one of your questions asks for more information, suggested reading material, or other experts whom you should contact.

Send a thank-you note within a few days. Within three days of the interview, send a short note thanking the person for their time.

Interviewing by Email

Identify your interviewee. Determine whom you would like to interview and why they would be a valuable source. Obtain their correct email address and contact information.

Make initial contact. Send your interviewee a courteous and professional email introducing yourself. Common introductions include “Hello [name of recipient]” or “Good morning/afternoon [name of recipient].” In your initial email, explain the goal of your interview , why you are requesting an interview with them, a rough estimate of the number of questions you will ask, and the length of time it will take to answer them.

Prepare your questions in writing. Make sure that the questions cover everything you need. Know something about what you’re asking. Research the topic if necessary. Be sure that one of your questions asks for more information, suggested reading material, or other experts whom you should contact.

Send an email with your questions. After receiving a confirmation from the interviewee, send a follow-up email with the questions and the date on which you would like to receive their responses. Be sure to end your email by thanking them for their time and for agreeing to participate in your interview.

Send a thank-you note within a few days. Within three days of the interview, send a short note thanking the person for their time.