



This slideshow has been cobbled together by members of the UNCW English Department.

Interviewing

- Three steps:
 1. Pre-interview: finding sources, learning about the subject, background info, plotting line of questioning
 2. Interview: face-to-face, telephone, or email
 3. Follow up: sort through notes, determine what you have and what is missing, follow up as necessary

The Pre-Interview & Getting the Interview

- There is a direct relationship between what you know before an interview and how much you will get out of an interview
- Do your homework, get background information
- Keep in mind deadlines and real life situations, and don't let interviews slip by.
- People often like to talk (especially about themselves), but they can say no

Choosing a Way to Interview

- In person: the best, especially for an important interview
- Telephone: fast, find out right away if someone will talk, how much, good when doing lots of interviews or if subjects are geographically distant
- Email: often the easiest but not the best way, because of the difficulty of creating a conversation

Interview Strategies

- Establish rapport
- Avoid yes/no questions
- Ease in
- Let the subject tell his/her story, get an overview, and then probe, fill in gaps, talk specifics, politely prod
- Consider what each subject can give to your overall project and ask questions accordingly
- Remain flexible
- Remember, our interview subjects are doing us a favor, so treat them appropriately

Questions

- ❑ Open questions
- ❑ Closed questions
- ❑ Getting specifics
- ❑ Follow-up questions
- ❑ Body language, tone, and engagement all matter

Note taking



- Have a workable note-taking strategy
- List the subject's exact name and other relevant data first
- Have a throw-away question for catch up
- Keep in mind what you are after and what is relevant to the project
- Write out exact wording of potential quotes
- Consider using a recorder

Examples

- Reporter: “Can you tell me precisely much did you lost?”
- Bank president: “Let’s see...I have that information right here. I know it is over \$50,000. Oh yes, \$50,423. Is that exact enough for you?”
- Reporter: “Yes, thanks. Do you know over how long a period of time the money was being taken?”
- Bank president: “Six months, approximately. From the beginning of January to the beginning of July. I can’t give exact dates. We’ve had police here every day this week, and those are the dates I told them...I mean it’s the approximate period.”

Notes:

Lost -\$50,423

Taken over approx 6 mos, begin Jan - begin July. No exact dates.

- Reporter: “What did you think of Jones, before you heard he had left for Brazil?”
- Bank president: “He was a fine employee. We never suspected anything. We have a lot of fine employees. Yes, I can certainly say that and let me add, we hire people we think will be fine employees.”
- Reporter: “What specifically do you remember about him?”
- Bank president: “He was, let me see, always the first teller here in the morning and he always brought his own lunch. I remember that.”
- Reporter: “What was your reaction when you heard he was in Brazil?”
- Bank president: “I was shocked. You can quote me on that. I mean...it was just...I’m a bank president not a ...Well, what else can I say? It was shocking.”

Notes:

“He was a fine employee. We never suspected anything.”

“He was always the 1st teller here in the morn.”

“I was shocked.”

Tips

- Skip verbiage (“Yes, I can certainly say that.”), skip irrelevant (“We have a lot of fine employees.”), skip the obvious (“We hire people we think will be fine employees.”), skip poorly worded (“I mean...it was just...I’m a bank president not a ...Well, what else can I say?”)
- Be polite, but keep it on track
- Listen and focus despite all going on in your head
- End the interview cordially

After the end

- Sort through and makes sense of notes
- Highlight quotes and blocks of info
- Identify holes
- Follow up to clarify and fill holes as necessary
- Prepare to write your Subject Profile Report