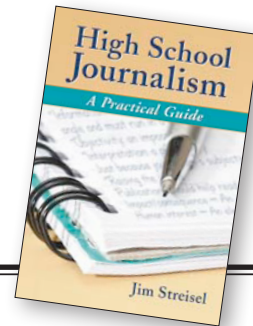


Interviewing 101

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WHO should you interview?

MAIN “FACE”	Generally, this should be a student source, since readers will relate better to their peers. This is the person who the news affects. Most often, this person is introduced in the lead of the story.
EXPERT SOURCE	Not always an adult, but often so, this source provides credibility to your story.
SECONDARY SOURCE	Often, this person is also a student. This person verifies the information presented by the main “face” by saying that the news affects more than one person, that it affects others, too. On the other hand, this person could be a source who contradicts the main source, who presents an alternate view of the angle.
TERTIARY SOURCES	Additional experts and secondary sources that you can add depending on the complexity and length of your story.

HOW should you prepare?

CONDUCT RESEARCH	What was the team’s record last year? What does the law say about teen drivers? How many hours does a student need to get an honors diploma?
SET UP AN APPOINTMENT	Find a mutually beneficial time for a face-to-face meeting, and make sure it’s on the source’s turf.
WRITE QUESTIONS	Anywhere from 15 to 20 questions is good (see example). Make sure you have plenty of open-ended (how and why) questions that will result in better storytelling quotes.
BRING MATERIALS	Bring: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• your list of questions.• something to write on.• something to write with.• a tape recorder (optional).

WHAT are you listening for?

STORYTELLING QUOTES

Quotes that only the source could tell in his or her own words:

- *“You know, I made a promise when my son was born. I said if anything ever happened to him, they wouldn’t find me in some nightclub or some drug house. If the police had to come, I’d be right here at home.”*
- *“The ferrets must have a mouth full o’ teeth. No filing of the teeth; no clipping. No dope for you or the ferrets. You must be sober; and the ferrets must be hungry — though any ferret’ll eat yer eyes out even if he isn’t hungry.”*

OPINIONS

You must remain objective as the reporter and journalist. But your sources can say what they want:

- *I think this is the worst team we’ve had in my 27 years of coaching.*
- *The dress code we’ve got this year is the stupidest thing I’ve ever had to deal with. I mean, c’mon, students and teachers are never going to agree about what is and is not acceptable. And in this case, the students always lose. It’s not fair.”*

WHAT should you avoid?

LIST OF Q’S IN A STAFF MEMBER’S MAILBOX

Leaves no room for follow-up. Impersonal.

E-MAILING Q’S

See above. If you do this, though, be sure attribution says “via e-mail.”

WALKING UP AND SAYING, “HEY, YOU GOT A QUOTE?”

A quote? About what? Who are you? Why are you talking to me? Why should I waste my time with you?

WRITING A LIST OF Q’S WITH SPACE BETWEEN EACH FOR RESPONSES

What about follow-up questions? What if you run out of room? What if the interview doesn’t follow the “script” of your questions?

COACH QUOTES

“We’re just looking for ways to win.” Duh. Ask better questions.

YES & NO Q’S

Look for storytelling quotes that result from how and why questions.

TWO-PART Q’S

Sources will answer one and not the other.

HOW should you follow up?

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEW

- Verify quotes.
- Leave the door open for follow-up questions.
- Thank source for his time.

ONCE YOU'VE LEFT

- Go over your notes.
- Write a thank-you card.
- Write draft and compile follow-up questions.
- File your notes/tapes/research somewhere safe.

A SAMPLE LIST OF QUESTIONS

Even the professionals generate a list of questions for their sources. It shows that you're prepared. Use this example from a story about a marketing class project as a guide for your own questions.

1. Please spell your name and provide your title as it is pertinent to this story.	Accuracy is important. It leads to credibility. Spell all names correctly
2. Do you believe that people of all ages can enjoy Santa's Secret Shop and Gifts Unlimited?	The filter question. Usually answered "yes" or "no," it tests your angle. Reporters should be 95 percent sure of the answer.
3. What other differences are there between Santa's Secret Shop and Gifts Unlimited other than the age targets? How are these differences significant?	Questions 3 to 14 are open-ended questions. Most of them ask "how" or "why." These types of questions, rather than "yes" and "no" questions, will result in better storytelling quotes.
4. How are these programs funded from year to year?	
5. Why is the increase for profit on merchandise 35 percent?	This question indicates that the reporter conducted some background research.
6. How do you think the prices of these shops compare to other places where students could shop? Why?	
7. Who decides which marketing class will run the different shops?	
8. How do elementary and junior high students organize opportunities to visit the shops?	
9. How do the underclass (junior) marketing students assist the seniors in running the shops?	Like Question 5, Question 9 indicates research. This reporter already knew that the shop primarily uses seniors.
10. How do the marketing students help kids choose the gifts they want to buy?	
11. Describe for me the typical experience that a young shopper would have if he visited the shops.	This is not really a question but an opportunity for the source to open up and provide some storytelling information. Questions like this should be followed up with several detail questions to fill in any "holes."
12. What changes, if any, have been made this year or are planned to be made?	
13. How will these changes affect customers?	
14. As a teacher, what skills do you hope your students gain from this experience? In other words, why is this a valuable experience?	
15. Is there anything that I haven't asked that you think readers should know?	It's important to phrase this question in terms of the audience. It reminds the source that people will actually read this information. Leave the door open for follow-up (nobody's perfect), but a subsequent interview doesn't need to be face-to-face.
16. May I get in touch with you if I have additional questions? What is the most convenient way to do this for you?	