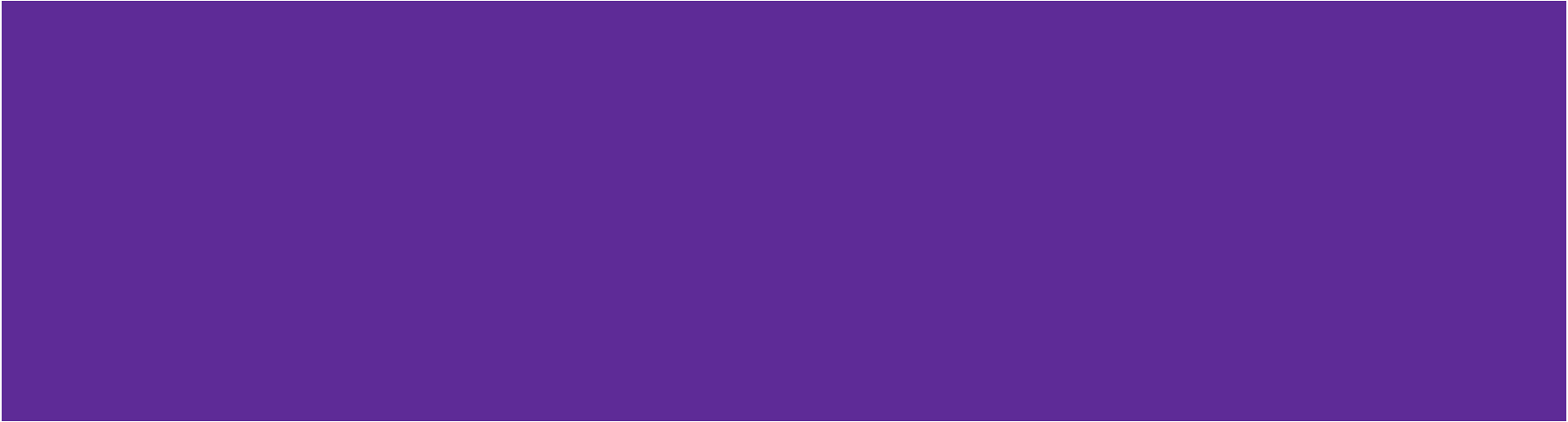


Interviewing Skills



The Story Process

1. Receive assignment and angle
2. Do background research
3. Connect with sources

4. Interview sources

5. Get photos for story
6. Transcribe interview
7. Write story
8. Story is edited
9. Story is published

What makes a successful interview?

- Work with your editor and do research to fully understand the story
- Prepared questions
- Set up interviews with intentional emails
- Build trust with your interviewee
- Veer off-script and ask those follow up questions
- Take notes!

Understanding the Story



Preparing Questions

*Stick with the classics and
you'll be set.*

- Who...?
 - Who's involved/leading?
 - Who's affected?
 - Who feels strongly about this?
- What...?
 - What's happening?
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages?
 - What's the purpose?
- When...?
 - Past: When was this decided? When did this become a need?
 - Present: When will the thing happen?
 - Future: When will we see results?
- Where...?
 - Where did the announcement happen?
 - Where will this take place/affect?
- Why...?
 - Why are they doing this?
- How...?
 - How will this be enacted?
 - How will we know it's working?

Emailing Sources*

***Your number of sources will vary based on the complexity of the subject matter. Your minimum should be 2 however. . . which means you should probably email 3-4.**

- Introduce yourself. Make sure to include you're a member of the Penmen Press!
 - Don't be vague. Tell them why you want to interview them.
 - Don't be afraid to share your deadline with them. It helps you and them.
 - Put in your availability.
 - Send them an Outlook invite once you have a time.
-

THE INTERVIEW

Building Trust

- Ask for consent to record - it's NH law!
- Be inclusive - ask them their pronouns
- Make small talk based on your observations (but keep it minimal!)
- Ask them their position and to spell their name
- Show up early - it means you care
- Look nice
- Listen
- Check in w/ office assistant
- “Climb the mountain” - start with small questions and work up

Conducting the Interview

- Use active listening skills
- Take notes
- Ask follow up questions
- Play devil's advocate and ask hard-hitting questions
- Use silence creatively. Use your pen creatively. Let your interviewee ramble.
- Be assertive & control the conversation
- Ask if you can contact them for follow up questions and fact-checking
- Get key documents and numbers
- “Any final thoughts?”

Getting More From Your Interviewee

Ask follow up questions and
clarifying questions

- After each question, should you ask how or why?
 - For clarity on key information, ask “Are you saying. . .?” or restate their answer
 - Don’t be afraid to be quiet after they finish their answer for 10 ish seconds -- sometimes they’ll ramble and you’ll get better information
 - Have them define jargon
 - Ask them for a specific example (this is good to get numbers!)
-



Note-Taking Tips

- Sit where they can't see your notes
- Keep track of potential quotes by recording the time which it was said
- Use your pen to keep your interviewee talking
- ALWAYS take notes - your recording can and WILL fail
- You can keep writing even after they stop talking
- Jot down key information - numbers, names, key phrases
- Write down your follow up questions before you forget them
- Make eye contact still

Advantages and Disadvantages of...

In-Person Interviews

Email Interviews

Phone Interviews

How to Handle...

- “Off the record”
- “Can I read this before it’s published?”
- Fact-checking
- Follow up

Different Types of Questions

- **Goal Revealing Questions**
 - Such as “What are you trying to accomplish?” or “What’s the real purpose of your organization?”
- **Obstacle Revealing Questions**
 - Such as “What problems did you face?”
- **Solution Revealing Questions**
 - Such as “How did you handle the problem?” or “What plans do you have for resolving the conflict?”
- **Start Revealing Questions**
 - Such as “When did the program have its beginning?” or “Whose ideas was it?”
- **Emotion Revealing Questions**
 - Such as, “How did it make you feel?” or “What were you thinking about when you found out about x, y, z?”
- **Numerically Defining Questions**
 - Such as, “How many students have you flunked at SNHU?” or “How many students have accessed The Cupboard?”
- **Open-Ended Questions**
 - Good for when you want a source to keep talking/direct the conversation/you need more information to work off
- **Yes or No Questions**
 - Limit interviewee’s response to help you with hard hitting news.