

ASSIGNMENT
Primary Research: Conducting an Interview
Date Due:

Assignment Overview

Purpose: Instructionally, this portfolio project is designed to enable you to apply your knowledge of the research writing process by obtaining a primary source through an interview. Interviewing allows you to obtain detailed information from a single individual who may supply expert opinions about your topic.

Therefore, you will conduct an interview in order to obtain supporting evidence of your thesis.

Process: This entire interview process will consist of a portfolio of information and result in 7 distinct items contained within a pocket file. Specifically, the file will consist of the following elements:

1. Contact pages (organization specific)
2. Contact pages (individual specific)
3. Candidate research notes
4. Question pages
5. Transcript of the interview
6. Thank You letter
7. Index citation card
8. Self-assessed rubric (supplied)

Instructions

- 1) Begin with a pocket file. You will place works-in-progress and completed materials in this central location.
- 2) Develop a contact page. Your thesis statement should be recorded at the top followed by a list (a minimum of 5) of potential professions or organizations that may employ individuals who may offer supporting evidence to your thesis.
- 3) Refine your contact page with actual names of five professionals that are potential interview candidates. (They may come from the same organization, but I recommend a variety from each organization you listed in step 2.) You may have to do more research by phone or Internet (see step 4 as well). List the contact information (phone, email, etc.). Next, you will meet individually with me to determine those that should be pursued for an interview.
- 4) Compile research about the candidates we determine are manageable prospects. Begin with the person's correct spelling of their name and company title or position. Obtain and record background research, which may include a brief biography of the individual (if available). The objective here is to show why this person is a viable candidate to your

research. Why is his or her opinion and knowledge important? What makes them a credible resource to the topic at hand?

- 5) Create a page of questions—five per candidate. Include your thesis statement at the top of each page. Your questions should be open-ended and focused to extract the information you are seeking from the candidate.
- 6) Call or email your candidates of your intentions. (See Guidelines.) and schedule an interview.
- 7) Transcribe your interview on paper. Record the date, time, interviewee and contact information followed by your questions and the interviewee's answers.
- 8) Write a Thank You letter. Send it to the interviewee and make a copy to place in your file folder.
- 9) On an index card, correctly indentify the primary source according to the APA citation style for interviews.

Scoring

Your work will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Preliminary contact page(s) includes a minimum of five potential organizations or professions that are legitimate resources to the topic at hand...**5 POINTS**
- Refined contact page includes a minimum of 5 specific contacts and contact information (phone numbers, emails, company/organization address)...**5 POINTS**
- Research notes include brief biography or other information on two individuals that details the reasons that makes them a credible resource to the topic at hand...**5 POINTS**
- Interview questions are open-ended and present an ability to extract necessary information in order to support the thesis...**10 POINTS**
- The transcript of the interview contains quotable phrase that may be applied to the research paper you have created in earlier assignments...**20 POINTS**
- The Thank You letter is appropriately addressed, well-written and uses correct grammar and punctuation...**10 POINTS**
- The index card contains the accurate citation for your interview based on the APA formatting style...**5 POINTS**

GRADING KEY A: 55-60 B:50-54 C:45-49 D:41-44 F: 40 & below

Guidelines

Choose candidates that you will have access to. While it would be great to talk to the President of the United States, that's an impossible interview to have granted. Try and stick with local professionals who may provide you with contact phone numbers and emails.

You may choose from several different types of interviews. Your choice will depend upon your individual's availability and proximity and how comfortable you feel talking to people.

Types of Interviews

1. **Face to face** interviews allows you to adapt your questions to the answers of the individual. You may either record the process on a microcassette recorder or simply record the answers through shorthand

2. **Phone** interviews can be used with someone not in your immediate proximity; is too busy to meet with you; or who does not wish to use technology (like email or Instant Messenger). You may wish to use a speakerphone and record the interview with a microcassette recorder (**Note: If a cassette player is used to record the conversation, you MUST ask for permission from the individual before you ask your first question.**)

3. **Email** interviews are less personal than face-to-face or phone interviews, but highly convenient for both parties. Initially, you are not able to ask follow-up questions or play off the interviewee's responses (which can be accomplished with a follow-up questions in a later email). Email interviews are useful because of their digital format and require no word-for-word transcription.

4. You may also interview someone through an **instant messaging** service. These interviews allow you to talk to people at great distances and give you the benefit of adapting your questioning based on the responses you receive. Some people are not fluent at typing, however, so you may not get as lengthy responses from this option.

Setting Up the Interview

- You must always be courteous and professional.
- Explain to the person being interviewed who you are, what you would like to talk with them about, and what project you are working on. You may have to speak to an office manager or secretary prior to speaking with your intended contact.
- Specify the amount of time and the number of questions you have allocated for this process. Five minutes is certainly less intrusive than 30. I would ask for no more than 10 minutes if you are conducting a face-to-face or phone interview.
- BE SURE to communicate your deadline to the interviewee, especially if you are leaving a phone message or communicating via email. Allow yourself enough time to conduct the

interview, transcribe the information and apply the quotations to your research by the due date I have requested.

- Provide your contact information in case the individual wishes to contact you. He or she may wish to revise a response, etc.
- Interviewees may appreciate the questions forwarded to them in advance. This provides them with time to develop some thoughts and ideas to their answers.
- Do not be discouraged if you contact someone unwilling or unavailable to be interviewed.
- Go for it!

Immediately Following the Interview

- Verify the tape recorder, if used, worked throughout the interview. Listen to recording once through to note any questions you may have about unclear responses or muffled audio mishaps.
- Make any notes on your written notes (clarify any fragments, numbers, etc.).
- Clarify as soon as possible any quotes or data with interviewee that may be in question.

Some Do's and Don'ts

When conducting interviews...

- Do confirm the correct spelling of the individual's name, company and title. You may also collect a brief summary of that person's responsibilities to the company or other means of credibility as it relates to your thesis.
- Do be careful of the types of questions you ask.
- Do start the interview with some small talk, but stay within the time frame you allocated to conduct the interview (Applies mostly to phone and face-to-face interviews).
- Do test your recording device prior to the interview (if applicable).
- Do not be intimidated to ask an interviewee to repeat or clarify a response or spell a particular term or name you are not familiar (if you feel you can not locate a correct spelling with a little research).
- Do pay attention to what is being said during the interview and follow up with responses if applicable.

- Do be prepared for the interview. You should learn as much as you can about the person you are going to interview before the interview takes place so that you can tailor your questions to him or her.
- Do not push the person you are interviewing. If he or she does not want to talk about an issue, you should respect that desire.
- Do not stick to your questions rigidly. If an interesting subject comes up that relates to your research, feel free to ask additional questions.
- Do not allow the person you are interviewing to continually get off topic. If a conversation drifts, ask follow-up questions to redirect the conversation to the subject at hand.