

Method Training: Conducting Interviews



Name:

Date:

Preparing an interview

On the following pages, you will first practice formulating questions and queries related to a given topic area, before finally preparing your own interview with appropriate questions.

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What is a social science interview?

An interview is an engaging conversation where you learn more about a person and their experiences. Social science interviews help us understand how people think, feel, and act. Today, you will become a researcher yourself!

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Choose a topic you are interested in!

To conduct an engaging interview, you must first choose a topic that you're interested in and about which you would like to learn more.

Examples

- How has life in our town changed in the last x years?
- What does friendship mean to different people?
- What dreams and goals do young people have today?

Write down a possible interview topic related to the subject area 'school'.

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Finding the right interview partner

Now it is important to find the right person you want to interview.

Consider who the best point of contact for your topic might be. Possible options include:

- Family member (father, mother, brother, sister, grandma, grandpa...)
- Friend (from school, the sports club, the music school, the neighborhood...)
- Teacher (homeroom teacher or subject teacher, possibly a former elementary school teacher)
- Neighbor (from your building, from the same street)

Note down potential people whom you could interview on the topic of 'school'.



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Asking the right questions

To get exciting answers, you need good questions. Here are a few tips:

- **Ask open-ended questions:** Use **what**, **how**, and **why** questions that allow for more than just a "yes" or "no" answer.
- **Plan follow-up questions:** Think about how you can respond to possible answers to find out more.

Examples

- "What is the most important lesson you have learned in life?"
- "How has your opinion on the following important topic changed over time?"

Write down possible interview questions (3-5) related to your topic in the area of 'school'. Make sure to formulate open-ended questions.

Talk about your results so far

Discuss your results together in class:

- What's your topic?
- Who are potential interview partners?
- Which possible questions have you written down?

Compare your results and give each other feedback on what you can still improve. Once you have discussed everything, it is time for you to come up with your own individual topic for your interview!

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Think about the topics that occupy you in your daily life and what is important to you. Then formulate your topic (e.g., in the form of a question). Write down your topic here.

Note down the person you would like to interview.

Now write down your questions (3-5 of them). Make sure to formulate open-ended questions.



Conducting the interview

Now it's time to conduct the interview!

Here are a few tips to ensure everything goes smoothly:

- Pay attention to the body language and reactions of your interview partner
- Signal (e.g., by nodding) that you are listening attentively
- Ask follow-up questions to interesting answers for which you want more information
- Record the interview (with permission) or take notes

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Reflection

After you have conducted the interview, discuss the following points together in class:

- How was the experience of conducting the interview for you?
- Is there anything you would do differently next time?
- What was the most interesting thing you learned?
- Was there anything that surprised you?



EXTRA: Improving interview techniques

Watch videos of journalists and talk show hosts and pay attention to how do they ask questions.

Discuss with your classmates:

- What questions did they ask?
- Which ones worked well?



EXTRA TASK

Create a poster, a podcast, or a short report about your interview and share it with the rest of the class.