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Interview Questions

Most interviews seek to achieve one or more of the following goals:

1. Obtain the interviewee's knowledge about the topic
2. Obtain the interviewee's opinion and/or feelings about the topic
3. Feature the interviewee as the subject

It's important that you know exactly why you are conducting an interview and which goal(s) you are aiming for. Stay focused on questions and techniques which will achieve them.

Do your homework. You will be expected to have a basic knowledge of your subject. Do not roll up to an interview with a band and ask them how many albums they have released — you should know this already. If you show your ignorance, you lose credibility and risk being ridiculed. At the very least, the subject is less likely to open up to you.

Have a list of questions. It seems obvious but some people don't think of it. While you should be prepared to improvise and adapt, it makes sense to have a firm list of questions which need to be asked.

Of course many interviewees will ask for a list of questions before hand, or you might decide to provide one to help them prepare. Whether or not this is a good idea depends on the situation. For example, if you will be asking technical questions which might need a researched answer, then it helps to give the subject some warning. On the other hand, if you are looking for spontaneous answers then it's best to wait until the interview.

Try to avoid being pinned down to a preset list of questions as this could inhibit the interview. However, if you do agree to such a list before the interview, stick to it.

Ask the subject if there are any particular questions they would like you to ask.

Back-cut questions may be shot at the end of a video interview. Make sure you ask the back-cut questions with the same wording as the interview — even varying the wording slightly can sometimes make the edit unworkable. You might want to make notes of any unscripted questions as the interview progresses, so you remember to include them in the back-cuts.

Listen. A common mistake is to be thinking about the next question while the subject is answering the previous one, to the point that the interviewer misses some important information. This can lead to all sorts of embarrassing outcomes.

Next page: [Open-ended questions](#)

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