

INTERVIEW TIPS

A great conversation is built around the people connecting, talking, and sharing with one another. However, there are a few things we can all do to make the experience flow more smoothly. We have put together some tips to help you have a relaxed and meaningful conversation with your interview partner.

Location, location, location

Choosing the right location is crucial as it sets the tone for the conversation. A quiet, comfortable space free from distractions allows for a more focused and meaningful exchange, allowing the conversation to flow naturally.

Things to think about:

- Outside noise. Turn off ceiling fans, air conditioners, even TVs in other rooms.
- Traffic noise. If you have a lot of traffic in your street, choose a location towards the back of the house or away from noise.
- Let people around you know that you are recording an interview, perhaps even put a sign on the door.
- Turn off your mobile phone... except if you're recording on it, especially the audio.
- If you are filming the interview, what is in the background?

Check your equipment

Checking your equipment before an interview is essential to ensure everything runs smoothly. Testing microphones, cameras, and recording devices ahead of time helps avoid technical issues that could disrupt the conversation.

- If you are interviewing remotely and using a program like skype, MS teams, etc. record a test question and play it back prior to recording the whole conversation.
- If you are recording in person, check camera placement (if applicable) and microphones
- If you're recording audio on a mobile phone or voice recorder, ensure your battery is fully charged or that you're plugged in to power.

Relax

Have fun! Enjoy the opportunity to share stories and reflections with your interview partner. Just be yourself, be curious, and let the conversation flow. If someone says something that is really interesting, follow the thread of what they're saying and ask them to tell you more.

Prepare your questions

Before starting your recording, take some time to plan some questions. Tell the person you're interviewing what you want to talk to them about, like "I'd like to interview you about your life and things you've learnt from your life experiences. This preparation will help ensure you make the most of your time together.

Start with a couple of warm up questions

Once you start recording, follow the prompts to introduce yourself and your partner. Begin with some easy, warm-up questions like, "Where were you born?" or "Can you describe the first time we met?"

Ask open-ended questions

Avoid questions that only require a "yes" or "no" answer. Instead, frame your questions to encourage storytelling, such as "Tell me about..." or "What was it like when..." This approach lets the storyteller focus on what matters most to them.

Follow up with additional questions

Be ready to ask follow-up questions or stray from your original list if something piques your interest. To keep the conversation flowing, try questions like "And then what happened?" or "How did that make you feel?" or "What were you thinking in that moment?"

Treat it like a conversation

Use your prepared questions as a guide, not a script. If your partner veers off topic, go with it. You can always bring them back to the original question later. Remember, this is a conversation—there's no right or wrong topic, as long as it's meaningful to both of you.

Provide context

Keep in mind that future listeners may not be familiar with the people and places you mention. When necessary, provide context with questions like "Who was Uncle Steve?" or "Why did he have such an impact on you?"

Encourage descriptive details

Ask questions that invite the person you're interviewing to describe things in detail. Engage the senses to bring the story to life with questions like, "What did your kitchen smell like when you were growing up?" or "What images come to mind when you think of Granddad?"