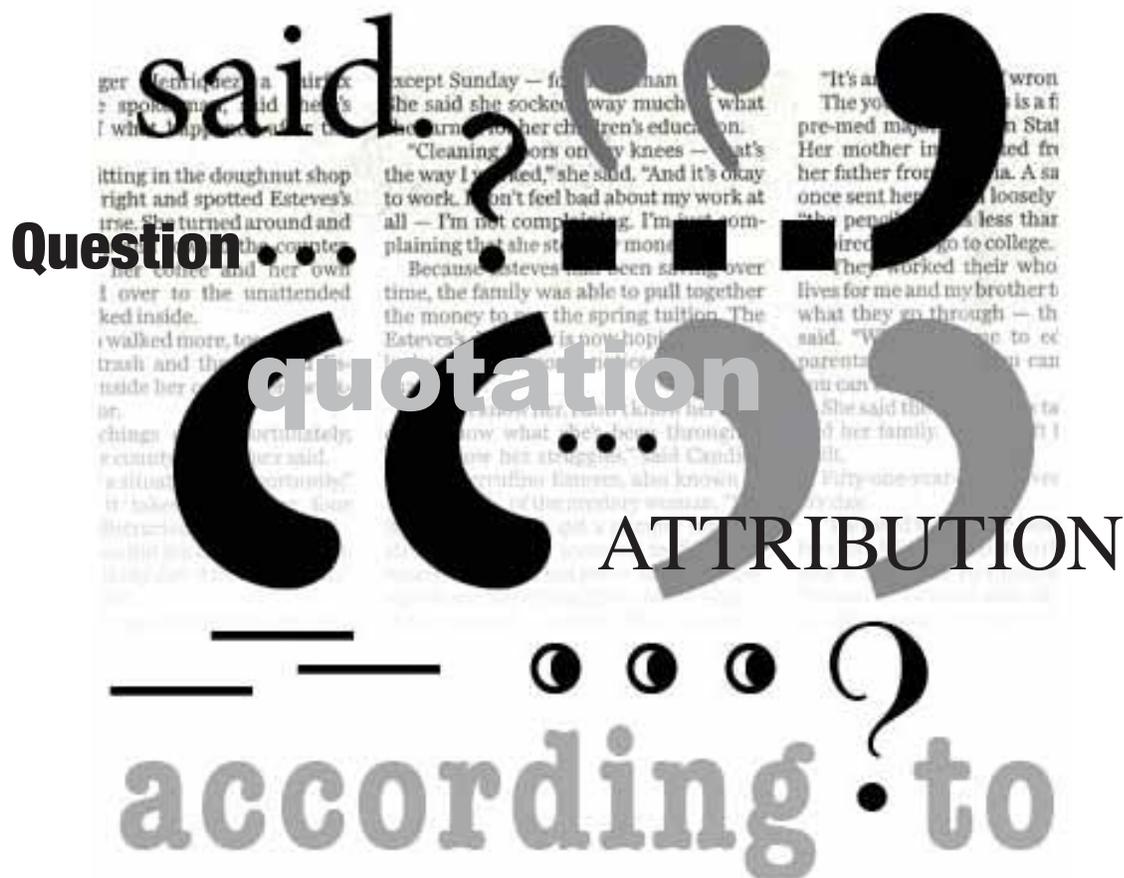


An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

## Interviewing 101



- Student Activity: It's More Than a Question
- Student Resource: Interview Tips
- Think Like a Reporter: Use Quotations | Full, Partial, Paraphrased
- Post Reprint: "Materials science? Piece of cake!"

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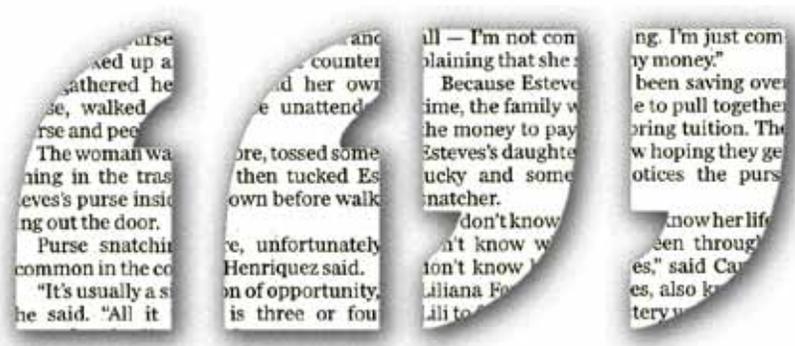
**W**hat do you want to know? Who needs to know?  
 Why is this information important? Where is this  
 story taking us? Who can provide the answers to  
 our questions? By when do you need to know?

The interview is an essential skill for every reporter.

The term  
 “interview” comes  
 from *entre-* meaning  
 “between” + Old  
 French *voir* meaning  
 “to see” (from Latin  
*videre*). Whether  
 the glimpse was for  
 military purposes

or later to get a job, the interview through the centuries involved  
 two people, or more, facing each other in person to get to  
 know one another. Reporters added the element of sharing the  
 interview’s content with a wide audience.

In this resource, you will find article reprints and activities  
 to help students conduct better interviews. “Interview Tips”  
 offers a step-by-step guide to preparing for, holding and using  
 the interview. Examples from the pages of *The Post* help  
 students know how to use full or partial quotations and when to  
 paraphrase responses.



# It's More Than a Question

Interviews revolve around questions, but questions are only first steps in getting the story to inform, to entertain, to inspire and to enhance your readers' understanding of people, places, events and issues.

*Post* reporter Victoria St. Martin began a news article:



Maria Candida Esteves always had one simple message for her children. "Don't steal," Esteves, 51, recalled in a recent interview. "When you need something, you ask for it."

St. Martin's news story is about the theft of cash from Esteves' purse, but it is a family's situation and a society's concern as well. Esteves is interviewed at her home, her daughter is interviewed via a tablet screen. In addition, the interview with a police spokesman provides particulars of this case and similar cases in the U.S. Each person who is interviewed adds to the news story, giving a face to the news and perspective on actions.

Keep these questions in mind as you prepare to cover a story and plan interviews.

## **The Person**

Will your article demonstrate that everyone has a story? Does this person represent others? Or are you interviewing this individual to give insight into another side of her character? Did he recently win accolades — which everyone knows — so you want to reveal what it took to win?

## **The Place**

Why is attention being given to this place? Is this a commemoration of its construction or historic events that took place here? Is this place an overlooked part of your community's story that people pass daily? How many different "lives" has this place had?

## **The Event**

Why should your readers care about this event? Is it part of your community's history? Does it reflect on the cultural or ethnic heritage of a segment of your student body? Will knowing about this event make people more mindful of their actions or their school? How important is it for students to know what is happening in other schools? Will your interview make your readers and viewers more informed?

## **The Issue**

What new perspective on an issue can you bring to your readers' attention? Who should you interview to show more dimensions of the issue? When might this idea impact your readers' lives? How can you localize the story?

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## Student Resource: Interview Tips



ILLUSTRATION BY CAROL PORTER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Two or more people facing each other in the same room, prepared to ask and answer questions. This interview may be informal or formal, but it is always based in questions and responses. The interview is one of the best means reporters have to get information from experts and reliable sources. Not only do reporters and interviewees get to meet each other, reporters get to observe mannerisms and gestures, to see the environment in which someone works and lives, and, perhaps, watch interactions.

For the most successful experience, you must prepare before you conduct an interview. Here are some steps to help you and your interviewee have a productive time.

### STEP ONE: Select the Best Person to Interview

- After determining your topic, write down what you know about it.
- What do you want to know, to confirm or to clarify? State this in a statement of not more than three sentences.
- Who is most likely to have this information?
- Determine who you are going to ask for an interview. Read the source's bio, what the source has written, and what others have written about your source.
- What information can this individual provide that no one else can provide and that cannot be found with a Web search?

### STEP TWO: Ask for an Appointment

- Politely contact the person by phone, a note or e-mail to ask for an interview appointment.

- Make it clear who you represent — your school, a club, a student project, a media organization.
- If you plan to tape (audio and/or video) the interview, you should ask the interviewee for permission to record when you ask for the interview appointment.
- Know your preferred meeting place: the person's office, your place of work, a neutral environment.
- Be prepared to tell the person why you have chosen him or her. Make sure you have done sufficient background reading that the interviewee knows you are serious.

### STEP THREE: Read for Background

- What do you know about this person? About the topic?
- What should you read to know more about the time period, person or issue? If you are interviewing someone who served

in the military, what do you know about the place(s) where he was stationed, the military branch in which she served or any engagements?

If you are interviewing a family member, do you know on which side of your family she is related and what time period he might help you to know?

- Have others written about this person or the person's point of view and/or work? Read and take notes.
- If this person has ever written a newspaper article, journal article or book on the topic, read it.

### STEP FOUR: Questions and Purpose Should Correspond

- Write 10-15 questions that require the interviewee to give more than a yes or no answer. These are called open-ended questions.

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- Be ready to ask follow-up questions during the interview.
- Form concise questions with the information you wish the interviewee to confirm. How can this source enhance your understanding?
- Think through different ways of getting information related to the subject of the interview. For example, if the interviewee has photographs in her office, see if they might relate to an area you wish to pursue. Or bring a photograph to accompany one of your questions.
- As you plan for the actual interview, don't neglect to prepare for the initial introduction. Some of this preliminary chatting may give you insight and provide useful actualities (to use with video and podcasts) so plan to record it as well.
- Do not forget your main focus, the reason you are interviewing this person.

### **STEP FIVE: Prepare Before Leaving for the Interview**

- Be sure to check that the recorder and microphone are working before you leave home. Charge batteries and check the memory card. Consider the ambient noise and lighting in the interview location. Do you have all the needed equipment in a field kit?
- A notebook and pencil or pen are important even if you plan to record the interview. You will need the notebook to refer to questions. Even if you have them memorized, have them written in

the notebook. Take notes even if you are recording the interview.

- Dress appropriately — even if you are using Skype. You are on an official assignment. Dress to show respect to your interviewee and to represent your organization well.

### **STEP SIX: Mind Your Manners and Be Professional**

- Introduce yourself. Greet the interviewee cordially.
- Be sure to get basic information on tape. Start the interview by having the interviewee say and spell his name and title. That way you will get both correct pronunciation and identification on the tape or in your notes. Be very polite when asking a lady for her age, if pertinent to your topic. Ask if she is willing to share her age with you.
- Do a sound check to be sure you are getting the best tape quality. Remember to wear the headphones so you know if there is a sound problem.
- Make eye contact. It is important to show your interest in the person and topic in this manner.
- Don't attempt to write down every word said. Do record and write down key phrases, dates and specific information.
- Remember/record gestures and body language, facial expressions, details from the room. Note what the interviewee is wearing or any mannerisms. If you do not do it during the interview, write this down immediately after the interview.
- You may ask the interviewee

to repeat something. Rephrase answers to clarify responses. For example, "Am I correct that you said ...?"

- Listen attentively.
- Be ready to ask follow-up questions. This may lead to a far better and more important story.
- As the interview is coming to an end, ask "Is there anything you'd like to add?"
- Enjoy the experience.

### **STEP SEVEN: Post Interview Actions**

- Immediately after the interview, add information about the setting, interviewee's gestures and other information not recorded.
- Review your notes and listen to or watch the tape. Read through notes to identify the essential information for the story.
- Review quotations to get the wording accurate, especially if a form of shorthand was used.
- For broadcast use, log the tape. The reporter does not need to transcribe the entire taped interview — just the portions that will be used in the broadcast.

Technology has advanced to allow video conferencing and interviews conducted across miles. This may be very helpful to scholastic journalists who may not drive or leave school grounds to conduct interviews during the day. Just be aware that Skype or other visual-based interviews are preferred. The same etiquette regarding taping and manners applies.

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# Think Like a Reporter

 | Use Quotations | Full, Partial, Paraphrased

Scholars and students quote from original sources in their papers. Media writers use quotations in news articles, feature stories, editorials and personal columns. Quotations provide data from reports, facts from studies, and personal points of view from interviews. Journalists give appropriate credit to the source of the quoted material. This is called attribution. Quotations may be used in a full quotation, partial quotation or paraphrase.

## Paraphrase

The paraphrase summarizes the source's statements in the words of the writer. This may be needed especially if the source of the quotation is verbose or uses technical diction, poor grammar or vulgarity. The paraphrase should be much clearer to understand than the original, longer statement.

*Example:* More than 250 pregnant women in the United States, worried they had been exposed to the Zika virus during their travels, have sought testing for the disease in recent months, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday.

— “No pattern to outcomes for U.S. women with Zika”  
By Brady Dennis  
and Ariana Eunjung Cha,  
February 27, 2016; A1

## Full Quotation

Quotations most commonly appear as one or more full sentences, with attribution. They provide vitality to the news article. They provide opinion — which the reporter should never do — and give perspective on events and issues. The quotation says more than what the reporter has stated. A quotation should not repeat what the reporter has paraphrased. The quotation can be identified by the quotation marks that surround it.

*Example:* “I think she’s got a chance to be a star at this,” Aaron Boone said. “She’s already impressed a lot of people, even people that have gone in skeptical, the people who are saying, ‘I don’t know if I think she can do it.’ And she’s already surprised them by saying something really on-point and really smart during a broadcast. I think that’s only going to continue.”

— “Hard work speaks volumes for baseball’s broadcasting trailblazer”  
By Barry Svrluga, January 22, 2016; D1

## Partial Quotation

Reporters have the option of quoting just a few words. This allows them to highlight only the most striking or important part of a quotation within the text. The interviewee’s exact words are more easily worked into the article.

*Example:* The bill would require K-12 teachers to identify classroom materials with “sexually explicit content” and notify parents, who would have the right to “opt out” their children and request that the teacher give them something less objectionable to study.

— “Bill would let parents ‘opt out’ on literature”  
By Jenna Portnoy,  
February 26, 2016; A1

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**Attribution**

Readers and viewers want to know: Who said that? Where did you get the information? Attribution provides the source of the information. Stating the source makes the reporter more accurate. This transparency gives media credibility.

Attribution for quotations is usually given using the verb “said.”

Reporters need to provide attribution when they are quoting from reports and studies. The phrase “according to” is most often used. It

is clear to readers that the reporter is not the source of this information.

*Example:* “You just couldn’t always trust you were going to have power,” said Raymond, a former West Point instructor.

— “U.S. midshipmen are learning the ancient art of sailing — by the stars”  
By Andrea Peterson,  
February 18, 2016; A11

*Example:* The prince even discussed imposing taxes, a sensitive subject for Saudis, during an interview published last month by the Economist. “We’re talking about taxes or fees that are supported by the citizens,” he told the magazine, although he explicitly ruled out imposing income taxes.

— “Saudi pivot to austerity could stoke civil unrest”  
By Hugh Naylor, February 26, 2016; A1

Read the beginning of a longer article about the inauguration of the H Street streetcar on Saturday, February 27, 2016. Identify the reporter’s use of full quotations, partial quotations and paraphrase.

# Streetcars are finally here. But who are they for?

D.C.’s long-tortured transit project debuts today — a boon to some, an affront to others

BY MICHAEL LARIS

• Originally Published February 27, 2016

When the red-and-gray streetcar dings its way down H Street NE carrying its first passengers Saturday, it will roll past a newish Giant supermarket, the site of a coming Whole Foods and a former church selling mango-lime chicken and mashed peas.

Photographer Steven M. Cummings, who bought a tumbledown rowhouse steps away from the church 15 years ago, credits the District’s much-derided streetcar system for the awakening. The 2.2-mile transit line was more than a decade and \$200 million in the making, but he thinks people will eventually find value they can’t see today.

“It could very well be the joke of the decade. But you don’t know,” Cummings said. “The joke is still working, because it’s clearing the block up. In the end, it’s going to turn

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GETTY IMAGE

**Photographer Steven M. Cummings, who bought a tumbledown rowhouse steps away from the church 15 years ago, credits the District's much-derided streetcar system for the awakening. The 2.2-mile transit line was more than a decade and \$200 million in the making, but he thinks people will eventually find value they can't see today.**

into something special and interesting.”

But when passengers head toward the poorer, eastern end of the line, they will find no comparable renaissance along Benning Road, where some are hostile to streetcars and dismiss them as a “party train” better suited for H Street bar patrons.

“This really doesn’t seem like it’s going to benefit the blacks in this neighborhood,” said Olene Claggett, a longtime resident of Langston Dwellings, a sprawling public housing project built in the 1930s. “All this money for building the trolley, and we don’t even have jobs. Is it bringing in jobs? No. Is it bringing in people? Yes. People from other places.”

The officials who seized on the idea of bring streetcars back to Washington never intended to build a “jolly trolley” or some other nostalgic amusement.

City officials wanted to build one of the most ambitious streetcar networks in the country: 20, 40 or even — in the view of one former top city official, Allen Y. Lew — 60 miles of track crisscrossing the District.

“None of us would be interested in the streetcar system if it was just purely a Disney ride,” Lew said in a 2014 interview as he was pressing his case for going big. Lew was a key force in building the city’s convention center and a waterfront ballpark for the Washington Nationals.” ...

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# Materials science? Piece of cake!

To teach a complex subject, teacher puts it in terms people grasp: chocolate

By Susan Svrluga

• Originally Published February 20, 2016

Daniel Friedman needed another science class to complete the requirements toward his degree at Johns Hopkins University. And as a philosophy major, he wasn't overly confident about diving into a highly technical, rigorous physics or engineering course. Then he saw the word "chocolate."

"It was an easy sell," he said.

Friedman didn't even know what materials science was, really, but he signed up for the winter intersession class. Jennifer Dailey, a doctoral student from the department of materials science and engineering at Hopkins' Whiting School of Engineering designed the class to test whether students would learn more if they worked with something more familiar and enticing in the lab.

So she taught one materials science lesson on thermodynamics to students in a traditional class. And she compared that to students' performance in the class learning with chocolate.

Chocolate won.

Okay, maybe "won" is too strong. But based on her data, it was just as effective a teaching method as the metals that are typically used in such classes, and she said the

students enjoyed the lesson more.

"It's an intermediate materials science class on thermodynamics," Dailey said. "I was teaching concepts from that to students who had very little background — half the students were humanities majors, and they were still able to learn the concepts, which made me very happy."

Plus, they got to eat tons of chocolate. So much chocolate that in the first class, some students told her it was too much chocolate. (They had recovered in time for the next class.)

Dailey describes materials science as "the study of stuff."

"There are materials scientists who study metals, how to make them stronger and lighter for airplanes. There are materials scientists who study cells and how to get better drug delivery for cancer treatment," Dailey said. "There are some that consider themselves effectively chemists, effectively physicists, even electrical engineers. It encompasses a lot of amazing ideas."

She loves to cook, enjoys the science of food, and seems to have a pretty intense familiarity with local chocolate shops, so the choice of material was easy.



PHOTO BY WILL KIRK/JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

**Jennifer Dailey, a doctoral student from the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University Whiting School of Engineering, above, teaches a class using chocolate.**

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Besides, “there are specific foods that work well for explaining ideas,” Dailey said. “Chocolate has a beautiful crystal structure. It crystallizes in five different ways, depending how you heat and cool it. You can discover how it gets to be a beautiful, shiny candy bar rather than that icky melted thing that you find in your pocket.”

Friedman said the phase diagrams were difficult. And when the students moved on to double phase diagrams, that was daunting. But he was thankful he wasn’t trying to understand it through the structure of lead or iron.

Traditionally, to teach a concept such as how to do phase diagrams, you would look at a combination of metals, Dailey said, and ask what phase they will be in at different temperatures and different compositions. “With 60 percent gold and 40 percent copper, what would ...” she said, posing a hypothetical question, and trailed off. “No clue.”

“But if I tell you I take chocolate and vanilla ice cream and heat them up, well, we just made delicious hot chocolate. Cool it down, chocolate milk, or ice cream. Or maybe they

will separate — chocolate-chip ice cream. When I gave them that example, it’s very interesting and entertaining to watch the students discovering.”

Grace Scott, a junior double-majoring in international studies and East Asian studies, was drawn to the class by the chocolate, too.

“Ever since I was a kid, I’ve loved cooking and baking and experimenting with different ingredients in the kitchen,” Scott said in an email. “My great-grandfather was an organic chemistry professor and I remember him telling me things like why salt’s chemical compound makes food taste different.”

She was excited when she got off the (very long) wait list, and she enjoyed the lab work, tempering chocolate in various ways, for example, and seeing how it looked like the craggy surface of some far-off planet when magnified 400 to 5,000 times.

“We subjected our chocolate samples to different scientific processes, including the scanning electron microscope, nano-indentation, and X-ray diffraction,” she wrote. “Through these experiments, I was able to better understand chocolate’s molecular structure and its crystallization patterns.”

The class tried to find chemical ways to imitate the smell of chocolate, talked about the ethics of chocolate production, and compared a whole lot of samples to talk about its different characteristics (“Compared” really means more eating of chocolate.)

For the final project, they had to explain some concept of science through food and give Dailey an example. “What would happen if you used baking soda instead of baking powder in cookies?” Dailey said. “Another student, using just chocolate and water and controlled temperature made this gorgeous chocolate mousse. ... A student who was a history major made an entire graph of this combination of Nutella with this chemical that made it into a powder.”

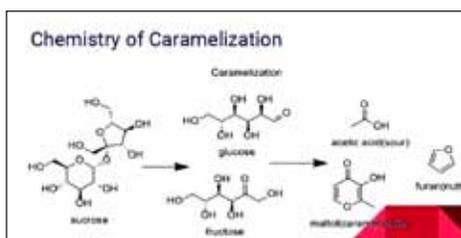
And yes, they brought their final projects in. And ate them.

“It was kind of like a big party,” Friedman said. “Having made the chocolate and analyzing it and then getting to eat it — there’s not much better than that.”

Friedman, who’s originally from Budapest, whipped up the caramel milk that people in small villages in Hungary have traditionally enjoyed — chocolate was too expensive for most people back then, he said.

And here, he shares his grandma’s recipe for caramel milk. Because even people who can afford chocolate can — if they study it, think about it, temper it, magnify it, and eat it for three weeks — eventually have enough chocolate.

1. *Pour a cup of sugar into an empty pan on medium heat.*
2. *Constantly stir for 3-5 minutes as the sugar starts to brown.*
3. *Once sugar is almost entirely browned and mostly liquid, remove from heat.*
4. *Stir in 3 to 4 cups of milk.*
5. *Enjoy!*



COURTESY OF DANIEL FRIEDMAN AND VICTORIA MICHAELS

**This is a slide from a final project in the Johns Hopkins University course “Chocolate: An Introduction to Materials Science,” explaining the science behind an old Hungarian recipe for caramelized milk.**