

LESSON 11

Preparing an interview

Learning objective

To prepare for and carry out an interview

Learning outcomes

- Distinguish between open and closed questions
- Prepare questions for an interview
- Ask questions and record answers
- Recall and use good interview techniques

Curriculum links

- **English (oracy):** Asking questions to further understanding; Answering questions and justifying ideas
- **PSHE:** learn the importance of having compassion towards others; how to show care and concern for others

See 'NewsWise and your curriculum' for a more detailed breakdown of how this lesson links to your national curriculum objectives.



This lesson focuses on the NewsWise value: **balanced and interesting.**

Journalist training school context

Interviews help journalists find out more information about a story, and add interesting details to their news reports. Journalists must try to get the best information they can when they interview people.

Core knowledge/skills

- Interviews help journalists better understand stories and allow them to add interesting details in their reporting.
- Adding quotes to a report also makes the story more credible – they are evidence that the story has actually happened.
- Often the people being interviewed are experts about the story, so what they say will help the audience to understand the story better too.
- When preparing for an interview, journalists have to research the person they are interviewing, plan questions related to the story and anticipate the kinds of answers they might get.
- Many journalists find that the best answers come from interviewees who feel comfortable and relaxed in an interview.

Before you begin

- Pupils will spend this lesson preparing for and carrying out an interview of someone closely related to the story they are writing. See our guidance on Reporting a real news story with your class for ideas about who to interview.
- If available, recording equipment should be used to collect responses. These can be used later when the final recordings are edited together.
- In the plenary discussion for this lesson, there are three scenarios. They are all very similar and responses will not differ significantly. Before the lesson, choose the scenario that is most appropriate for your class and only address that one.

Starter/baseline assessment [10 mins]

1. Use the lesson slides to explain the starter activity to pupils. Allow time to answer questions and address any misconceptions.
2. Invite pupils to work in groups of three. One pupil will ask the questions, another will answer the questions in role and the third will listen carefully to the interview to see which answers gave the most interesting responses.
3. Lead a class discussion to allow pupils the opportunity to share their reflections with the rest of the class.

Learning activities

Activity 1 [10 mins]

1. Explain the different types of questions, referring back to the examples from the starter as needed.
2. Give pupils the **Types of questions** worksheet. Allow small groups time to read the questions and decide which are open and which are closed.

Activity 2 [15 mins]

1. Remind pupils of the story they will be reporting on. Through class discussion, generate ideas about what they want to find out from their interviews.
2. Model writing a question based on these before allowing small groups to record their own questions on the **My questions** worksheet.

Activity 3 [20 mins]

1. Remind pupils of the tips for a good interview. Allow time to answer pupil questions where necessary.
2. Pupils use remaining lesson time to complete their interviews. Pupils may add any relevant interview responses to **Planning organiser** (completed in lesson 10).
 - This activity will be dependent on the arrangements for your interview and may not fit into this time slot. We encourage you to make the interview experience as immersive as possible. That may mean you need to schedule time for a class visitor, allow pupils to conduct interviews at home or make necessary arrangements to complete interviews off-site.

Plenary [10 mins]

Present the discussion prompt and multiple choice options from the ‘What should you do?’ slide. Give pupils time to decide what they would do before leading a class discussion around each of the options. Encourage pupils to think about how they should be prepared to ask challenging questions but should be fair and respectful in how they do so.

Questions for assessment

- *What type of question will get the best answers from your interviewee? Why do you think that question will get the best response?*
- *Why is it a good idea to use more open questions than closed when you are interviewing somebody?*
- *What tips would you give someone who wanted to get quality answers during an interview?*
- *Why might it be a good idea to record an interview?*

Extension opportunities

Pupils write a guide to how to conduct an effective interview. Encourage them to consider the different types of questions they should include and how they can get the best answers from their interviewees.

Resources checklist

- **Lesson slides: Preparing for an interview**
- **Types of questions** worksheet
- **My questions** worksheet
- **Reporting real news stories with your class** guidance theguardianfoundation.org/programmes/newswise/schools/reporting-real-news-stories

