

## **Bare Essentials for Conducting an Interview**

**Tip #1: Try to establish a rapport with possible interviewee by leaving them a telephone message or visiting during office hours for professors.** If sending out emails, give a brief introduction such as the one below. Note: **DO NOT** start right off the bat with a long list of questions in your first email.

Ex: Sample E-Mail

Dear Doctor Jane-Doe-Re-Me,

Hello, my name is John Doe, an undergraduate at UC Berkeley. I am writing an article on the failure rate of rabies vaccinations for Issues Berkeley Medical Journal. Would you perhaps be interested in talking about this subject in a brief interview, either in person [if they're nearby], over the phone, or email? This would be a tremendous help, and I would appreciate any

comments you

would have on this topic.

If you are interested please reply to the same email address at my-email @yahoo.com

Thank you for your time,

John Doe

**Tip #2: Have a list of written or typed questions before hand, but DO NOT simply read off of the paper during the interview.** Use those questions as a guide for steering the interview, but don't be afraid to explore other relevant topics that arise and would be useful for your article.

**Tip #3: Do your research BEFORE conducting your interview.** It's critical that you know the material in order to understand what your interviewee is saying and seek clarification or delve deeper if necessary.

**Tip #4: Do not ask yes or no question. Do not ask yes or no questions.** Notice the repetition. These questions really won't get you anywhere.

**Tip #5: Contact your in-person or sometimes even telephone interview as far in advance as possible and confirm with them. They might forget or have a sudden change in their schedule.**

**Tip #6: Practice before you conduct your interview!** This helps create a smoother, more energetic interview. Even for those conducted via email, carefully consider what initial and follow-up questions to ask. Their time is limited, and nobody wants to waste time answering a really obvious question.

**Tip #7: Be polite!** Politeness is important for maintaining a good impression and ensuring a cooperative interviewee.

**Tip #8: Allow your interviewee to choose the format of his interview, whether it be over the phone, in person or email.** Since they're giving you their time, try to be as accommodating as reasonably possible.

**Tip #9: Always send your interviewee a copy of the quotes from them, and seek permission to use those quotes.** This provides them an opportunity to clarify anything they said and to know early on what they'll be quoted as saying. In the end, this process avoids a "he-said, she-said" and "I didn't mean that" situation.

**Tip #10: Send a copy of Issues to your interviewee if you're published.** This is a good gesture and a great way to maintain a relationship for future interviews.