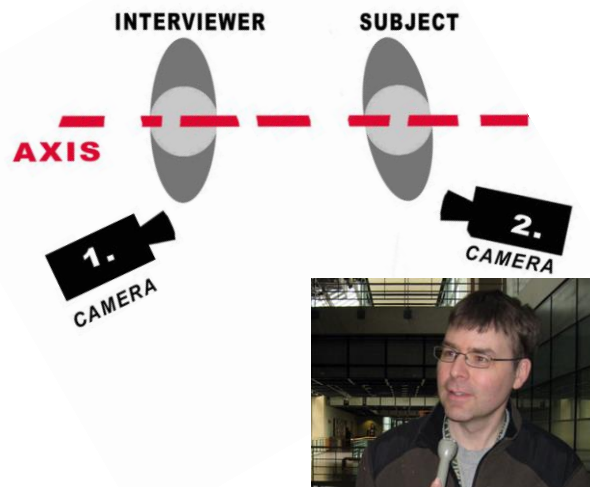
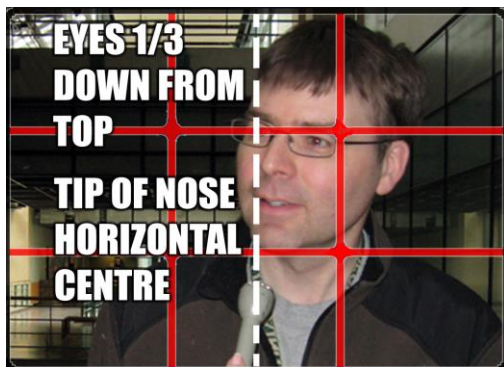


## Interviews: Framing

- Get a  $\frac{3}{4}$  view of the face so both the eyes are visible (see diagram below for setup)
- Leave room for any titling – Subject's chin should be  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way from the bottom of the screen.
- Do not let the person face into or look into the lens as this breaks the objective/subjective barrier.
- Always check the background for anything that will distract or look odd (windows, lights, signs etc).
- Move the camera as far back as possible, zoom in and this softens the background.
- **DO NOT ZOOM during interview.** This is very dangerous as you might get stuck in editing with a zoom you do not want. You want to watch the framing of the face and adjust accordingly but try to reframe when the question is being asked and not when the person is giving their answer.
- **Use a Tripod where possible.**

### Person on the Street – How to Frame the Human Face

1. The most effective shot for this is a MCU. The diagram below shows how the camera is placed over the shoulder of the person doing the interview in order to get the  $\frac{3}{4}$  view of subject's face.
2. Tip of subject's nose should be the horizontal centre of the shot. Put the eyes  $\frac{1}{3}$  down from top (Remember the rule of thirds – again, see the diagram below).
3. It is usually most effective to shoot people individually rather than in couples or groups (unless the couple element is needed for the story). If you shoot a 2 shot, generally you end up with one person standing there awkwardly (distracting the audience) while the other person speaks. Since you only have one microphone, if the second person does talk there might be audio problems while you move the mic over to them. Shooting one person at a time on the MCU is much easier to edit.
4. After the interview the camera person should move to position 2 in order to get a reaction shot or reasks from the interviewer. Remember, a neutral face is best for reaction shots unless it is a fun story and you want a fun response. Make sure you ask the same questions you asked the first time. When shooting from position 2 note the camera did not cross the axis.
5. NEVER give up your microphone to your subject if you are using a hand mic. People do not know how to hold microphones and it also means they now control the interview. A lavalier (tie clip) mic is preferred for sit down interviews but is usually not practical for street interviews.
- 6.



### Interviewing a Child



When interviewing a child you want to **shoot eye level** to the child so you will want to kneel or sit on a small stool. Put the mic just under her/his chin. Note in the example picture the interviewer is using her left hand to hold the mic. This is important because if she used her right hand she would block the shot of the interviewee. The example here is to show mic placement **NOT** the suggested framing. In most instances a medium close up works best as in the photo above.

## Shooting a One Camera Interview

In a perfect world every interview would be shot using 3 cameras. One for a MCU of the guest, another for a MCU of the interviewer and the third one would get a two shot. The cameras would be hooked into a switcher which would allow the director to select the best shot of the interview as it was being conducted live.

If you were able to get two cameras, one camera would shoot the interviewer and one would shoot the interviewee with the output being recorded on two different tapes. At some point one of the cameras would be used to take two shots, over the shoulder shots, reasks and reaction shots. These elements would be combined in editing. It is also possible to get a similar look from a one camera interview if you shoot it correctly. It of course will also have to be edited.

In the case of a one camera shoot, the interview is first conducted with the camera shooting the interviewee. Later the interviewer is recorded by turning the camera around and having them repeat the questions asked earlier in the real interview. The same camera is used to take two shots after or before the interview. The Post-production once again helps in putting together the interview.

Because you have one camera to shoot with in the field, shooting an interview and including the proper shots is difficult. You must compensate by shooting the following.

Every interview should include these basic shots:

1. **Two Shot** – Great for mid interview usage and at the end when ending an interview. Remember, this is not how you want to conduct the whole interview because the subjects face is too small. The two shot will be a tighter shot than the wide shot (#5 below).
2. **Over the Shoulder** – The camera shoots over the host's shoulder to get a shot of the guest (shoulder and back of head are included in the shot). The same shot should be taken from over the shoulder of the guest looking at the host. These should be interspersed in the interview.
3. **Close Up** – Used to show facial expression and detail – you might see this used if the person becomes emotional. Be careful about using the close up as it can be unflattering in some cases (especially if you are shooting high definition). The close up is a very intimate shot which should be used sparingly because it can make the audience feel uncomfortable if used incorrectly.



4. **Medium Close Up** – Shows the person from mid-chest up which is the primary shot you will want to use. It is a good, safe, shot. If you were to stop and talk to someone in real life this is about how close you would get to them and so the medium close up has the same comfortable feel. When in doubt – use this one as it is a good general purpose shot for interviewing and when videotaping people talking.
5. **Wide Shot** – Similar to the two shot but includes more information. This is a good shot to set up the interview after the host introduces the person. Try to do the interview in a scene that fits with what you are talking about. In this case the subject, the woman on the left, is a florist.
6. **Cutaway** – Can be a reaction shot or two shot. This is used to cover up edits and is a very useful shot. In this case the cutaway is an over the shoulder shot of the reporter. You could also use a medium close up or a close up. A cutaway could also be an image of something the person is talking about.
7. **Re-ask** - Always have the host or the reporter “re-ask” the same questions they asked in the interview and will be edited in later. You can do this with the guest in the chair or you may feel more comfortable doing this after they leave.
8. **Reaction**– This is the shot of the host taking notes or looking at the subject. Usually shot with a medium or close up shot. These shots are gold. Always shoot reaction shots of the interviewer. They can be used to cover any edits. Try to avoid nodding because it looks like you are agreeing with what the person is saying. You want to stay neutral.



## Interviewing Tips

What a person says is an important part of the storytelling process and how interesting or compelling your story is, is a direct result of effective interviewing. What good is a well shot interview if it is boring or provides no new information? Peter Gzowski, a famous interviewer said: "The task of the interviewer is to guide (*Encourage, prompt & provoke*) rather than to motivate. The subject paddles, the interviewer steers. The ability to steer ... even when it involves staying in the same place and rephrasing the still unanswered thought ... is the ultimate achievement of the craft. To master it you must first learn to listen, to follow every turn of your subjects' phrase and to use the energy that comes from it to take him down the course you want to follow; to be in control at all times, in other words, while maintaining the illusion that you are just along for the ride."

Sometimes the most difficult part of interviewing is LISTENING. Interviewers can be so focused on asking the next question they do not listen to the subject and miss out on good follow up questions.

Interviews are ultimately about people so make sure you do not lose them in facts & statistics. Try to always find the human angle in a story. People relate to people not things. It is also important to keep things balanced by presenting both sides of the story. An interview is not so you can voice an opinion. Be sure to present all the information and let the audience decide for themselves.

### Types of Interviews:

- One on one • Panel • Video Conference • Scrum • From the floor (press conference) • Phone

### Good interviews are:

- |             |                  |               |                         |               |
|-------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| ✓ Anecdotal | ✓ Detailed       | ✓ Compelling  | ✓ Specific              | ✓ Personal    |
| ✓ Revealing | ✓ Conversational | ✓ Informative | ✓ Full of visual images | ✓ Inquisitive |

### Bad interviews are:

- |                            |                             |                |            |          |                |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------|----------|----------------|
| ✗ About things, not people | ✗ Vague                     | ✗ Impersonal   | ✗ General  | ✗ Formal | ✗ In your face |
| ✗ Distant                  | ✗ Full of facts and numbers | ✗ Bureaucratic | ✗ Ordinary |          |                |

**PREPARATION:** Questions to ask yourself as you prepare for your interview:

1. **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW?** Investigation? Information? Discovery?
2. **WHO CARES?** Why will your audience want to watch this particular interview?
3. **WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THIS INTERVIEW?** (put this into one sentence)
4. **HOW DOES THIS PERSON FIT INTO THE FOCUS?** (is he/she a participant, witness, expert?)
5. **WHAT DOES THE VIEWER NEED TO KNOW** (In my intro) Before the interview begins in order to understand the background and context?
6. **WHO IS WATCHING?** Why did they pick us? What are they expecting from us? What I am hoping the viewer will get from watching the interview?
7. Look at all the topics you MIGHT cover in the interview. Example: Jessica Holmes is literally an overnight success in the Canadian comedy scene. She went from being an unknown to having her own national TV show. Your interview is part of a series on what makes Canadians so funny.
 

<i>Background:</i>	How she got into comedy in the first place
<i>Lucky break:</i>	What was the pivotal experience/event/connection that got her on air?
<i>Current:</i>	What she's doing now to make it as a comedian
<i>Personal:</i>	Why doing comedy is so important to her
<i>Talent:</i>	Is she any good?
<i>Road blocks:</i>	What is standing in her way?
<i>Successes:</i>	What is the best thing that has happened to her so far?
<i>Assistance:</i>	Who her mentors have been along the way
<i>Future:</i>	What next?



8. How many of those areas of conversation fit into your focus? How many can you logically cover in the 5 or 10 or 15 minutes allotted to you? Practice the art of leaving out!
9. Once you know what areas WITHIN YOUR FOCUS you want to cover, write a few questions for each area. Don't go off on tangents and start asking questions about unrelated things. I don't need to know where Jessica went to university or where she grew up as part of the interview.

## **STRUCTURE**

Write the focus on the top of the page. Write an intro that relates clearly to the focus. Keep the intro between 15 and 30 seconds. The first question should lead DIRECTLY out of the intro. Have two extros ready ... one that you'll use if everything is right on time and you can provide all the information you need and one to go to if you are out of time and need something to jump to fast!

- Write approximately one question for each minute of interview time.
- Write a few extra questions in case you have to stretch to fit time.
- Know what question you'll jump to if you are running out of time.
- Write questions that start with WHAT and WHY and HOW
- DON'T make statements. (Jessica/Mark/Catherine/William/Kevin, you are newcomers to television .... Instead, phrase questions as QUESTIONS: What is this experience like for you? Or ... What sorts of things are you learning about television now you're on the other side of the camera?)

## **BAD HABITS:**

1. **Overloaded questions** ... the more you put into a question, the less you'll get out of it. Keep questions SHORT and SIMPLE and ask ONE at a time.
2. **Leading questions.** When you ask "don't you think" or "isn't it true" you are leading the guest towards an answer instead of finding the true answer. Leading questions shut down guests ... either make them defensive or lead them to simply deny what you've asked. Instead use "open ended questions" by adding the word WHAT. What do you think? What do you believe to be true?
3. **Editorializing** is tacking a personal comment at the beginning or the end of a perfectly good question. "What are your plans to deal with the deficit, because it looks like you don't have any?"
4. **Assumptions.** It doesn't matter if your assumption is right or wrong. It will be challenged. "We all know that Americans are ignorant about Canada" (to which the guest replies... "Well I'm an American and I'm not ignorant").
5. **Statements.** It is impossible to respond to a statement. "Mr. Smith, you are a teacher with 30 years of experience." (What can he say..."Yes)
6. **Emotional words.** These are words that trigger an emotional rather than thoughtful response. "Are you enjoying your new job?" Sounds simple but the guest will respond to the word "enjoy". Instead ask: "How is your new job going?" Or "What is your new job like?"
7. **The either/or question.** "Is it because of X or Y?" (Are there ONLY two possible answers?)
8. **The yes/no question.** Your goal is to open up the guest ... get him/her to give you information. A yes/no question will shut people down. "Do you know about computers?" "No..." OR... "What do you know about computers?" "Well I can use the internet and I belong to a chat room and I'm learning to design a web page..."

**The rule is: the more colourful the language in the question, the less colourful the language will be in the answer.**

### **GOOD QUESTIONS ARE:**

1. **Open ended** (questions that make you think and not simply react) – cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no”. eg. What is the purpose of this organization? (**Closed ended** questions can be answered with a “yes” or “no” eg. Do you think this organization is doing good work?)
2. **Simply worded** – simple are better than complex
3. **Neutral** (keep your opinion out of it!)
4. **Active** (keep verbs active and you will encourage active answers)

Avoid starting questions with: DO you ... So ... Is it ... Would ... Are... Those words lead to closed ended questions. ("Did your firm win the bid?" No.... OR... "What happened to your bid?")

### **GOOD ALL AROUND QUESTIONS FOR EVERYDAY USE:**

• What happened (what happened next)? •What went through your mind? •What do you mean (by that)? •What do you remember most (about X) •What is the point? •What is the most important thing (for you) about ... ? •What are you telling me that's new? •What were you thinking (when X happened)? •What is your favorite story (about that)? •What changed? •How did that happen? •How can you convince (whomever) of that? •How do you rate the chances of X? •How so? •How will that affect YOU?

**Silence can be the best question.** Don't jump in when the guest hasn't finished answering or is thinking. Lean forward. Make eye contact. Often they will jump in to fill the gap. Or provide a little prod: "Oh really"... "Is that so"... "I didn't know that"

### **ON THE INTERVIEW SET**

1. Try to meet the guest in the green room or touch up lounge before the show starts. OR...
2. Make sure you have at least a few minutes with the guest before the interview starts. Make sure they know you are interested in them and that you are "user friendly".
3. Let the guest in on the process. Tell her/him what is going on. Mention if you are live or taped or live to tape. Say the length of the interview. Point out the floor director and indicate that you are taking cues from that person. Don't provide a list of your questions. Instead, answer the question "what are you going to ask me" by revealing the focus of the story (what was discussed on the phone with you or the researcher).
4. During the countdown, look down at your notes or over at your guest but not at the camera.
5. After your intro, look over to your guest. Don't sneak peeks at the camera (unless it is part of the format of your show) and advise your guest in advance to look just at you.
6. **GET TO THE POINT.** Don't mess around with background information. Start the interview by asking a question that gets right to the focus of the interview.
7. **AVOID BEING A VERBAL LISTENER.** It is annoying to hear interviewers saying "uh huh" and "wow" and "OK" and "no kidding". Learn to respond with your face and body language (smile, shrug, shake your head) and not with verbal interjections.
8. **BE IN CONTROL.** You are the captain. Steer the ship. If the guest wants to go a different direction, grab the oars and get back on course. Know the focus and stick to it. That might mean interrupting the guest mid stream to ask another question - You don't have to listen to the boring stuff. Touch the guest's hand ... say his/her name...
9. **LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN.** Yes you have a focus BUT if the guest says something amazing in the middle of an answer - prepare to steer in another, more interesting direction.
10. **ASK FOR ANECDOTES/ EXAMPLES/ EXPERIENCES.** Sometimes a guest will have told you great stories on the phone ... try to ask questions that will get them to tell you these.