

Interviewing Tips

After completing your list, you are ready to email three classmates and request an interview with each. Using the email addresses from the class roster, write to three classmates and request an interview. Exchange emails with three of your classmates with the purpose of discovering one significant and interesting characteristic that makes each person unique and special.

It is helpful to create a list of questions to ask your classmates that reveals information about that person. Decide what information you are looking for, and then construct questions that help you find the right answers. You might ask questions that reveal the person's background, family ties, likes and dislikes, hobbies, experiences, school and academic preferences, goals and aspirations. You will also be interviewed by your classmates, so have your prepared information at hand.

There are four different types of questions that elicit different information:

LEAN questions: ask for only a short answer, usually "yes" or "no" or one or two words.
Examples: Do you have any hobbies? What is your name? What are your hobbies?

MEATY questions: ask for answers that are detailed and give more information.
For example: Could you describe one of your favorite hobbies?

SIDEKICK questions: ride on the back of another question; a follow-up question.
For example: Describe one of your favorite hobbies and explain why you chose it as your hobby.

FEELING questions: ask for a person's opinion.
For example: Why did you choose the hobbies you enjoy? How do you feel when you are doing this hobby? Why do you like doing your hobby?

You might use these questions to start your interview. Then, add some questions of your own.

1. What is your name? Where do live? What is your educational or work background?
2. What are your hobbies and/or special interests? How do you spend your weekend and/or working time?
3. How did you first become interested in _____? Did someone introduce you to this interest/hobby? When did you first begin?
4. How often are you able to participate in this activity? How many hours a day/week/month?
5. Have you obtained any special training/background for this interest? What? and where?
6. What accomplishment are you most proud of?
7. What do you like most about this activity? Why?
8. What do you like the least about this activity? Why?
9. Do you share your interest in _____ with anyone else? Who?
10. Where do you see yourself in 5 years, 10 years? What are your goals regarding this interest?

As conversation gets rolling, focus on one aspect of each person's life or personality that would make a good topic for a paragraph about the person. As you conduct your interview, keep in mind that sometimes the best question stems from an answer to another question. Listen (or read) carefully your interviewee's responses and ask follow-up questions. Think about activities you do, like playing games and sports, going to movies, family activities, going to school, etc. Ask your interviewee questions about these activities and be alert to responses that tell you about the person's interests. Try to draw out specifics: How long, how many, when, etc.

When you have finished the interviews, reread the emails from your classmates and summarize what you learned in an organized manner.