



MAKING THE INTERVIEW WORK

GENERAL INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES

- Know what you want to find out.
- Decide whom to ask.
 - Primary Source: the person whose business it is to know.
- Always identify yourself before the interview.
- Don't be overly nervous—it's distracting to the interviewee.



PREPARING AND ASKING QUESTIONS

- Prepare your questions *before* the interview.
 - Sometimes requires research.
- Be straightforward.
 - Don't make a speech every time you have a question.
- Make sure your questions are “open-ended.”
- -Est questions.
 - “High-schoolish,” and can cut off conversation
- Stock questions are for short notice interviews.
- Embarrassing questions: ask but be tactful.



LISTENING TO RESPONSES

- Pay attention to how a question is answered.
- Sometimes a question not answered can be revealing.
- If you don't understand what is said, ask for clarification.
- Never threaten your source.
- Go with it.
- “Is there anything else I should know?”



CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

- Prepare: research, questions, appointment time.
- Warm up: ask necessary background questions.
- What order to ask your questions
 - Important first: guarantees they get asked.
 - Important last: gives you a chance to become comfortable with your subject.
- Be friendly and attentive!
 - Eye contact
 - Handshake
 - Listen carefully...Youth In Asia
 - Use the person's name
 - No Gum!
 - Posture
 - Acknowledge your subject when they say something
 - Express interest, you don't have to agree.



OBSERVING THE SUBJECT

- Look for quotes that convey the subject's personality
 - Help your audience “see” your subject.
- Actions are important
 - How are they sitting?
 - Do they “do” anything that reveals their level of interest or comfort with the subject.



TAKING NOTES

- Figure out your own method of shorthand.
- Use a recorder
 - Always ask your subject first
 - Don't rely on your recorder only
 - Besides, people are more willing to talk if you seem genuinely interested in what they are saying.
- Off the record
 - Agree to the terms
 - Honor your agreement!
 - Identify when you are back “on the record.”



WRITING THE INTERVIEW STORY

- Avoid general descriptions of your subject.
 - Don't say the store owner is short, say he is 5'2".
 - Don't say the secretary is lively and efficient; say that she moves about the office, juggling projects while giving an interview.
 - Don't say the teacher is intelligent, point out that he has written six books.
 - Be specific in your detail.



DETAIL EXAMPLE

- Example of detail by Gay Talese, an American journalist, writer, and researcher:
 - [He was] fifty years old, a lean and well-tailored man with gray hair, alert blue eyes, wrinkles in the right places....He had an angular face that suggested no special vitality; wavy gray-black hair combed tightly back from his high forehead, and soft, timidly inquiring eyes behind steel-rimmed glasses. His voice was not strong; it was, in fact, almost high-pitched, wavering and imploring when he spoke normally.



DETAIL EXAMPLE

- Traditionally English, thirty-five feet long and eighteen feet wide, trimmed in draperies of a white linen stripe, it is lined with a blue-black tweed rug that conceals the inky footprints of editors who have been up to the composing room. Toward the front of the room is an oval walnut conference table surrounded by eighteen Bank of England chairs....In the rear of the room, a long walk for visitors, is Daniel's big desk and his black leather chair which, according to the decorator, was selected because it produces a minimum of wrinkles in Daniel's suits.



QUOTING

- Use direct quotes, they bring the subject to life.
- Stay out of the story.
 - Don't say, "I asked..."; just give the answer
- Q&A
 - Exact questions and answers instead of story form.
 - Allows the reader to determine the important statements.



PROFESSIONAL PROFILE: MARY KIM TITLA

BY: KARA RITTER

From the San Carlos reservation in eastern Arizona, the pattern of Mary Kim Titla's life almost has made a full circle.

The Channel 12 reporter and fill-in anchor was born as a member of San Carlos Apache Tribe and began her life in a large family within a small Indian community.

Although working as a broadcast journalist for 10 years between Tucson and Phoenix, Titla thinks breaking back into that community and culture on the reservation would be a good move for her family.

"The way Native Americans are described is as people who live in two different worlds. It's as if there is a 'mainstream lifestyle' and an 'Indian lifestyle.' Even though I live in the 'city' now, I miss the freedom, the openness, the culture. I want that for my boys."

The 35-year-old mother of three has worked for KPHX-TV Channel 12 for two years, and prior to that, she hosted a public affairs program from KVOA-TV Channel 4 in Tucson. Titla also was an assistant producer for KTVK-TV Channel 3 in Phoenix.

Being one of a dozen Native American broadcasters, Titla considers herself as a role model.

"I'm the only Native American who is a public figure that people see a lot. I take that seriously. They need to hear and see their own people," she said.

During an interview on the Gila River Reservation, Titla covered a story

about some of the NFL players visiting the area. Before the camera crews loaded up, she had more children and people ask for her autograph that the players on the Dallas Cowboys and Pittsburgh Steelers.

"They see me on TV, and I think inside it makes them challenge themselves to say, 'Well, maybe I can do that too.'"

...Titla started in the Phoenix journalism market as a news station receptionist.

"It was the only opening, and I had to get my foot in the door. I looked at it as a start, and said to them, 'Well then I will be the very best receptionist I can.' But they knew I was there because I really wanted to climb the ladder."

The receptionist job was just a small beginning for Titla, who recently was featured in a Super Bowl pregame show. In a fully beaded buckskin dress, she translated the Star Spangled Banner into American Sign Language as musician Vanessa Williams sang her version.

Although she knows traditional Indian sign language from her past, Titla quickly learned how to interpret American Sign Language, which is a little more complex with its hand signals that represent numbers and letters of the alphabet.

"One of the neat parts about being involved with the production was that the Native American community here nominated me to the pre-game committee. That made me feel pretty good...."

As popular as her name is and as much as people recognize her, Titla originally just wanted to write....

"I really liked writing. That's what hooked me into journalism. I always thought about teaching English because that was my strong subject...."

"Going to college was something we all knew was the next step. It wasn't ever an option. I grew up in poverty, and it was really important to our parents to break the cycle of alcoholism. My parents wanted their children to be education-minded and be successful at whatever we choose to do."

Titla's family of seven all have their bachelor's degrees, including her parents.

"They went back to school after we were grown, and my mother now is a social worker and my father is an art teacher. I think it's great they went back. You hardly ever see a family on a reservation with a few graduating from college—let alone a family of seven including the parents.

"I didn't want to be a negative statistic. I'm glad I went and finished. I did think about leaving in the beginning, but I stuck with it, and I'm glad."

