

MANAGING MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Training for researchers

Belgrade, May 15, 2019

Content



- What makes news?
- What interview is and what it is not
- Getting ready – interview preparation factors
- Shaping a media message (and staying on it)
- Some good-to-know ground rules
- The most common interview-related worries
- Body language tips for a TV interview

Richard Davidson portrait interview

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Gok2dUtdWE

WHAT MAKES NEWS

„Man bites dog.“

DRIVING HOMES CLASSIFIEDS CAREERS OF

TORONTO SUN
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 20 2016
GET UP TO \$70 OFF on select Yokohama tires SEPTEMBER 15 TO DECEMBER 1

HOME NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE TECH MONEY TRAVEL OPINION PHOTOS

TORONTO & GTA ONTARIO CANADA WORLD WEIRD ARCHIVES

NEWS TORONTO & GTA

Intense debate over free expression at U of T

BY ANTONELLA ARTUSO, TORONTO SUN
FIRST POSTED: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2016 05:20 PM EST | UPDATED: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2016 07:21 PM EST

A raging debate over political correctness, gender identity rights and free speech led to a tense forum at the University of Toronto Saturday.

Professor Jordan Peterson, who has said he will not use "made up" gender-neutral pronouns like ze and hir instead of he and her, argued that rubbish science is being used to falsely claim that virtually all differences between males and females is essentially an invention of society.

His position has earned him two reprimand letters from his employer, the University of Toronto, and led to Saturday's debate where he went up against two professors who vehemently disagreed with him.

University of Toronto Professor Jordan Peterson debates Bill C-16 and the gender provisions in the Ontario Human Rights Code on the university campus on Nov. 19, 2016. (Dave Abul/Toronto Sun)

Professor Mary Bryson, from the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia, said scientists have no way of accurately looking at gender in the absence of sexism and misogyny.

"We can't actually reach conclusions about what we take to be gender differences," Bryson said. "A lot of what we've been hearing here is hate propaganda."

SUN+ Article
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Herald Sun
NEWS PAPER OF THE YEAR

AMERICA ATTACKED

Special Edition

LOTTO SCOT'S JACKPOT JOY
I thought win was £10k not £10m
By Jonathan Meades

Daily Record
NEWS PAPER OF THE YEAR

PURPLE REIGN IS OVER
Music world in shock after star found at Palaeley Park

POP ICON PRINCE DIES AGE 57

DO NOT WASTE PRAYERS ON ME FOR I DO NOT HAVE WISDOM AND HE HAS FUNNY PRAYERS TOO

Militias, chaos and starvation
Britain 10 years after Brexit
By Jonathan Meades

Good enough for Bridget Jones...
The return of chardonnay

The Guardian
THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2016
£1.00 for subscribers

Event horizon
Astronomers capture the first image of a black hole

May defies critics with vow to stay on and see Brexit deal through

News Focus 2-8

ROYAL BABY SOUVENIR SPECIAL

DAILY EXPRESS
THE NEWSPAPER OF THE WEEK

IT'S A BOY!

Harry 'incredibly proud' as Meghan gives birth to 7lb 3oz son

This little thing is absolutely to-die-for, says beaming new dad

SPECIAL REPORTS AND PICTURES TABLES 3 TO 8 AND 33-37

from **2014** **The Guardian**

TROPICAL CYCLONE IDAI

LANDFALL: FRIDAY 12:30 AM
NEAR BEIRA, MOZAMBIQUE
MAX WINDS: 110 MPH

MOZAMBIQUE
Quelimane
Chimololo
Beira
MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL

The Argus

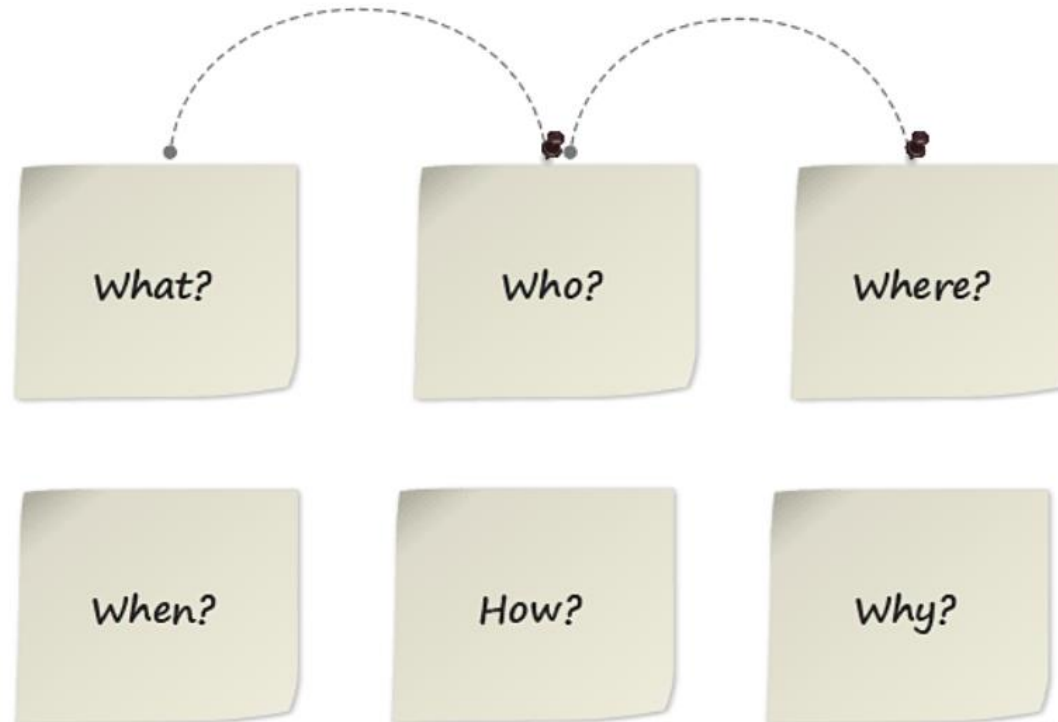
**KITTEN
CHOKES
ON MOUSE**

The Argus

Elements of the news

- Prominence
- Timeliness
- Relevance
- Proximity
- Human interest
- Impact, consequence
- Disasters
- Conflict
- Oddity, out of the ordinary
- Extremes, superlatives

The
great
5 W and
one H Qs



A media interview: what it is not



What is it, then?

...a discussion involving questions and answers for the purpose of broadcast.



...a scheduled conversation with a reporter where you have an opportunity to prepare.



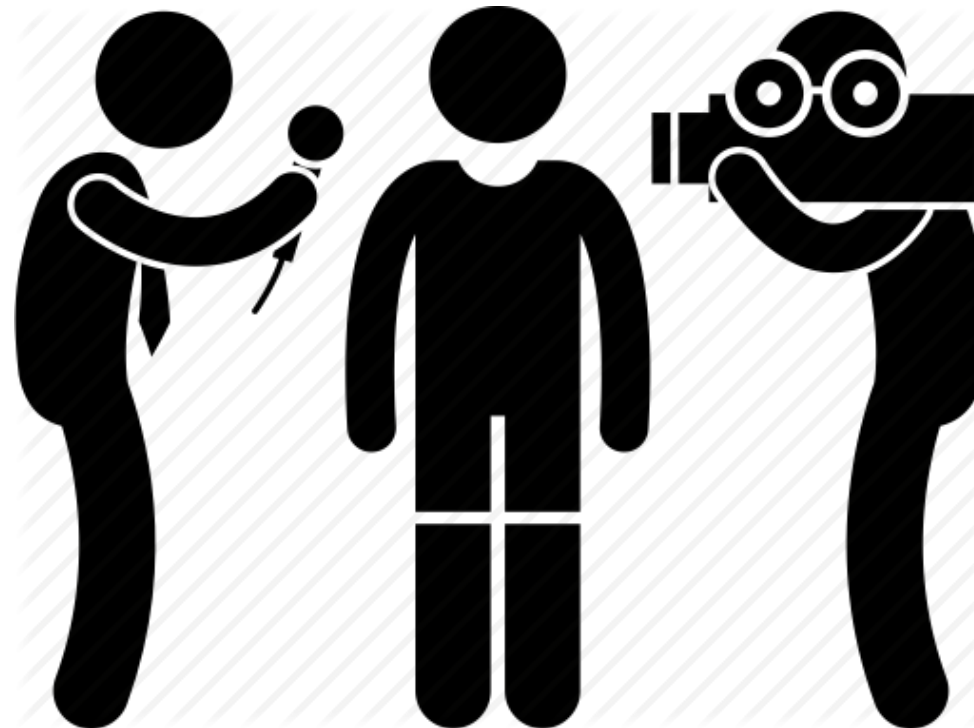
Therefore, it is...

- PRE-PLANNED
- STRUCTURED
- REGULATED
- CONTROLLED
- TIME-LIMITED/TIME-SENSITIVE



Sometimes it can also be...

A CAMERA IN YOUR FACE AS YOU LEAVE THE BUILDING



Threat or opportunity?



- Interrogation
- Feel scrutinized, insecure, exposed
- Overly self-conscious
- Worried about how you look
- Worried about what people/peers may think
- Your work attracts attention, i.e. it matters
- You know about the topic more than anyone else /most people – pioneer, leader, expert
- A way to put your message across
- (It's not about you, anyway)

GETTING READY

FOR MEDIA INTERVIEW

Intro in 5 steps

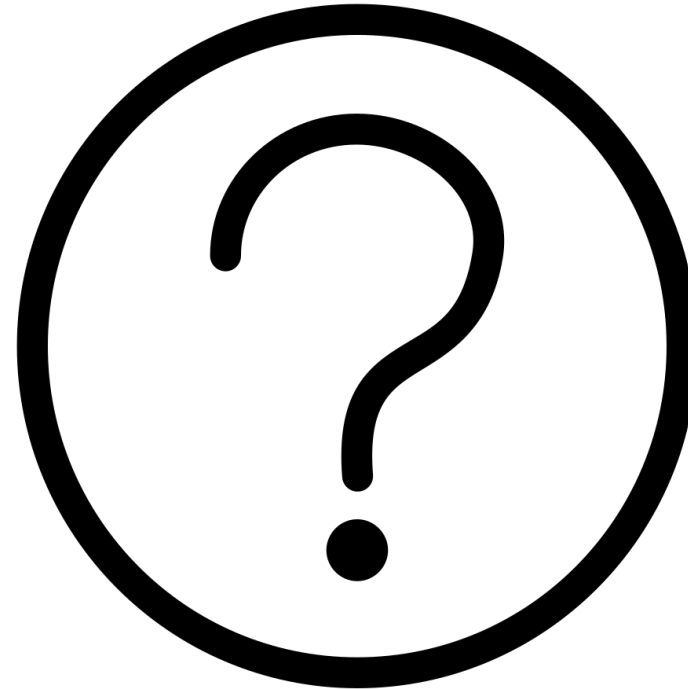


1. Who are you?
2. What do you do?
3. Who do you do it for?
4. What those people want and need?
5. How they change / what benefits there are as a result of what you do?

Interview preparation factors

TOPIC	What will be the range or scope of the interview? How can you prepare yourself so you are better able to address specific questions? Ask for the list of questions in advance, and anticipate that you will be asked questions that are not listed. Prepare for the unexpected and you won't be caught off guard.
TIME/deadline	What's the time frame or limit? A 15-minute interview may not require as much depth as one that lasts an hour or more.
FORMAT	How will you be interviewed? Will it be through audio or video, over the Internet, over the telephone, or in person?
BACKGROUND	What's the backstory on the interview? Is there a specific issue or incident? Why is the interview now and not earlier? Why is it important?

Know your reporter



Quick exercise 1



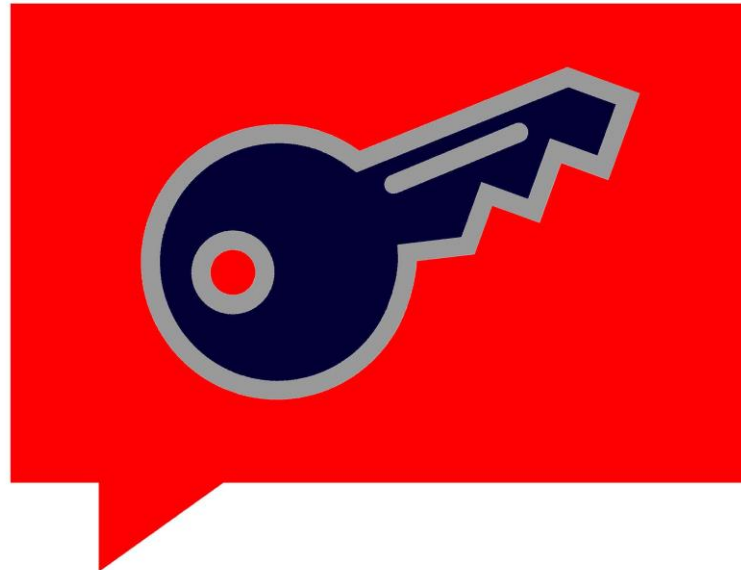
How would a media interview serve your organization and your work right now?

SHAPING A MEDIA MESSAGE

... and staying on it.

Key message(s)...

- ... are the core messages you want your audience to HEAR, REMEMBER and ACT UPON.



Key messages, cont.



- Capture **the reason** for the interview in one sentence.
- Figure out how you can tell your whole story in **three short, clear sentences** –using the WH questions.
- Can you share your whole story in **140 characters**?

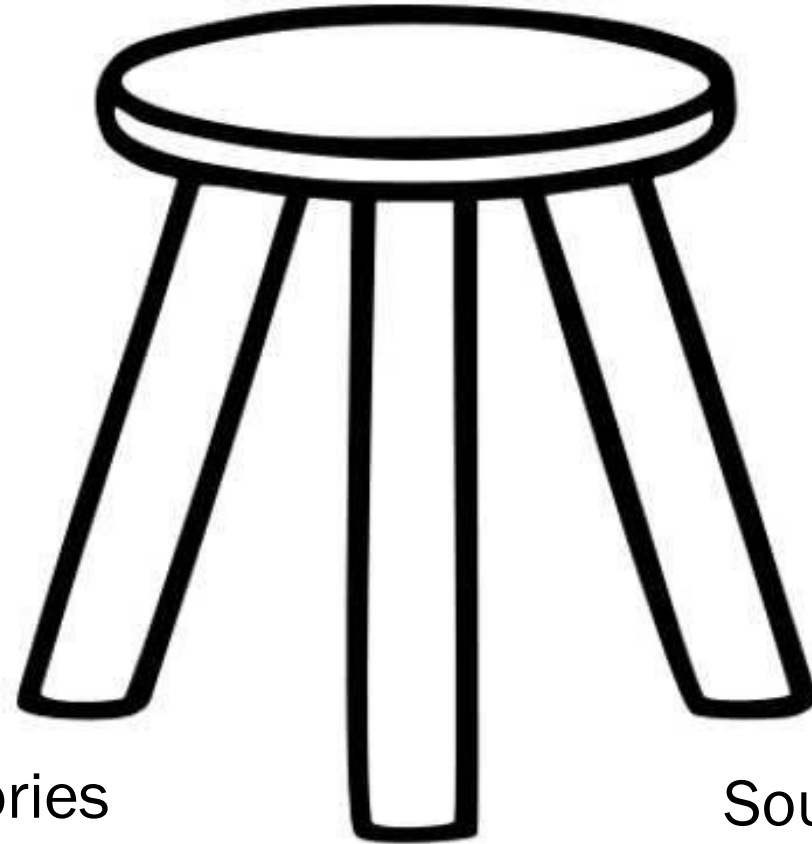
E.g.:



State funding for arts and culture educates children, attracts tourists, stimulates business and generates local and regional partnerships - all of which benefit the entire community, independent research shows.

Cancer prevention is an essential component of all cancer control plans because about 40% of all cancer deaths can be prevented.

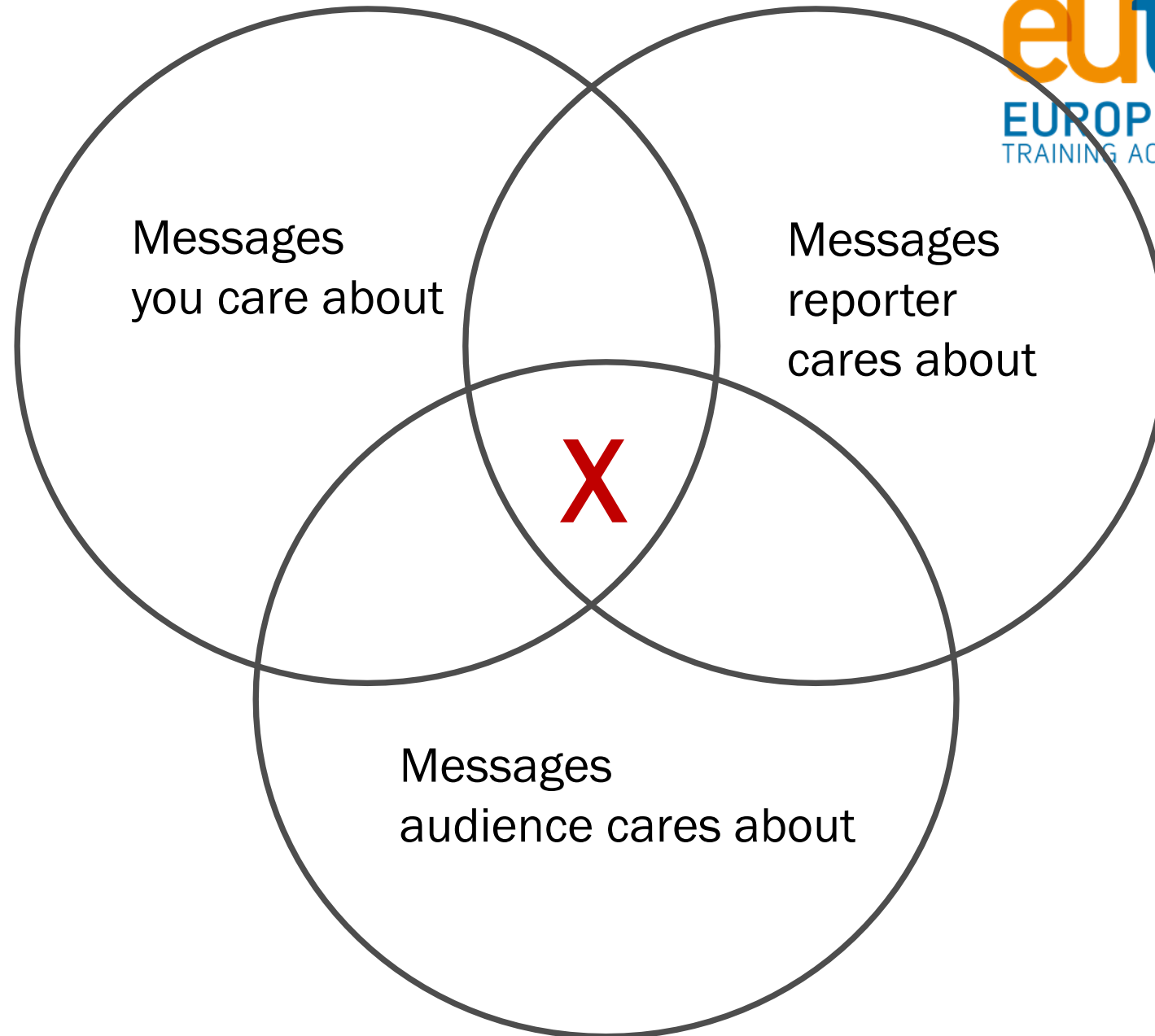
Data shows populations of fish and other marine vertebrates, including marine mammals, reptiles and birds have halved since 1970. The world's oceans are in trouble.



Stories

Sound bites

Stats



Message worksheets



Message 1: _____

Stories:

Stats:

Soundbites:

Quick exercise 3



- Thinking about your current work, what three messages would you like to put across in a media interview?

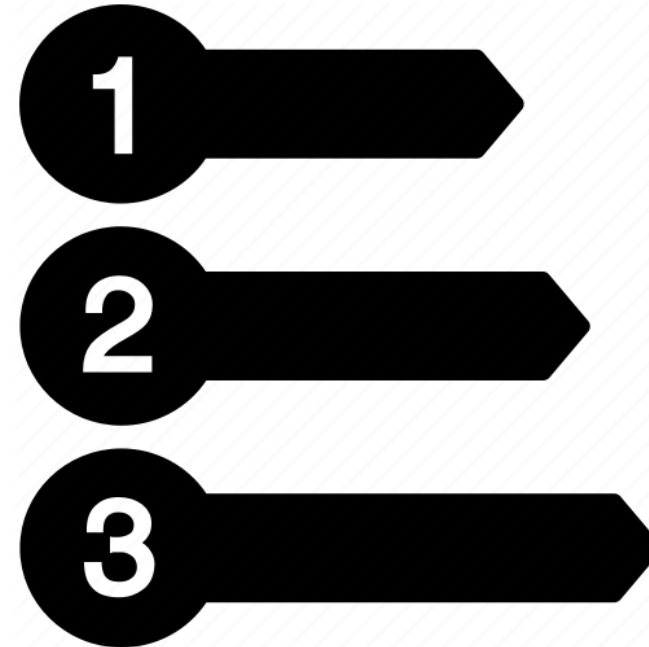
KEEPING YOUR MESSAGE FRONT AND CENTER IN THE INTERVIEW

Tip 1: Start from the end

END – BEGINNING
– MIDDLE – END

Tip 2: Prioritize your information

Beware of the tendency to tell reporters everything you know, to educate them. When you prioritize your information, you have a lot more control over what's published.



Tip 3: Provide good quotes

Marry your most important point with a compelling phrase or expression. That way you stand a good chance of the full quote getting included in the story and reaching your audience. Reporters find good quotes irresistible.



ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

The A,B,C model



- **A – Acknowledge** the question
- **B – Bridge** to your key message
- **C – Contribute** with proof points

Bridging examples

- That has been a problem in the past, **but that is why we have put in place measures to...**
- It is a valid question, **but what your readers/viewers are more interested in is..**
- I don't have the precise details on that, **but what I can say is...**
- I'm glad you've asked me this because it **brings me to a point that I've been wanting to make...**
- I don't have precise details, **but what I do know is...**
- The underlying question is...
- What I think you mean by the question is...
- Let's not lose sight of the key issue here, which is...

„Rewriting“ the (tough) question

„Aren't you embarrassed
because...?“



„How do you feel
about...?“

Interview techniques and appropriate responses

Gun firing

- Of those questions let me start by answering...

Interrupting

- Before I answer that, let me complete my thought.

Untruthful claim

- No, that's wrong. To be accurate...

Speculating, hypothesizing

- I'm not a fortune teller, but I can tell you that...

Paraphrasing (putting words in your mouth)

- No, that is not what I said. I said...

Pausing (awkward silence)

- (Just wait them out.)

Trudeau CNN interview

<https://edition.cnn.com/videos/politics/2018/11/06/poppy-harlow-trudeau-relationship-with-pres-trump.cnn>

„Our connection with the US runs deep.“



Lenovo

0,40“

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNeaivMa7pA>

TOP INTERVIEW- RELATED WORRIES

AND HOW TO ADDRESS THEM

Worry #1: They could ask me anything

- A media interview is a negotiated interaction. Focus on your key messages and answers.
- If the reporter goes off script, you don't need to feel compelled to give an answer. This is not a police interrogation.

Worry #2: I won't have the questions in advance

- Focus on creating high-quality answers that are short, concise, full of examples, points of view, stats, etc.
- Prior to the interviews, ask the reporter to give you a sense of the types of questions he/she would like you to answer for his readers/listeners/viewers. The information you get can then help steer you in a direction.

Worry #3: I had a bad experience before and it's got me doubting myself

- Think what happened, figure out the *specific reason* your interview went wrong. Then work on that to fix it for the next time.
- Practice. Practice. Practice.

Worry #4: Reporters are out there to get me

- Really?
- Think of them as a filter through which you'll pass your message to your audience.
- You are the architect of your interview. Don't take a passive role. Figure out what you want to say and prepare in advance.

Worry #5: I talk too much when I'm nervous

- Before the interview, time yourself. If any of your answers is longer than 20 seconds, start chopping.
- Deliver your message, then stop. The reporter will ask you another question. It's a good opportunity to breathe, to regroup and to think about your next answer.

Worry #6: I don't want to have „a deer in the headlights“ moment

- First, prepare. Spend some time considering the topic, writing your content and doing a practice interview.
- If you do get a question you were not expecting, ask yourself **what the real question behind the question is.**

SOME GOOD-TO-KNOW GROUND RULES

Pre-interview the Reporter



Learn more about the reporter and the focus of the story.

It's perfectly ok to ask:

- Can you tell me about the story you're working on?
- How do I fit into the piece?, What do you need from me?
- Who else are you interviewing?
- Is there any research I need to do prior to the interview?
- What's the format?
- When are you publishing / airing the story?

(Kindly) request questions in advance



- There is no guarantee these are the only questions that you will be asked. Reporters may opt to go “off script,” so it’s best to be prepared for anything.
- You could ask whether there’s any specific information or data you should gather to help prepare for the interview.

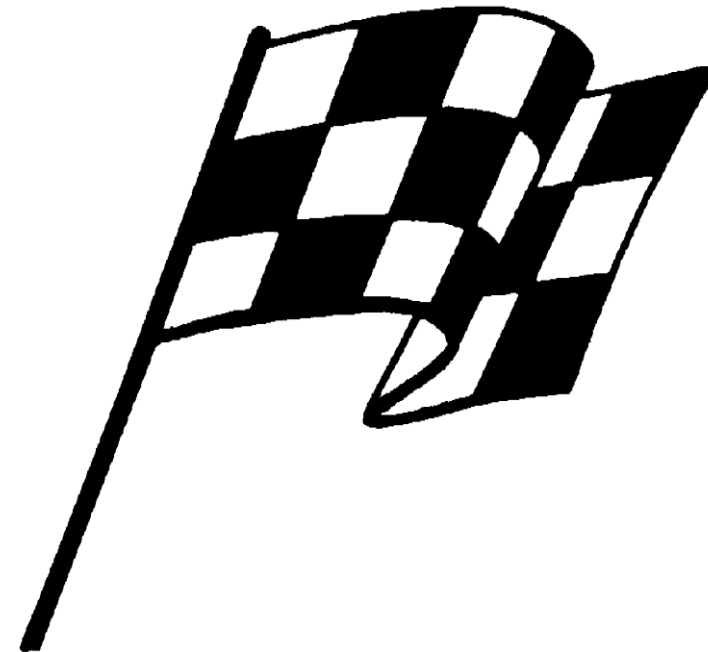
Know your audience

- Set your messages and your wording accordingly.
- Jargon can be useful within an audience of peers, but going beyond necessary technical terms can cause misunderstanding or alienation with a more lay public.



Mind the deadline

- It's best *not* to wait until the deadline to return a reporter's call.
- Take the opportunity to provide a deeper perspective on the subject or persuade the reporter to consider an alternative viewpoint or angle.



„I am not a fascist!“ – Never repeat a negative part of the question

- When answering a reporter, avoid repeating the accusation, misinformation, misquote or misconception in the question. Doing so raises the issue in an audience's mind.
- Instead, avoid it altogether, offer correct data and return the conversation to your messages.



Never say ‘No comment’

- Develop a response that explains why a “no comment” is your only option (“I can’t say more about this topic because ...”). If possible, explain how your discretion is not just for your own benefit.

**GUILTY
AS CHARGED**

Avoid off-the-record conversations

- Consider your history with the reporter.
- Ask the reporter to define what “off-the-record” means to them.
- Make an off-the-record agreement *before* speaking — not after you’ve started talking.



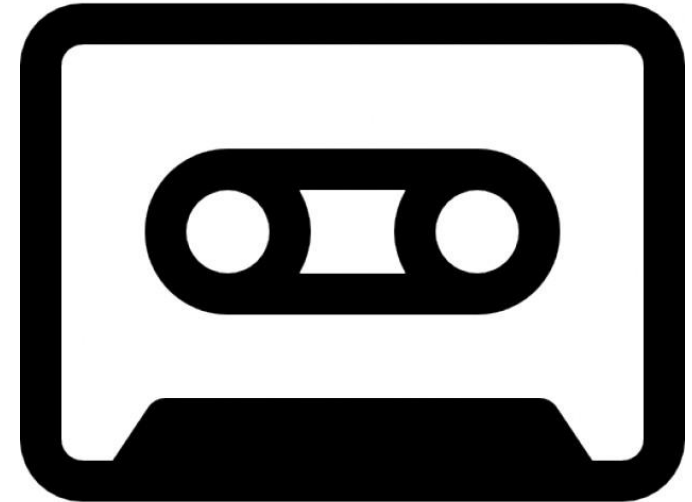
Offer to fact-check

- Review ≠ rewrite
- You are not writing this story, they are. Always respect their authorship.
- However, offer to help with technical stuff.



Tape the interview

- Even though many reporters are trying to write an accurate, engaging, and compelling story, a source can be misquoted. It's good to have your words on tape to be able to provide the exact quote.



Watch the clock

- Time yourself.
- Be concise, don't go overboard with details and information.



Do not fill the silence

- It's the journalist's problem.



Stay in your lane

- Don't feel compelled to answer every question you're asked. If a question is off the beaten path, it's perfectly okay that you do not follow. Stay in your lane.



BODY LANGUAGE

TIPS FOR TV INTERVIEW

What to be mindful of?

- Energy
- Eye contact
- Gestures (hands)
- Posture
- Voice
- What (not) to wear

Don't:

- Slouch
- Nod your head
- Play with pen
- Scratch and touch your face
- Move excessively
- Have notes in front of you
- Move at the end of interview
- Leave your mobile on
- Chew a gum

When to decline an interview?



- When the request is off-topic
- When the story direction is questionable
- When the story may have unwanted ramifications
- When the timing is wrong
- When you have a reason to believe that the reporter won't give you a fair shake
- When the outlet is questionable

Break (15 min)



When we get back:

INTERVIEW SIMULATIONS

Resources



Beware double meanings when you talk research

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mscn8QBu2Ws>

How to be convincing

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qX8UsLJprU

What to wear

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeTFCWieNVI>