

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TO THE PUPIL	5
CHAPTER ONE — THE INTERVIEW	6
Advantages of Interviews	6
Types of Interviews	6
Getting Subjects for Interviews	7
Interviewer Training	9
Writing Responses	11
Depth Interviewing	11
Courtesy—A Must for Successful Interviews	14
Example Telephone Conversation	14
CHAPTER TWO — THE INTERVIEW SHEET	16
Construction of the Interview Sheet	16
Question Construction	17
General Interview Format	19
CHAPTER THREE — THE RESEARCH REPORT	21
Schedule of Activities	21
Study Plan	22
Pre-Test	23
Pilot Study	23
Writing a Research Report	24
Introduction to the Research Report	24
Format for Interview Study	25
Evaluation	27
CHAPTER FOUR — NEWS ARTICLE	29
Writing a News Article	29

To the Pupil

Interview research can be a fun and interesting approach to learning research skills. Just select a topic of interest, locate a person with expertise in that field and prepare yourself for an adventure.

But why learn to do interview research? First and foremost, you will become familiar with interview techniques and procedures as well as learning to write a research report. In addition, you will enhance your interpersonal skills by becoming more at ease with others, developing conversational skills and becoming interested in other people. As a result of successful interview experiences, your self confidence increases and who knows – you may choose a career utilising interview expertise or, to put your skills to work now, you could be writing interviews for your school magazine. There are many opportunities for you to apply these skills. Can you think of others?

The examples in this book are for the purpose of giving you ideas for conducting interviews and writing research reports. Be creative and include anything that you think will add to your study. These guidelines are the bare essentials for your interview study but should in no way stifle your imagination. It is up to you to make learning fun!

Betsy Christianson

Note: Some of the words *emphasised* throughout the text are defined in the Glossary.

Chapter One

THE INTERVIEW

ADVANTAGES OF INTERVIEWS

1. The response rate for interviews is higher than the response rate with self-administered surveys. Respondents are less likely to turn down someone who appears on their doorstep, but may think nothing of throwing away a postal survey.
2. In a survey, respondents may leave some answers blank or write in "I don't know". In an interview, the respondent is encouraged to answer; therefore, the response rate is increased.
3. Interviewers can clarify *ambiguous* answers on the spot. Sometimes it takes several questions to get at the respondent's intended meaning.
4. The interviewer can make observations during the interview about language, fluency, dress, grooming, reactions to each question, and many other details which indicate something of interest about the respondent.
5. Additional material of interest may be uncovered during an interview that might not surface during survey research.

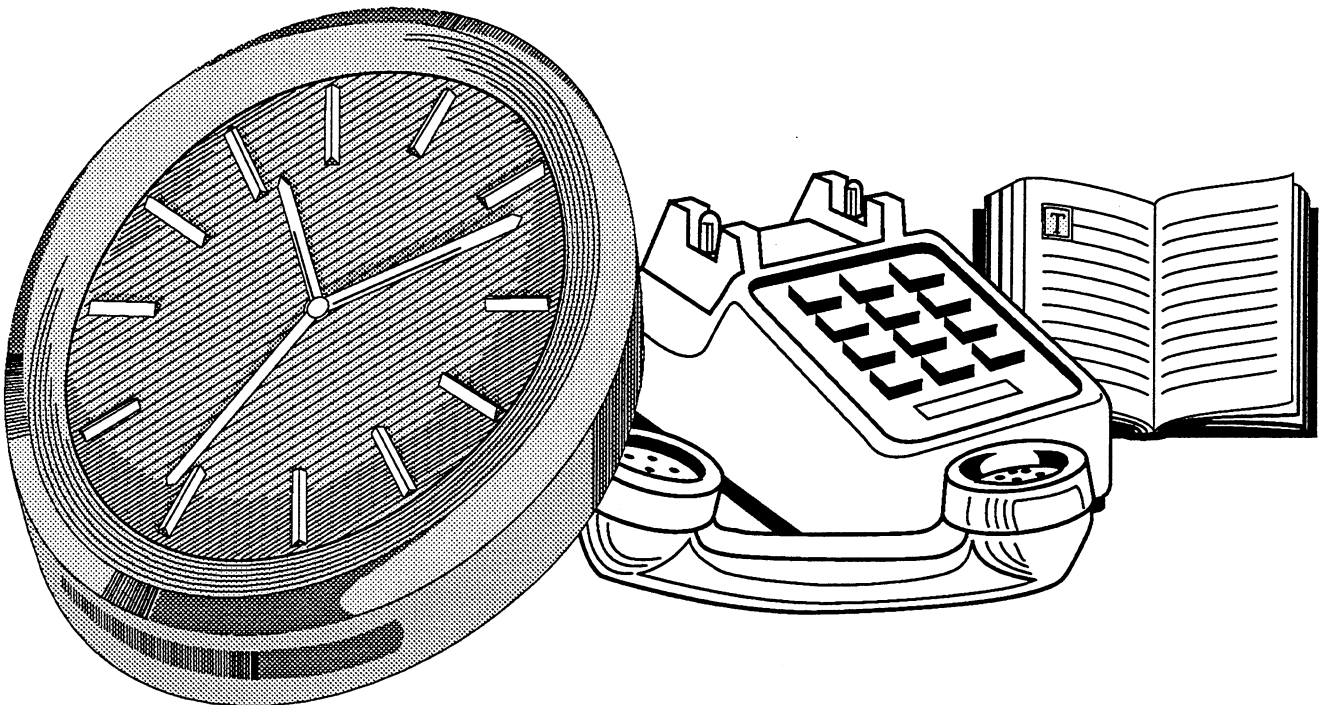
TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

1. STRUCTURED — the *interview sheet* must be read verbatim.
2. SEMI-STRUCTURED — certain questions are asked but the interview sheet is very flexible. You can try different approaches to obtain specific information. Questions can be skipped or revised.
3. UNSTRUCTURED — there is no *interview sheet*. Spontaneous questions are asked during the conversation.
4. OBSERVATION INTERVIEW — report the facts about what you observe. The instructions will tell you what to observe and what to report. Examples of this type of research are:
 - (a) Counting the cars that pass billboard locations.
 - (b) Observing a counsellor through a one-way glass. (The counsellor must be informed about the observation but he or she doesn't have to know which session will be observed.)

GETTING SUBJECTS FOR INTERVIEWS

Generally people are very flattered to be chosen for an interview. It means that someone is interested in them and their opinions. However, the researcher may want to ensure a greater response rate by doing the following:

1. Seek the *endorsement* of a respected and well-known organisation such as your school.
2. Write a letter explaining who you are and the purpose of the interview. Use school letterhead stationery when corresponding about your research and include your teacher's signature (page 8).
3. Follow up the letter with a phone call to see if the person will agree to be interviewed. Organise an appointment.
4. Be prepared with several dates and times that your mum or dad will be free to take you to the interview. **REMEMBER:** professionals are usually busy people. The time of the interview should be convenient for them. They should not have to work around your timetable; you should work around theirs.
5. Be *meticulous* in copying down the date and time of the interview. This will avoid a lot of confusion and frustration.
6. Phone the day before the interview to *confirm* the date and time of the interview.



Interview Research

12 March 1990

Pederson Art Studios
6 Terra Cotta Place
Brighton
Victoria 3186

Dear Mr. Pederson

My name is Janet Reynolds and I am a student at the Cheltenham Learning Centre. As a part of my research project on art, I have to interview an artist. I'd like to interview you if you have the time.

Also, I would like you to assess my performance and my interview questions. This should take about 40 minutes if you agree to make the assessment.

I will call you on Saturday, 19 March, to see if you would like to be interviewed.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely

Janet Reynolds
Learning Centre Student

Mrs. Christianson
Program Co-ordinator

12 March 1990

'New' Magazine
71 Radcliffe Road
South Melbourne
Victoria 3205

Dear Ms. Wasson

My name is Suzy Seymour and I am a student at the Cheltenham Learning Centre. I have chosen journalism as my topic for an independent study in my careers studies class. After I have studied journalism in depth, I would like to interview you if you have the time.

I will call you Saturday, 19 March, to see if you want to be interviewed. I am looking forward to talking to you.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Suzy Seymour
Learning Centre Student

Mrs. Christianson
Program Co-ordinator