



"I'm going to be an artist."
"Do you have any advice for other artists?"
"Don't press down too hard with your crayons."
- Humans of New York

Interview Portrait

How to Interview

You will interview a fellow student that you don't know. You will then choose a quote from that interview to pair with a photo that you will take of that person.

RESEARCH

- Look at HumansofNewYork.com. Scroll down to see the photographer's most recent work. At the bottom of the screen, go to the "about" page and read about how he got started. You should also watch the short video.

HOW TO INTERVIEW

1. Before the interview starts, create a list of questions to ask. It is important to know the difference between OPEN and CLOSED questions.

You can think of close-ended questions as multiple choice questions on a school exam and open-ended questions as short responses and essay questions on an exam.

Closed questions have the following characteristics:

- They give you *facts*.
- They are *easy* to answer.
- They are *quick* to answer.
- They keep control of the conversation with the *questioner*.

They are useful at the beginning of an interview as opening questions in a conversation. It makes it easy for the other person to answer, and doesn't force them to reveal too much about themselves.

For example, *What grade are you in? Where do you live? What's your favorite medium to work in?*

These type of questions don't get you very far, don't give you very interesting information and doesn't foster interesting conversations.

Open questions have the following characteristics:

- They ask the respondent to *think* and reflect.
- They will give you *opinions* and *feelings*.

- They hand control of the conversation to the *respondent*.

They are useful as a follow-up from closed questions, to develop a conversation and open up someone who is rather quiet. They allow you to find out more about a person, their wants, needs, problems, and so on.

Open questions begin with words such as: *what, why, how, describe*.

For example, What was the best experience you had this summer? What world problem do you want to solve and why? How did you and your best friend meet? Describe something that brings you joy.

2. During the interview, either take notes or take notes AND record it using a smart phone or other device. It is important to take notes, even if you record it, because you can jot down ideas, follow up questions as you go along, or other impressions.

During the interview it is important to LISTEN and respond to their answers. Don't just go down your list of questions. For example, if you asked, "Who is the most influential person in your life and why?" and they responded by talking about a musician because they play the same instrument. Follow that line of questioning, "Why did you start playing the ---?" The interviewee brought up that subject because they are interested, there is a story there. That is an area where you will find out more about that person. Follow their passions, let them guide the interview. Once that part of the conversation is over, then refer to your notes and move onto the next question.

3. After the interview, review your notes. Listen to the recording. Find your most interesting quote that you will focus on. Think not only about the quality of the quote, but also how you might want to compose your photograph. Remember you don't usually have to include the question you asked. Often it is more powerful if you just write down the answer.

Here are some sample questions to help you get started. Don't limit yourself to these – make up some that you are truly interested in asking.

- What is your favorite class at Inderkum and why?
- What do you feel is the most beneficial thing about high school?
- How can your top qualities help you succeed in school?
- What are some of the things that bring you the most joy?
- What interests do you and your siblings share, and which interests do you not share?
- What was the best gift you were ever given?
- Do you have a pet and what is your pet like?
- Do you like animals and why?
- When is your birthday and how do you like to celebrate?
- If we were to look at the photos on your cell phone, what would we mostly see? Why?