

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS FOR YOUR PODCAST

FINDING SOMEONE TO INTERVIEW

Try to identify individuals who can speak authentically about the topic:

- **Local leaders** (mayors, attorneys, judges, civic educators)
- **Community members** affected by the issue
- **Experts** (professors, journalists, nonprofit leaders)
- **Peers or family** with relevant experiences

CONTACTING A POTENTIAL INTERVIEWEE:

- 1) Write a short, polite email or message explaining:
 - Who you are and what project it's for
 - The topic of your podcast
 - Why you'd like to speak with them (what makes their perspective valuable)
 - How long the interview will take (10–15 minutes)
 - How it will be used (for contest only).
- 2) Schedule at a convenient time and confirm permission to record.

Example Message:

Hello [Name],

My name is [Student Name], and I'm a student at [School Name] creating a short podcast about [topic] for a Law Day Podcast Contest. I admire your work on [specific area] and would love to ask a few questions about your experiences. The interview would take about 10–15 minutes and can be done by phone, Zoom, or in person.

Thank you for considering this,
[Student Name]

DEVELOPING STRONG INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

START BROAD, THEN GO DEEP

- Begin with open-ended questions: "Can you tell me about your work in [topic]?"
- Move to specific questions: "What challenges have you seen in making this issue better?"
- Ask reflective questions: "What gives you hope about the future?"

AVOID

- Yes/No questions.
- Leading questions (that suggest the answer).
- Multiple questions at once.

SAMPLE QUESTION FRAMEWORK:

- **Introduction:** “Can you tell me a little about yourself and your role in [topic]?”
- **Background:** “How did you first become interested in this issue?”
- **Main Idea:** “What do you think people misunderstand about this topic?”
- **Challenge:** “What obstacles or barriers exist?”
- **Civic Impact:** “Why does this matter to our community or democracy?”
- **Reflection:** “What advice would you give to students who want to make a difference?”

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Find a quiet location with no background noise (turn off fans, phones, notifications).
- Evaluate your equipment — record a short test to check audio levels.
- Have your script and questions printed or on-screen.
- Get verbal consent to record.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Speak clearly and naturally.
- Don’t interrupt or talk over the guest — let them finish before speaking.
- Use nonverbal feedback (smile, nod) instead of saying “uh-huh” or “yeah.”
- If background noise occurs (door slam, cough, etc.), politely pause and repeat the question.
- Keep an ear on the sound quality — if the recording sounds muffled, ask to repeat an answer.
- Make sure to end the interview gracefully – Thank the interviewee and ask if they’d like a link to the final podcast.

Audio Tips

If using one microphone, place it midway between speakers, about 6–10 inches away. If on Zoom or phone, use headphones to avoid echo, and record using the speaker’s local device when possible.

CREATING THE BEST SOUND QUALITY

Tip	Why It Matters
Record in a quiet room with soft surfaces (carpet, curtains).	Reduces echo and reverb.
Avoid typing, fidgeting, or paper rustling while recording.	Prevents distracting background noise.
Mute notifications and silence phones.	Keeps focus on the speaker.
Use a pop filter or speak slightly off axis from the mic.	Reduces harsh “P” and “B” sounds.
Monitor your recording with headphones.	Helps detect issues early.
Speak one at a time and leave short pauses between speakers.	Makes editing smoother.
Save multiple takes or backup recordings.	Avoids losing content due to errors.

