

# INTERVIEWING

Taking pictures is only one aspect of producing a yearbook. We also need to write captions and stories, and we can't do that without talking to people to gather information.

This information must be gathered through interviews! Interviews are formal conversations. As a member of the yearbook staff, you are responsible for guiding this conversation through the questions you ask.

## THE TECHNICAL STUFF

**YOU MUST WRITE DOWN EXACTLY WHAT THE PERSON SAYS. NO EXCEPTIONS.** We cannot put quotation marks around something if it isn't exactly what that person said. Ask them to slow down or repeat themselves if necessary.

**You must identify yourself as a member of the yearbook staff and make it clear that their responses may be printed in the yearbook.** This is called being "on the record." You must do this every time you talk to someone for the yearbook.

**Prepare your questions ahead of time!** Have those questions ready before you run a slip or contact someone. Often, a person will be ready to talk right then and there, and you need to be prepared.

**Try to use open-ended questions whenever possible.** Don't ask yes or no questions. "Yes" does not make for an interesting quote. Ask questions that require the subject of the interview to give a thoughtful answer.

**Ask follow-up questions.** Almost every factual question you ask needs to be followed up by a short question designed to elicit some sort of emotion (How did it make you feel? Why was it your favorite?). The best follow-up questions typically start with "why" or "how."

**Ask your subject to spell his or her name.** This is especially important if they go by a nickname. There are about 12 ways to spell Katy/Katie/Kati/Caitie/Kaitie. We need to know which way the subject prefers.

**WRITE DOWN EXACTLY WHAT THE PERSON SAYS.** This cannot be stressed enough.

## INTERVIEWING FOR CAPTIONS

When you interview your captions, there are two primary tasks you must accomplish: getting your subject to provide basic information about the photo (who else is in it, when it was taken, what they were doing, why they were doing it, the names of any specific equipment or tasks they were doing...) and providing additional information in the form of a quotation that can be used for the second sentence.

Start with the easy stuff first: the who, what, where, when, why and how.

Then, ask an open ended question to elicit a response that can be used for the second sentence.

- What happened next?
- What surprised you about...
- What was the best part about
- What did you learn from...
- What else should I know about...
- Did this meet your expectations? Why or why not?

## INTERVIEWING FOR Q&A's

There are a number of places in the book where we use simple Q & A's. We pose a question, and one or more students answer it. If you are asked to complete a Q&A assignment, you will be told how many students you need to interview.

This task sounds simple, but it is not. Without good interviewing skills, people will give you one- or two-word answers. We can't use those in the yearbook. In order to get a meaningful, interesting, unique answer to the question, you **MUST** ask open-ended follow-up questions.

- Why do you like (or dislike) it?
- What made it /fun/embarrassing/memorable?
- How did/does it make you feel?
- Can you tell me more about that

## THE BEST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS EVER!

The best questions really aren't questions at all. They are follow-ups or statements that will keep the conversation going, or that will elicit additional information you don't even know you need!

- Why?
- Tell me more about.....
- Is there anything else I should know?
- Who else should I talk to?