INTERVIEWING LIKE A BROADCAST JOURNALIST

Time: 45-75 minutes

Workshop purpose: In this workshop, youth learn to identify active listening, and learn interview practices such as asking open-ended questions and follow-up questions. They practice using digital audio recorders and get to know other members of the group.

Materials:
- Computer and speakers
- Digital audio recorders and headphones (or ask youth to bring their own smartphones and headphones).
- White board or chart paper and markers.
- Pen and paper for students

PREP

- Gather materials
- Load these links to listen to and print related transcripts if desired:
  - Sigur Ros on NPR's Bryant Park Project: https://make.headliner.app/download/8da556ed-d7f3-420f-8b03-2140d8c8419
  - Clare Martin interviews a stranger at Seattle's Pike Place Market as part of KUOW's RadioActive Youth Media workshop: https://make.headliner.app/download/71b62ffe-9b26-4512-8b82-97eefb20a0e2
- Optional – load this RadioActive stories to listen to
  - (More stories are linked in the related Google Slides presentation)
OPENING 5 MIN

5 min INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP:

● “Today you’re going to learn to do an interview like a broadcast journalist. We’ll talk about what kinds of questions you can ask to get interesting answers, and then you’ll practice by interviewing a partner.

● “This workshop comes from RadioActive Youth Media, the teen journalism program at KUOW Public Radio in Seattle.”
  ○ “At RadioActive, teens get paid to make their own radio stories about the topics that matter to them. We’ll listen to a RadioActive story today, and you can learn more about getting involved with them at kuow.org/radioactive.”

● “Any questions before we dive in?”

WARM UP | 5 MIN

10-15 min WARM-UP: ASK ONE QUESTION

● “Interviewing is all about asking great questions and listening closely to the answers. So we’ll start by warming up our brains and bodies with a question-asking and answering activity.”

● “Take out a piece of paper and something to write with. We’re going to take one minute to write down a get-to-know-you question. This should be a question you’d be comfortable asking anyone in the room. And it should be legible enough that someone else in the room can read it.”
  ○ “What’s an example of a ‘get-to-know-you’ question?”
    ■ [Brainstorm a few questions as a group.]

● “Can I have a volunteer to help me with the next part?”
  ○ [Invite volunteer to the front of the room]
“Once you’ve got your question written down, you’ll move around the room and find a partner. Then you’ll ask your partner your question, and your partner will answer it. Then your partner will ask you their question, and you’ll answer it.

Then-- here’s the fun part-- you’ll switch questions, and go ask a new partner your new question.

- [Model this with your volunteer.]

You’ll ask a question to three people. When you’re done, return to your seat.

Questions? Ready, go!

**Short debrief:**

- What was that experience like?
- What was your favorite question to answer?
- How did it feel to ask someone a question? To answer a question?

### BUILDING INTERVIEWING SKILLS 20 MIN

#### 10 min

**INTERVIEW STARTERS AND STOPPERS**

- “We’re going to listen to two short samples of interviews from public radio shows. As you listen, write down a few ideas on what makes an Interview Starter and what makes and Interview Stopper.”
  
  - By Starter, I mean a question that gets an interesting, compelling, emotional, detailed answer.
  
  - By Stopper, I mean a question that gets awkward silence, one-word answers, or uninteresting answers.

- [Listen to Luke Burbank’s interview with Sigur Ros for 2 minutes]

- [Listen to Claire’s Pike Place interview for 1 minute]

- **Group discussion:** What did you hear that were Interview Starters? Stoppers?
  
  - Chart these answers.

- If these haven’t been brought up, suggest these:
Open-ended questions. That means something that can’t be answered just “yes” or “no.” Open-ended questions begin with **who, what, when, where, why, or how.**

Listen and ask **follow-up questions** that make your partner dig deeper or be more specific.

### INTERVIEW PRACTICE 15-25 MIN

**5 min**

**INTERVIEW PRACTICE**

- Divide into pairs or groups of three using your preferred grouping method.
- If recording the interviews, offer a brief tech lesson.
- “Now you’re going to try interviewing each other.” We’ll work in pairs (or groups of 3) and you’ll have 5-10 minutes each to interview your partner. We’ll all use the same topic: **What is a challenge you have faced, and how did you deal with it?**
  - [Brainstorm and chart possible follow-up questions]

**Instructions for interviewing each other:**

- Challenge yourself to stay on topic the whole time!
- Follow your curiosity and ask follow-up questions that get at emotion, detail, and stories.
- Let youth know how much time they’ll have for the interview (5-10 minutes each), and that you’ll let them know when to switch.
- Questions?

**10-20 min**

**INTERVIEWING**

- 5-10 minutes per person (depending on the size of your groups, age, and time available)
- Circulate around the room and give suggestions/encouragement
- Let them know when to switch roles.

### CLOSING 5 MIN
### REFLECTION:

- What questions worked well to get interesting answers?
- What was challenging?
- What would you do differently next time you did an interview?
- What other questions do you have about interviewing?
- How is the skill of interviewing useful for people who aren’t journalists?

### LISTEN TO A RADIOACTIVE STORY (OPTIONAL) 10 MIN

#### LISTENING

- Let’s listen to a story from RadioActive Youth Media. We have three stories to choose from:
  - [How politics brought my mom and me closer](https://kuow.org/radioactive/episodes/how-politics-brought-my-mom-and-me-closer)
  - [How one transgender dancer challenges the Bollywood binary](https://kuow.org/radioactive/episodes/how-one-transgender-dancer-challenges-the-bollywood-binary)
  - [A poem for my mother, a Vietnam boat refugee](https://kuow.org/radioactive/episodes/a-poem-for-my-mother-a-vietnam-boat-refugee)

[Scroll down to the bottom of each web post to find a video with closed captioning]

- This story was produced by a Seattle teenager. They did all of the interviewing, recording, writing and audio editing themselves!
- As you listen, think about:
  - What parts of the story caught your attention and made you want to keep listening?
  - When do you get bored or tune out?
  - What questions do you have about how this story was made?
  - What do you think the reporter had to consider when interviewing?
  - What challenges do you think the reporter faced when interviewing for this story?
- Listen and discuss.