

Writing Challenge 8.0: Interview

engl 281 / sec. D / autumn quarter 2009-10 / chang

According to Sarah Stuteville, writer for bravenewtraveler.com, “[G]ood journalism is dependent on a total stranger’s cooperation and participation. At the heart of this issue is the interview. The finished product may be a piece of writing that you craft, but the material a result of the interviews you conduct.” This week’s writing challenge asks you to prepare for, conduct, and write up an interview. First, you must interview someone you do not know personally. Second, you identify a reason for conducting the interview (e.g. What is your exigence? What do you want to know about? What do you want to know about them?). Third, you must generate a brief list of interview questions (e.g. the interview should be no longer than 15-20 minutes). And finally, you must write an exposition of the interview (not just a transcription of what was said). The best interviews are more than just questions and answers—they exemplify, illuminate, and capture the person you are interviewing—think about all of the interviewing that had to go into John McPhee’s profiles. This 2 to 3 page paper is deceptively simple: make sure you have a clear idea of what you’re looking to learn, of what you’re trying to show, of why you’re doing the interview, and what you want to communicate to your reader. Be specific. Be open, honest, and candid. Be simple, sincere, and straightforward. This interview may be a pared down version of a longer interview for your Major Paper research.

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: 2-3 pages, typed, no title page, double-spaced, proper heading
1 page, typed, single-spaced copy of interview questions
Due: Tuesday, November 24, at the start of class

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