

JULY Challenge 'Hot Tips'

How do I choose my interviewee?

Interviewing people can be tricky if you don't have experience! If you're feeling nervous, find a friend, peer, or classmate that is making a difference in your community. It doesn't have to be someone that has won heaps of awards, we want to showcase the impact of a range of people no matter their experience level.

How do I approach someone for an interview?

If you're approaching someone you don't know very well, it's best to send a professional email. Contact them explaining the purpose of the interview and asking if they are happy to do it. If it's practical to have an in-person conversation that can be a good option. Once your interviewee agrees, it's good practice to send them a copy of the questions you will ask them, so they can come prepared and not feel nervous on the day.

How do I prepare good questions?

Think about what you would want to know if you were reading the interview! Definitely ask them to explain what they do, and what impact they're making in their community. You can ask them about specific parts of that, their favourite parts or projects they've worked on, or the challenges they've faced and how they overcame them. You don't want to overwhelm them with questions, but make sure you have some backup questions just in case.

How do I make my interviewee feel comfortable?

Interviewing someone can be nerve-wracking, but so is getting interviewed! Make sure to be friendly and have a smile on your face. Finding something in common or something to bond over is a good way to make your interviewee feel comfortable, which can be easy if you go to the same school or club or if you have shared interests! Definitely start off asking how they've been, how their week is going, etc. to settle them into it.

How do I listen well?

Make sure you are actively listening to the person instead of getting distracted by the next question you want to ask them. You will want to be facing them, looking, listening and smiling or nodding when needed to help them feel comfortable. This is why journalists often prefer to record with audio even if it is a written article, so you can pay attention instead of writing notes.

How do I ask follow up questions?

If you are actively listening, that will make it easier to think of follow up questions. You can ask them to elaborate on specific details of what they are talking about, if there were highlights or lowlights, dates or timelines you think would be helpful to know, or anything you find particularly interesting.

How do I capture their story creatively?

There are many ways to capture someone's story creatively, often depending on the person and what their story is. You may want to read some interviews or research styles of interviewing before you start this challenge. If the interview takes a new direction you weren't expecting, that's totally fine! Let your interviewee speak from the heart to capture the most authentic version of them. It is always good to have some kind of visual element to your interview, whether you decide to record it as a video or include pictures. Pictures of your interviewee making their impact or helping their community are much more effective than a simple headshot.

It is extremely important to get your interviewee's consent! Make sure they know:

If you are video recording, audio recording, taking pictures, taking notes, etc., and that the interview is being submitted to Te Ara Tīrama's July challenge. Explain what that means, and that it will be viewed by the Te Ara Tīrama team. In general, make sure they are happy to do it, and understand the purpose of the interview!

