

RW1 - Reporting Assignment #4

News outlets frequently feature question & answer stories, which seem deceptively easy to write. But writing a good Q&A requires asking the right questions (since you have to use your own words in the article), finding an artful structure, and yet being able to go with the flow of the conversation.

Write a **500-600 word Q&A feature based on an interview** with someone *not connected to Hunter* (no students!). Examples: store owner, waiter, bus driver, street performer, homeless person.

The story should include a **headline, short introduction paragraph** (description of this person and the interview site, relevant background information), **the Q&A itself** and **at least one photo and caption** posted on your Instagram tagging [#hunterjourpgm](#), and **at least one tweet** tagging [#Hunterjourn](#). Post the Q&A on your website with at least one photo. List contact information for interviewee at end of piece.

Deadline: Post to Blackboard assignment under Q&A Assignment (submit here) by May 15 at midnight.

GUIDANCE:

The piece will be worth 100 points and graded based on the strength of your

- Introduction (0-10 points achievable)
- Story organization (0-55 points achievable)
- Questions (0-5 points achievable)
- Accuracy and proofreading (0-10 points achievable)
- Reporting and news judgment (0-10 points achievable)
- Twitter and Instagram (0, 5, or 10 points achievable)

What I'm looking for:

- Does the Q&A have a theme or idea that holds it together?
- Do the questions and answers reflect that theme?
- Is the Q&A well organized? Does it lead the reader logically through the interview?
- Have you used colorful quotes to bring your subject to life?
- Is your final question and answer a satisfying ending to the reader?
- Have you double-checked the spelling of all proper nouns?
- Have you corrected AP style errors, spelling, grammar and punctuation errors?

Some Interviewing Tips

Getting the interview

- Use charm, occasionally strong-arming.
- Let your source know you're working on a deadline.
- Don't be embarrassed about being persistent.

BEFORE the interview

- Do your homework
- Organize & prioritize questions

DURING the interview

- Start with basics
- Easy questions first, tough questions last
- Ask open-ended questions (use “how” and “what”). Avoid questions with yes/no answers.
- Listen, stay flexible and ask followups
- Stay in charge - remember, it's a “guided conversation” and you have goals.
- Make sure to get all your important questions answered. Review your notes & any outstanding question before interview ends
- Take copious notes, even if you have a recording device

AFTER the interview

- Always leave the interview asking for more, i.e. more info, sources, documents.
- Confirm it's alright to call back for more.
- Say “thanks”
- Immediately after you leave, while the interview is fresh in mind, look at your notes and consider carefully what you have (and what you don't)