**CAREER RESEARCH INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT**

**Learning Objectives:** This assignment gives you an opportunity to

* apply the communication strategies you've learned as you conduct an information-seeking interview
* learn about a career you’re interested in
* analyze yourself as an interviewer
* use memo format in reporting what you learned from the interview
* write a formal letter of thanks

**Brief Description:** Conduct a 30 minute career research interview with a professional in a field of your choice. Create an interview plan. Write an analysis of outcomes.

**Two-Step Assignment:** This assignment is submitted in two steps: (1) preparation and (2) results.

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**CAREER RESEARCH INTERVIEW\_PART 1: INTERVIEW PREPARATION**

**A. Reading Assignment:**

1. Read Chapter 6 in your text.
2. Read the first two sections of Chapter 7 ("The Information-Gathering Interview" and "The Career Research Interview").
3. Read Appendix II "Business Writing," the sections about "Memos" and "Formal Letters."

**B. Preliminary Research:** Choose a profession, job, or volunteer activity you’d like to learn about. Prepare for your interview by conducting background research.

* 1. In the library:
	-Consult your reference librarian. Most libraries have abundant career research resources.

-Page through a copy of the Occupational Outlook Handbook.

* 1. On the web:

-[www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/) provides a searchable version of the Occupational Outlook Handbook. In exchange for using this free site, you may be asked to complete a short customer satisfaction survey which will help them improve the site for future users.

-[www.careergames.com](http://careergames.com/) provides a free self-assessment tool.

-[wetfeet.com](http://wetfeet.com/) describes various careers and gives information about projected future demand for these careers

-www.jobweb.com offers links to job choice guides focused on liberal arts, science, and diversity.

3. Networking: Use your personal network to investigate potential careers (see Ch 1 Self-Assessment).

**C. Choose the "Right" Interviewee:** Use your personal network to locate a professional who is employed in your field of interest.

1. This person should be a **stranger**. An interview is a formal occasion; you won’t experience a realistic formal atmosphere with a friend or relative.
2. Choose a local interviewee so you can conduct the interview **in person**. A face-to-face interview includes a nonverbal dimension that is integral to this assignment.
3. Contact your potential interviewee right away to set up a time and place for your interview. Allow plenty of lead time. Choose a time and place that are convenient for the interviewee.
4. Before you contact your potential interviewee, plan a gracious self-introduction. Refer to Figure 7-1 (Request for Informational Interview) for ideas. Since time is short, it's fine for this assignment to contact them by phone or email, rather than writing a formal letter.
5. It's highly recommended that you re-confirm your appointment a few days ahead of time. At that point, tell them the three or four specific topics you'll be asking about.

**D. Prepare Your Interview Topics and Questions**

1. Your interview plan should include an opening, a body, and a closing (see student sample).
2. In the body of your interview, focus your investigation around two to four topics, such as
- what your interviewee likes and dislikes about their profession
- what types of training and education they would recommend to prepare for this profession
- what the prospects for future employment are in this profession
- any other advice they would like to add
3. Plan a number of primary questions for each of your topics. Use mostly open (rather than closed) and neutral (rather than leading) questions. Consult Chapter 6 and “Writing Interview Questions.”
	1. Write questions that sound conversational. If you use long, "stuffy"-sounding questions, you may feel robotic when you ask them.
	2. Plan some secondary questions (probes) to ask in case you don't get full answers to your primary questions.

**E. Materials To Submit For Part 1:**

Submit a word-processed, spell-checked plan with two headings: ‘Preliminary Research’ and ‘Interview Plan’

**E.1. Preliminary Research:**

1. **The Interviewee**: Explain who you chose to interview, why you chose them, how you contacted them, where you will interview them, and why you chose that place.
2. **Career Research**: Describe the results of your background research. What type of work are you investigating? What is the nature of the work? What types of daily activities are involved? What education does this career typically require? What is a typical pay scale? What is a typical mission statement?
3. **Cite the research references** you used to gather this information, right within this paragraph, linked to the information you gained from that reference.

**E.2. Interview Plan:**

1. **Opening**: Write out the exact words you’ll use to open the interview. In your actual interview, you won't read this word for word, but stick to the spirit of the script. Include all the elements of an interview opening (see Chapter 6).
2. **Body**: Outline your questions, using your three or four topics as headings.
* Under each topic, write several primary questions. Label them as open or closed.
* Under each primary question, write at least one secondary question. You might not have time to ask all these questions, but it's best to be prepared. Leave room to jot down a few handwritten notes --- just a few words--- under each question.
* \*Add a final topic titled "**Clearinghouse Questions**." Under this topic, ask a couple of wide-open questions such as "Is there anything else you can think of that you'd like to share?" and "Who else would you recommend that I talk to?". Sometimes, you'll get the most important information of the interview in the clearinghouse stage. You might learn about some aspect of the career that hadn't even dawned on you to ask about. These questions also signal that the interview is coming to a close, so it will seem less abrupt when you announce that you're done.
1. **Closing**: Outline the exact words you might use to close the interview. Don't READ these words at the time of the interview, but think through what you’ll say, so the closing won’t sound awkward. Remind your interviewee to complete the evaluation form.