

Ilarani

Unit III:

Interview  
Skills



## UNIT III, LESSON A

# OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

### OBJECTIVES: (students will be able to)

1. Understand the difference between questions that will produce quality answers versus boring ones by examining a variety of questions.
2. Anticipate questions that will produce boring answers by contrasting closed and open-ended questions.
3. Learn and practice ways of drawing out information through questioning by role-playing interviews.

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**STEP 1:** Hand out the "Can you Predict?" sheet. **ORGANIZE** your class into small groups (2,3, or 4) depending on size.

**STEP 2:** Go over the directions, and give them time to discuss the questions. Be sure to emphasize the need for groups to come up with **REASONS** for their decisions.

**STEP 3:** After they have had enough time to discuss the questions, **EXPLAIN** that they are going to try to come up with a list of what makes a good interview question. Have each small group **PRESENT** back to the group their finding.

**STEP 4:** **RECORD AND DISCUSS** their reasons as a group.

**STEP 5:** Ask each group to develop a list of questions for the teacher that they think would produce interesting answers. (Questions should follow the original topics listed in the mini-topics list from the "Can You Predict?" Sheet).

**STEP 6:** **DISCUSS** the quality of the questions as a class.

**STEP 7:** **DEVELOP** a list of ways to start interesting interview questions. **POST** this list in the room for future reference. **They will need to refer to this in a future lesson.** You may want to prompt them with the following sample list:

Sample ways to ask interesting interview questions:

Can you tell me about...

How have things changed since...

Why ...

How did you feel about...

How important was...

What was it like...

Can you give me an example of that?

Can you describe that in more detail?

Tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_

#### **STEP 8:**

**ROLE PLAYS:** To give the students more practice with questions, you may want to have them do the following role play scenarios. If they need more practice you could come up with some of your own, or have the students come up with scenarios. Have fun with it!

1. You are interested in what the life of a 5 year old is like. You want to get a better understanding of what 5 year olds today go through. You also want to find out what current 5 year olds are interested in. It has been 10 years since you were five and you seem to have forgotten everything about being that age.  
Develop a list of questions that might get good answers. Have a partner pretend to be the 5 year old you are going to interview.
2. You are interested in learning more about what school was like for you parent's generation. You think there must be some things that were the same, but many things are probably different.  
Develop a list of questions that might get good answers. Have a partner pretend to be the adult you are going to interview.  
Discuss which questions worked, and which ones didn't.  
Was this a more difficult role-play than the first? Why?

They will probably find that #2 was more difficult. Explore why. Help them see that in #2 they have to make up most of the material because they have not lived beyond their age. It is much harder to ask questions when you have very little information or knowledge about what you are trying to learn.

This shows why it is important to do a little research ahead of time so you know what to ask in your own interview. Before they put together questions for their interview, they will do a little research to find out as much as they can about their contact and topic. This is explored in the next lesson.

**Before you interview, you have to know the right questions to ask!**

**Pre-Interview research is necessary**

# CAN YOU PREPARE?

**Directions:** Pretend you are going to interview your teacher. Review the mini topics (this outlines the information you are trying to get). Now look at the list questions that someone developed. In your groups, answer the following questions.

Which questions will produce boring answers?

Which questions will produce interesting answers?

Be prepared to share your reasons with the group.

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## Mini – Topic List (Teacher)

- Childhood
- Family life
- Teaching life
- School experience

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## List of Questions to ask

### **Childhood**

Did you like growing up?

Where were you born?

What kinds of things did you enjoy growing up?  
Is there anything you didn't like about growing up?

### **Family**

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Are you the oldest?

Can you describe your relationship with your brothers and sisters?  
Was it easy for you to get along with your brothers and sisters? Can you tell me a story about it?

Do you get along with your parents?

Can you describe your relationship with your parents?  
What were some of the most challenging times with them?

Are you married?

How did you meet your wife? How did you feel about getting married?

### **Teaching Life**

Do you like teaching?

What is your favorite subject to teach? Why?

What made you decide to become a teacher?

## UNIT III, LESSON B

# PRE-INTERVIEW

**OBJECTIVES:** (students will be able to)

1. Complete initial research on their interview topic by utilizing a variety of resources and materials.
2. Develop a guiding question for their research.

Students need to gather some background information on the topic and/or person they are going to interview so that they are able to ask intelligent questions. The type of information, and where to go to get it will differ depending on the student project.

The goal here is that they gain enough background knowledge to know what to ask so that they can conduct a quality interview. Some students will already know enough about their subject, others will know very little. Regardless of their level of understanding of the topic, all students should do some preliminary research. It will help them refine their research and shows a level of respect to their contact by being prepared.

Here are some possible sources for background research:

- Ask others in the community who might be knowledgeable about the topic.
- Search the net for information on your topic.
- Check old newspaper articles or other primary documents in the community (tribal docs, city docs, etc.).
- Textbooks
- The Alutiq Museum and Archaeological Repository (907.486.7004)  
Check their website too:
- The Baranov Museum and Kodiak Historical Society (907.486.5920)

From this research, each student or group should come up with a guiding research question. In our basketmaking project example, a questions might be: *What role did basketmaking have in family relationships and how has it changed over time?*

**The format and extent of the research required is up to you. You know the project and the student, and are best able to assess what is reasonable here.**

There may be numerous documents and other material that will shed light on the topic, or there may be none at all. Either way, it is important to have them do some initial research. No matter how lengthy or extensive, it will help shape the project and is essential in helping the student prepare a quality interview guide. That's the next lesson.

**TO BE TURNED IN:**

1. Evidence of research
2. Guiding question for the project

## UNIT III, LESSON C

# INTERVIEW GUIDE

**OBJECTIVES:** (students will be able to)

1. Analyze individual research and utilize previously learned knowledge of open-ended questions to create an interview guide to be used as a shopping list of historical information for the interview.
2. Practice using the guide as an outline, not a questionnaire to be read from.

If you are doing one topic as an entire class, (like interviewing numerous people about their school experiences) you may want to develop one guide to be used in all interviews. Otherwise, each group or individual should develop their own guide.

**STEP 1:** Ask students to pull out their dissected list of topics and their project proposal. From these documents, they will develop an interview guide. The guide will aide them while they are conducting the interview.

**STEP 2:** **DISTRIBUTE** the sample interview guide on Basketmaking. Read over the sample as a group.

**STEP 3:** Using the format on the sample guide, students should **DEVELOP** their own sample questions for each sub-topic. They should refer back to the list of sample ways to start an open-ended question posted on the board from the previous lesson.

**If they are stuck, ask them to scan their questions to make sure they cover the basics (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How)**

**STEP 4:** **FIRST QUESTION:** Ask students to pay special attention to the first question; why they should not read this directly from the guide in the interview, they should know it in their head. It should be open ended – one that the narrator can take and run with. The goal with this question is to help the narrator relax, and to get them talking at length.

Take time crafting this first question – it is very important.

**STEP 5:** **SHARE** and critique each others' questions. The goal here is a collaborative one. They should help each other prepare questions that will get the information they want.

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

# INTERPS

- Think of the interview guide as a shopping list of the information you want to find. It is NOT a questionnaire that you will read from word for word.
- It should be more in your head than in your hands.  
Read and reread the guide until you have a solid understanding of the topics you wish to cover.
- Do not read from the interview guide!  
You should NOT check off questions or topics as your contact covers them.
- Do not let the guide keep the narrator from talking about other things he/she wishes to discuss.  
Just because it's not on the guide doesn't mean it is not important.
- Don't be too concerned about the order in which the informant covers the topics. Often, it will be different than the order you have in your guide.  
Remember the shopping list. At the grocery store, you don't pick up everything in the order on the list.
- Keep your primary attention on the subject not your interview guide.



## SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

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General Topic: **Basketmaking**

Research Question: **What role did basketmaking have in family relationships and how has it changed over time?**

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First Question: *Can you tell me about how you learned to weave?*

**How and where the contact learned to weave.**

Can you describe how you made your first basket?

What do you think about while you are weaving?

How do you feel about your work?

How are your baskets different from your mothers?

**Role of basket weaving in family relationships.**

How important was basketweaving to your relationship with your mother?

Can you give me an example of how your mother taught you to weave?

Do you remember when you first decided you wanted to learn how to weave? Can you tell me about it?

**Uses of baskets**

How do you use the baskets you make today?

How is this different from how they were used when you were young?

Why do you think this has changed?

How do you feel about this change? Is it a good thing, a bad thing?

## UNIT III, LESSON D

# BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

**OBJECTIVES:** (students will be able to)

1. Discuss the importance of background information by brainstorming and sharing a list of important components in a person's biographical history.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of important background information by developing a general list of questions for interviewers to ask in order to gather useful background information.

*What type of background information (on the people you are going to interview) is important for your readers to know?*

**STEP 1:** Ask students in groups to **DEVELOP** a list of answers to the above question.

Sample background information topics:

- Family
- Place of birth
- Early life history

**STEP 2:** **SHARE** their lists as a group. You may find it valuable to discuss the reasons for needing this information. **AGREE** on a list of pertinent information.

**STEP 3:** In groups or as an entire class, **DEVELOP** a list of questions that will produce the background information desired. This list will be used to help each interviewer gather background information.

It should be viewed as a guide, since each individual interview will require slightly different information.

## UNIT III, LESSON E

# FIELDED NOTES

**OBJECTIVES:** (students will)

1. Develop descriptive writing skills.
2. Practice observation skills.
3. Demonstrate active listening strategies.
4. Practice writing field notes.

There is a lot of significant information during an interview that the tape recorder does not pick up. Namely gestures, facial expressions, actions, smells, thoughts, feelings, and of course the physical appearance.

Students will need to record this information during the interview so they have it when they go to write their article.

The following activities are designed to help students hone their observation skills before they get to the actual interview. Pick and choose, adapt and modify the ones that you think will work best for your students. Some may need more practice than others. Most of these activities can be repeated for further practice.

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## OBSERVATION ACTIVITY

- Have someone stand in front of class (a student, you, another teacher, an aide) for 2 minutes. Then that person leaves or sits down and the students have 5 minutes to do a descriptive quickwrite of the person.
  - Put an object in the middle of the room, or show a picture up on the overhead. Give them 2 minutes to look at the image or object (without writing). Then give them 5 minutes to describe it in as much detail as possible.
  - Share and compare student descriptions
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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION ACTIVITY

- For homework on night, assign them to write a description of their room, or any room in their house. Make sure they use all five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste where appropriate)
- Have students share their descriptions with the class. Classmates can then ask questions about what they don't 'see' from the writing.

# LISTENING ACTIVITY

Ask for a pair of volunteers. One student will tell the second student a story. It is the job of the second student to be ACTIVELY LISTENING. By using the following phrases at appropriate times, the listener reminds the narrator that he/she is interested. This often helps the narrator continue.

“Uh huh.”

“Really?”

“What next?”

“Wow!”

“Just what I need to know!”

“Go on.”

Have the rest of the class evaluate the listener on his/her job.

You may want to have students add to this list with their own phrases and gestures that show active listening.

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## FIELD NOTES

(use the attached field note form, or devise your own)

Drawing a line down the middle of the page works fine too.

What the narrator is saying and doing is not the only important information for your article. Your thoughts and feelings are also important. Readers are often interested in your process. So, you will want to be paying attention to your own thoughts, feelings, and questions as they come up during the interview.

The attached field note form will help in recording and organizing this information during the interview. A section to record names of people and place names the narrator mentions has been added. This will allow you to go back at the end of the interview and verify the spelling of these names. It saves a lot of time in the long run.

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**These skills are important in your interview. Your reader was not there, so you need to be the eyes and ears for them. It is easy to miss a lot of the visual information that can really make your article stand out. That's why we're practicing now.**

# FIELD NOTES

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Narrator: \_\_\_\_\_  
Note taker: \_\_\_\_\_

## Observations

(what you see, what the narrator does, facial expressions, etc)

**Your thoughts, feelings,  
and questions about the his/her  
observations**

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PROPER NAMES MENTIONED:

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## UNIT III, LESSON F

# PLANNING IMAGES

### OBJECTIVES: (students will)

1. Begin thinking about what type of images will accompany their article
2. Develop a list of possible photos for the article.
3. Develop a list of possible artwork to create for the article.

**STEP 1:** **EXPLAIN** that images greatly enhance the message of an article. **BRAINSTORM** with students what makes a good image? (Relevant to the story, shows the interviewee doing something, etc) Create a list on the board.

**STEP 2:** Copy, distribute, and **REVIEW** the “Photo Guidelines” section from Appendix IV Photos and Drawings. Review the basic guidelines with students.

**STEP 3:** Copy, distribute, and **REVIEW** the “Bad Photo” section from Appendix IV Photos and Drawings. Review these with students.

**STEP 4:** Have each student come up with a list of photo and drawing ideas for their article. This will help them prepare for their interview as they may need to take some of the photos during the interview.

## UNIT III, LESSON G

# INITIAL VISIT

### OBJECTIVES: (students will)

1. Meet with their potential narrator
2. Explain the *Iluani* Magazine project.
3. Ask permission to interview.
4. Go over proper forms.
5. Set up a time for their interview.

It is important that you meet with the possible narrator **IN PERSON**. During this meeting you can explain what *Iluani* is and go over your topic. **DO NOT** bring a camera or recording equipment. This is a chance for you to ask permission to interview. They may say no. In that case you will need to find another person to interview.

If the contact says 'yes' the initial visit will give him/her some time to think about the topic before the interview. This will allow them to prepare, and will most likely produce a better interview.

Bring the following to your initial interview:

- Pencil and paper
- A copy of *Iluani* magazine
- Your interview guide
- Written Release form
- Possible dates and times you can suggest for the interview

### STEP 1: **EXPLAIN** what *Iluani* is.

"*Iluani*" in Alutiq means 'inside.'

The magazine is a student produced oral history magazine. We are trying to get 'inside' the life and culture of Kodiak Island by recording stories and preserving knowledge.

Show them the copy of *Iluani* that you brought with you.

### STEP 2:

**DESCRIBE** you topic and the information you would like to learn about.

You may want to share your interview guide with them

Ask if they would be willing to be interviewed about these topics.

Ask if there is anything missing from your guide, or if there are other topics related to yours they may be interested in sharing.

) **STEP 3:** If 'NO,' thank them for their time, and start thinking of someone else to interview.

If, 'YES,' bring out the Written Release Form, and read over it with them. Ask all the appropriate questions on the form.

**STEP 4:** Set up a time and a place for the interview to take place

**You may want to have students **ROLE PLAY** this in pairs or model it for the entire class. As always, the more practice the better.**

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**Iluani:**

program

K.I.B.S.D.

**Oral** history

### III. INTERVIEW LOG FORM

Interview ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Type (circle one) Audio (length): \_\_\_\_\_ Video (length): \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ School

Interviewee (narrator): \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Subjects covered: (briefly summarize in order on tape)

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## UNIT III, LESSON H

# THE PRACTICE INTERVIEW

### OBJECTIVES: (students will)

1. Conduct a practice interview to prepare for the real thing.
2. Rate each other on interview skills.

It is now time to set up a practice interview for the class. You have several options here. As long as students get some practice with the interview process, it really doesn't matter who they interview.

1. They could use their list of questions from Unit III Lesson A and interview you as the teacher.
2. You could bring in a community member willing to give an interview. Students would have to prepare a list of topics and interview guide to make it realistic.
3. A student could volunteer to be interviewed. Again, the rest of the class would have to come up with a list of acceptable topics and interview guide.

In any case, they should follow the attached interview checklist to help them remember all the steps. Remind them that interviewing is a very difficult skill. There are many things they have to be thinking about at once. It takes years of practice to become a skilled interviewer.

Interviews are unpredictable and require flexibility. They never go as planned. Being prepared and comfortable with the process will make it easier for the students to adjust, get the information they want, and have an enjoyable experience.

**STEP 1:** **CHOOSE** a group to conduct the practice interview. **ASSIGN** roles to group members:

- **Questioner**
- **Field note taker**
- **Photographer**
- **Equipment monitor**

(all students should take field notes – it just won't be their primary role)

**STEP 2:** **SPLIT** the rest of the class into 3 groups:

- **Field note takers:** they will take field notes in the audience as if they were in the interview themselves. They will then compare their notes with the student doing the interview to see how they did.

- Checklist watchers: This group will make sure that the interviewers cover everything on the “Interview Checklist” sheet.
- Scorers: This group will score the interviewers using the “Practice Interview Score Sheet” (they will not be able to score the entire interview until they have talked with the Field note takers, and the checklist folks).

**STEP 3:** **DISTRIBUTE** the Interview Checklist, and Practice Interview Score Sheet.

**STEP 4:** **CONDUCT** the practice interview.

**STEP 5:** **SCORE**

**STEP 6:** **DEBRIEF** as a group.

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**NOTES:** You may want to do this several times to give students a chance to be in different roles.

The debrief will be a good time to go over field notes. Students often write down a lot of superfluous information. Help them try to record important information. For instance, a certain expression a narrator gives in response to a question is important, but a fly landing on his head may not be of much value to the article.

Review the next lesson’s list of things to remember during the interview. It will help students with this lesson. You may even want to go over this list with the group before the practice session, and again during the debrief.

# Practice INTERVIEW Score Sheet

Score Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Rate the interviewer from 1-4 on the following:

## COMPLETED ITEMS ON CHECKLIST

- 4 = Completed all items
- 3 = Completed most items
- 2 = Completed some items
- 1 = Completed very few items

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

- 4 = Never read directly from the guide; but covered all the content
- 3 = Rarely read directly from the guide; covered most of the content.
- 2 = Read from the guide and from memory; covered most of the content.
- 1 = Read questions directly from the guide often; didn't cover all the content.

## FIELD NOTES

- 4 = Made numerous relevant observations; shared insightful personal thoughts.
- 3 = Made many relevant observations; recorded many personal thoughts.
- 2 = Made some relevant observations; recorded few personal thoughts.
- 1 = Made very few observations; few personal thoughts and questions.

## PROPER NAMES

- 4 = Wrote down all proper names; checked spelling at the end of the interview.
- 3 = Wrote down most proper names; checked spelling at the end of the interview.
- 2 = Wrote down some proper names; didn't check spelling; or interrupted narrator
- 1 = Didn't write down proper names; didn't check spelling.

## ACTIVE LISTENING

- 4 = Regularly used gestures and comments that showed interest.
- 3 = Often used gestures and comments that showed interest.
- 2 = Occasionally used a gesture or comment that showed interest.
- 1 = Rarely used a gesture or comment that showed interest.

TOTAL

# INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

\_\_\_\_ **COME PREPARED WITH THE FOLLOWING:**

- Recording equipment,
- Interview guide,
- Paper,
- Pencil,
- Field Note form,
- Camera
- Any necessary Release Forms

\_\_\_\_ **INTRODUCE YOURSELF (and others present)**

\_\_\_\_ **ASK PERMISSION** to take photos and record. (you should have already discussed this earlier in your initial visit.

\_\_\_\_ **SET THE RECORDING DEVICE** in between yourself and the narrator in a place where it will record well. (free of noises)

\_\_\_\_ **RECORD THE "ORAL RELEASE FORM":**

----- **STOP**, play it back so you know it worked. -----

\_\_\_\_ **BEGIN gathering necessary biographical information.**

\_\_\_\_ **ASK YOUR FIRST SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION** to start the interview.

## UNIT III, LESSON I

# THE INTERVIEW

### OBJECTIVES: (students will)

1. Conduct the first interview for their project.
2. Employ their observation skills to help them describe the interview.

*Now that you have your interview guide, background information, practice with the entire interview process, and initial contact with the subject, it is time for the big event.*

**STEP 1:** It will be useful to practice with and study the following list of things to remember with your students.

### TECHNICAL MATTERS:

- Check your equipment before you go to the interview to make sure it is working.
- Choose a room that is comfortable for the narrator, and free of any loud noise.
- Make sure you place the recorder and microphone in a place where you will get a good recording

### DURING THE INTERVIEW

- You job is to help the narrator feel relaxed.
- It should be more like a monologue, not a dialogue. (the narrator should be doing most of the talking. – you should be on the sidelines cheering them on)
- Let the narrator chat naturally; don't fire off questions rapidly.
- Listening well is much more important than covering your entire list of questions.
- Silence is awesome! It gives the narrator time to reflect, and you time to take notes. Don't be afraid of it!
- Interviews are unpredictable events, so be sensitive to what is happening.
- Surprising topics will come up that might seem more important than what you were looking for. **GO WITH THE SURPRISES!**
- If you are quiet, reserved, and good at listening, it will be easy for you.
- Practice active listening “Uh huh.” “Really?” “What next?”
- If you don't understand something, **ADMIT IT RIGHT AWAY!** Ask them to explain it so you have it on tape.
- If you are interviewing in a team, split up the duties:
  - one takes photos,
  - one takes notes and watched the equipment,
  - one asks questions

## ENDING THE INTERVIEW

- Interviewing can be exhausting for the narrator. Stop before either of you get tired.
- If you still need more information, agree on a time and place to interview again. Plan the topics you would like to cover next
- Ask the narrator:
  - How are you feeling about the interviews?
  - Are you enjoying it?
- Check your list of people and place names with the narrator for spelling

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## STEP 2: IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- Go home and write up a detailed description of the place, the narrator, and your thoughts and feelings about the entire event. (share the attached examples to give them ideas about what to write.)

### OPTIONS:

- Make a quick sketch of the place you are conducting your interview
- Make a list of things you saw/noticed

Your introduction will be much easier if you jot this down while it is fresh in your mind.

## STEP 3: SHARE INTERVIEW EXPERIENCES WITH THE CLASS.

Interviews are complex events. By sharing with each other, it will not only help them remember what happened, but may spark some quality discussions about what to do in certain situations. Debrief how they handled unexpected events.

You may want to prompt them on:

- Their general impression of the interview
- How they took photos
- Their field notes (what are useful field notes?)
- What went well? What didn't?