

## **ONLINE INTERVIEWING LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES- CONTENT**

### **OVERVIEW**

This series of lessons and activities sets the stage for an online interview by:

- reviewing the concept of a main idea and a supporting idea to help develop good questions, good listening, and good follow up questions.

- introducing an exploration of problems with potential solutions that will be used to generate hero ideas in later lessons.

Before generating story ideas and diving into production, it is important to first have class conversations about what the problems are in the world, and what people are doing to try to solve them. This will help them later when trying to identify a hero who is doing something, on some level, to help solve a problem.

In these exercises, students will develop an understanding of how conversations can be broken down into main and supporting ideas and how those ideas can be organized with a beginning, middle, and end to shape an understanding of the overall ideas expressed by a person.

To do this, students will be introduced to the concept of problems in the world, and will develop their thinking about one problem of their choice. This thinking will be developed through a writing assignment, then shared through a recorded conversation with a peer. The recording will be analyzed for quotes that will be used to shape a beginning, middle, and end that adequately shares the individual's thinking about the problem.

This series of activities creates a foundation for students to understand how to look at a topic, break it down into questions, and use a transcript to shape a piece based on the interview statements.

### **ACTIVITY 1:**

#### **OVERVIEW:**

The purpose of this exercise is to access prior knowledge of problems in the world, and to have students explore and organize their thoughts around one question by identifying main ideas and supporting ideas.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

##### **1) Warm up quick write:**

What's the difference between a main idea and a supporting idea? Give an example. Solicit volunteers to read what they've written.

**INSTRUCTION:** A main idea has one topic. To find that topic ask yourself "who or what is this sentence about?"

A supporting idea can be a detail, a description, or an example that relates to the main idea.

## **2) Present the essential questions**

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: WHAT ONGOING PROBLEMS ARE THERE IN THE WORLD?**

- 1) what are problems people may have in their home
- 2) what are problems people may have in our city
- 3) what are problems people may have in our state
- 4) what are problems people may have in our nation
- 5) what are problems people may have in the world

**3) Pairs are assigned one of the essential questions to research** (there will be duplication depending on the number of pairs), organizing their thoughts into main and supporting ideas to present to the group.

Give them around 30 minutes to research their answers to the following questions:

1. *What is your essential question?*
2. *List the problems you think of or find in your research*
3. *Choose one problem and write it as a main idea, then write a supporting idea about it, either a detail, a description, or an example.*

*For example, if your essential question was "What are the problems people may have in our state," one problem might be "There's not enough money to pay for everything people want the government to pay for." (main idea)  
"Schools don't get enough money for everything they need."(supporting statement—an example)*

Pairs share their answers into a group document for the whole group, which is read and discussed.

**4) Individuals will identify a problem they care about and explain why by answer five specific questions.** These questions will be used for the first interview activity, learning to listen and phrase a question based on something the person says.

### **Individual writing activity: What problem do I care about and why?**

- 1) -Identify an ongoing problem that you care about? It can be something that was discussed, or a new idea.
- 2) -Explain why you think it's important to you and to others. You may research your ideas, though it's not necessary, but make sure to cite your source.
- 3) -If you had a magic wand, how would you fix the problem?
- 4) -Without a magic wand, how do you think people *could* fix the problem?
- 5) -What keeps people from being able to solve the problem?

## ACTIVITY 2: The Art of Listening and Coming Up With Questions Based on What is Said by the Person You're Interviewing

### OVERVIEW

The purpose of this exercise is to learn to listen to what a person is saying, and to create a new question based on their answer. This is a foundation skill for interviewing.

### PROCEDURE:

- Working in pairs, students will do a mini-interview of each other asking the same questions they wrote about in the previous activity.
- Each student will take a turn as the interviewer and as the person being interviewed.
- The Interviewer records the interview for analysis and evaluation.
- Emphasize to students to follow these directions exactly!

### DIRECTIONS:

When you are the interviewer, you will ask a question, listen to the response, then ask a second question based on what the person said.

Here's an example of how it might go:

Interviewer: What ongoing problem do you care about and why do you care about it?

Person being interviewed: I care about homelessness because I see all these people on the street and I feel sorry for them.

Interviewer: Why do you feel sorry for them?

Person being interviewed explains.

The second question by the interviewer *must* come from the other person's answer.

The Interviewer asks all five questions, and five follow up questions, and the person being interviewed answers.

The Interviewer is responsible for recording the interview and will use it for the next Activity.

The Interviewer then takes the recording and fills in the following chart. This is called a *transcript* and is a foundation step for editing.

Interviewer questions	What the person answered	Interviewer: Follow up question based on what the person said	2 <sup>nd</sup> Answer
What ongoing problem do you care about and why do you care about it?			

Why is this problem important to you?			
-If you had a magic wand, how would you fix the problem?			
-Without a magic wand, how do you think people <i>could</i> fix the problem?			
What keeps people from being able to solve the problem?			

**ACTIVITY 3 LEARNING FROM EXAMPLES:** Reverse engineering an interview to determine what questions might have been asked to get the answers.

Have you ever watched a really good interview and wondered how the interviewer got their subject to open up? It's an Art that takes practice to perfect, but you can learn a lot by watching and thinking backwards in time.

- 1) Have students watch a MY HERO video with a good interview all the way through. **IDENTIFY ONE**
- 2) Watch the video a second time, stopping to ask students: What types of questions did the interviewer ask to get the responses from the interview subjects in the videos? Let each student take a minute to write down their answer, then discuss and continue through the video.

#### **ACTIVITY 4: CONDUCTING YOUR FIRST INTERVIEW**

- 1) Tell students that they are going to be interviewing each other (in pairs). The goal is to explore in detail one topic—any topic-- that is important to the other person.
- 2) As a class, brainstorm sample topics and questions you might ask each other that would be interesting.
- 3) Pre-production:

- a. Each student lists topics they would feel comfortable talking about that they relate to in some way. It can be from the brainstorm list or may be their own idea. They choose their favorite topic and give it to their partner.
  - b. The partner writes questions about the topic, grouping together main ideas with their supporting questions that would give details, descriptions, and examples.
  - c. Avoid asking yes/no questions. Also avoid leading questions that show what kind of answer you're looking for.
  - d. Taking turns, the students interview each other about the chosen topic, using the questions they wrote as a *guide*. Emphasize the importance of listening to what is said and following up with a question that is related to what the person said. When an idea has been fully explored, the interviewer can look at their list of questions and continue the conversation.
  - e. The Interviewer records the interview, types up a transcript of a portion of it (the best two minutes?).
  - f. In a separate document, the Interviewer cuts and pastes the best sound bites from the two minute transcript, placing them in order that tells the best story about the person's topic.
  - g. This preliminary paper edit is shared with the person interviewed first, where changes can be made if necessary, then shared with the class.
-