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Informational Interview Assignment Prompt

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The Informational Interview

2-3 pages (500-750 words)

MLA or APA Citations (if needed)

Final Due: Thurs. 5/19

Interviews are used in all genres to share knowledge, experiences, and wisdom. **Informational interviews** specifically are used by scholars to gain advice from those already established in their field of interest. For this asynchronous project, you will reach out to a writer whose work you admire, do research about their work and life, and ask them specific questions about their writing life. You want to find out their *career trajectory*, their *writing philosophies*, and *writing-advice* they might have for you. This interview may be conducted over email, Zoom, phone, or in-person (if their schedule allows).

What you will do:

1. **Find** the contact information of any 2-3 professionals in your field you would like to interview.
2. **Craft** a polite and formal email requesting for a *casual* interview.
3. **Write** out at least 4 questions you would like to ask them about their writing career, writing philosophies, or advice (Bonus if you ask specific questions about choices they've made in their work or projects). Let them choose the format of the interview.
4. **Record** the interview by taking notes, recording on zoom, or taking screenshots of the email.
5. **Write** a 2-3 page reflection of the experience.

Essentially, you will have a conversation about your field of interest and write a bit about that conversation. We will talk about how to ask the specific questions that might not have already been answered and how to listen for follow-up questions.

Strategies:

Good Questions are clear and specific, and might keep your interviewee talking for longer.

Good questions are *clear* (i.e. unclear: “Why did you conduct this study?” vs. clear: “What characteristics attracted you to first conduct this study?”), and *focused* (i.e. unfocused: “What is the future for psychology majors?” vs. focused “What do you think the future in the job market looks like for those with bachelor degrees in psychology?”).

Beginning the Interview the right way will be important for setting a tone for the rest of the interview. If your interview is not asynchronous, make sure to *be on time*. *Thank your* respondent for taking time out of their schedule to talk with you. State the *subject and purpose* of the interview. If you wish to record the interview, ask permission.

While you **conduct the interview** you should take *notes* on important concepts and facts, but remember they should be brief and take secondary precedence to the needs of the interview. Start with your *prepared questions*—you might be nervous at the start, and it helps to know exactly what you’ll ask. You should also listen for *follow-up questions*, because the interview might go in a direction you did not intend and that’s okay, because your other prepared questions will help put the interview back on track.

Conclude the interview by thanking the respondent and requesting permission to quote them in your reflection.

After the interview you should write down the important information while the material is still fresh in your mind. You should also write them a *brief thank you note* within a day or so of the interview.