

# Climate Stories Project interview tips:

## 1. **Research your interviewee**

- You should have at least a rough understanding of the interviewee's background:
  - Where do they live/work?
  - What kind of community do they live in?
  - What is their work?
  - What experience might they have with climate change?

## 2. **Get permission to interview and record**

- Make sure you explain how the interviews will be edited and shared, and have interviewee sign release form as needed.

## 3. **Make list of questions**

- Brainstorm questions first.
- Tailor your questions to your interviewee.
- Choose 5-7 questions will lead to interesting and detailed answers.
- Turn yes/no questions into open-ended questions.
- Have some "warm up" questions to make the interviewee comfortable, such as "tell me about your favorite place in your local environment."
- Consider the order of questions - do the questions follow each other logically and naturally?

## 4. **Practice!**

- Interviewing is a skill that gets better with practice. Practice interviewing with friends, family, and classmates first.
- Modify your list of questions and interviewing techniques as needed as you practice.

## 5. **Test recording technology**

- Check charge/battery levels in your device.
- Check memory space/memory cards.
- Make sure you know how to setup and use your device smoothly.

## 6. **Find a good location for the interview**

- A quiet room is best, but sometimes not possible - you can often find a relatively quiet corner of a less-than-ideal space.
- Try to anticipate and minimize potential distractions - people entering the room, or incoming phone calls, for example.
- Find a good location for your recording device - closer to the speaker is generally better. You may have to hand a cell phone back and forth if that is your recording device.

- Do a test at the beginning of interview to make sure recording levels are set properly and sound is clear.
- 7. Get all contact info and biographical info before the interview**
    - Keep all info organized so you can easily reference it later.
  - 8. Have a conversation rather than an “interview”**
    - Put your interviewee at ease - aim for an informal rather than a “professional” interview.
    - Consider your list of questions as a guide rather than a set of rules to follow.
    - Listen to what your interviewee is saying and expressing, rather than just planning your next question as they talk.
    - The interview may go in a direction you didn’t anticipate, so be flexible enough to let the interview flow (However, you may need to steer the interview back to climate change if it gets too far off topic).
    - Ask follow-up questions if something the speaker said could be developed more.
  - 9. Ask for specific anecdotes, details, and sensory descriptions**
    - Make the interviewees’ experience central to the interview. Specific details of the interviewees’ experiences, observations, and feelings about climate change will be more interesting than a general discussion of climate change as a scientific or political issue.
    - Don’t be afraid to have your interviewee repeat an answer in greater detail or give a specific example from their own experience.
  - 10. Don’t cut the interview short**
    - Ask your interviewee if they have anything else to add after you’ve finished your questions.
    - It may happen that your interviewee will save their most interesting story until after the interview is officially over. Keep recording until you are packing up. If necessary, check with your interviewee it’s OK to use this “unofficial” material.
  - 11. Thank your interviewee and let them know how to stay involved in the project**
    - Leave your contact info.
    - Keep interviewees informed about the progress of the project and how their interview is being shared.