

ZeroProof Lesson Plan | Health Education

TALK TO YOUR FUTURE / THE FUTURE TALKS BACK

Time: 2-3 non-consecutive classroom days; 2 weeks total (for interview and assignment completion)

Day 1: 30 minutes – Introduce assignment & start brainstorm activity

Day 2: 30-45 minutes – Discuss effective interview strategies, professional decorum and have students revise their interview questions based on the discussion

Day 3: (Optional) 30-45 minutes – This additional day could be used to begin drafting letters after their interviews have been completed, for group work where they work on drafts of their letters in small groups, or as a whole class where each student presents an excerpt of their letter

Objectives:

This assignment helps students articulate goals and identify positive role models in their communities or desired communities with whom they might establish healthy communication and relationships. Students will articulate goals and action items to help them achieve or further those goals.

Materials Needed:

Tips on effective interviewing skills and asking good, open-ended and specific interview questions. Tips on professional decorum.

Special Notes or Instructions:

Feel free to modify the letter writing assignment and brainstorm questions to suit the needs of your specific classroom or overall discussions in a given semester.

Procedure:

Day 1:

Introduce the assignment and have students complete the Talk To Your Future brainstorm worksheet.

The next class period, teachers should collect students' ideas for who they would like to interview and their 5-10 questions. These can be screened ahead of time for any potential conflicts or challenges as well as for an opportunity for teachers to provide feedback for stronger questions or ideas for more appropriate interview subjects.

Day 2 (1 or 2 class periods later):

Discuss effective interview techniques and appropriate levels of conduct for contacting potential subjects for interviews. Discuss the different challenges between email, phone and in-person interviews and the benefits of each. This is a chance to also talk about decorum and professionalism, how to make good choices about how we present ourselves to professionals in our potential future professions and organizations.

Hand back their interview questions with your comments for revisions or suggested modifications. Offer students time to revise their interview questions and talk to you about any questions they might have.

Students should be given about a week to contact their subjects and to conduct and finish their interviews, including any follow up interviews or correspondence.

Day 3 (about a week or so later):

Once students have completed their interviews, have them write a one-page, single-spaced letter from their future self to their present day self, explaining in detail how to accomplish or further their goal. They should use

their interview answers throughout the letter to support their examples and advice. The letters should be detailed accounts of how to get from where they are today to where they want to be. They may also include additional research that didn't come from their interviews (i.e. basic internet research about what kind of education is required for a particular field, any relevant internship programs they might apply for, organizations they could volunteer for and what their minimum requirements are, etc.).

Homework:

Week 1:

1. Complete brainstorm worksheet and come to next class with names and contact info of two potential subjects; Bring 5-10 interview questions for both subjects
2. Revise and finalize questions if necessary
3. Contact your interview subject and schedule interview

Week 2:

1. Conduct interview
2. A one page, typed, single-spaced letter from your future self to your current self

Resources:

Interview tips:

mediahelpingmedia.org/training-resources/journalism-basics/475-20-interviewing-tips-for-journalists
or see Tips for Journalists handout

Grade 7-8 NM Benchmarks & Performance Standards Met:

Content Standard 2 Benchmark 1 Performance Standard 3
Content Standard 2 Benchmark 2 Performance Standards 1, 2
Content Standard 3 Benchmark 1 Performance Standards 1, 2
Content Standard 3 Benchmark 4 Performance Standard 2
Content Standard 5 Benchmark 5 Performance Standards 1, 2
Content Standard 6 Benchmark 3 Performance Standard 3
Content Standard 6 Benchmark 4 Performance Standards 1, 2
Content Standard 6 Benchmark 5 Performance Standard 1

Grade 9-12 NM Benchmarks & Performance Standards Met:

Content Standard 3 Benchmark 1 Performance Standard 1
Content Standard 3 Benchmark 4 Performance Standard 2
Content Standard 5 Benchmark 1 Performance Standards 1, 2
Content Standard 6 Benchmark 3 Performance Standards 1, 3
Content Standard 6 Benchmark 4 Performance Standards 1, 2



TIPS FOR JOURNALISTS HANDOUT

20 interviewing tips for journalists

By Jaldeep Katwala, 24 November 2015 for Media Helping Media

Preparing and executing an interview

Brevity, authority and focus

A journalist needs to be well prepared when planning an interview. However, after all your research, try to keep the interview to three questions, because if you haven't worked out in three what you want to find out from the person you are talking to you, you probably never will. And try to avoid looking at your notes, but, instead, pay attention to what the person you are interviewing is saying, otherwise you might miss the news story. Here are a few tips for planning and executing an interview.

Interview tips for journalists

- 1: Never give an interviewee questions in advance. It's fine to give a general idea about the interview themes, but being too specific may limit what you can ask in the interview. It also risks being overtaken by events and allows the interviewee to rehearse answers.
- 2: Be on time. There's nothing worse than keeping someone.
- 3: Always check that your equipment is working and that you have enough batteries, tapes, discs etc before you leave the office.
- 4: Treat the interviewee with respect. A warm but not over-enthusiastic greeting is a good start. The interviewee deserves respect whether they are a president or a man or woman in the street.
- 5: Take control of the location. It's your interview. You need to choose a place that isn't too noisy and where there are not too many distractions.
- 6: You are not the center of attention. You are there to get the perspective of the interviewee, not give your own.
- 7: Do the research you need to, but don't try to cram it all into your questions. Put yourself in the shoes of a member of your audience before you start the interview. If they were here, what would they ask?
- 8: Ask the most important question first. The more pressed the interviewee is, the less time they will have and the more likely that they will cut the interview short.
- 9: The interview is a conversation. It is not a confrontation. You are not there to make the interviewee look stupid.
- 10: Try to avoid looking at notes. If you look at your notes, the interviewee may be distracted. And it's difficult for you to read and listen at the same time.

- 11: Maintain eye contact at all times. Keep your body language in check. If you nod your head, your subject may take this to mean that you agree with them and so there is no need to explain further. You may miss the chance to discover more. If you shake your head, or recoil with a shocked facial expression, you risk making your subject clam up. You will have shown them that you find their views offensive and so they are likely to stop short of saying even more in the same vein.
- 12: Try to ask a maximum of three or four questions. An interview is not a fishing expedition. If you can't get to the essence of what you want the interviewee to say in three or four questions, change the questions.
- 13: There are only six basic questions. Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?
- 14: Shorter questions are better than longer ones. Never ask more than one question at a time, combining questions makes it easy for the interviewee to avoid answering one altogether but without seeming to. Be as direct as you can without being rude.
- 15: Be sure of your facts. There's nothing worse than being told you are wrong by an interviewee – especially when it's live.
- 16: Listen. The interviewee might want to use your interview to say something important that you were not expecting.
- 17: If the interviewee's not happy with the way they answered a particular question, don't give in to appeals for them to do it again – unless there is a factual error in the answer or there is a risk of serious confusion.
- 18: At the end of the interview, no matter how difficult the interviewee has been, always say thank you.
- 19: Always check the interview has been recorded before the interviewee leaves. It's much harder to re-do the interview if there's been a technical fault.
- 20: When you're editing, don't take answers out of context. That's dishonest.

TALK TO YOUR FUTURE BRAINSTORM WORKSHEET

Take some time to answer some questions about the next 5 years of your life.

Which clubs, organizations or extracurricular activities would you like to belong to throughout high school?

Which activities or hobbies would you like to try that you haven't tried yet?

What are some electives or courses that aren't required that you might like to take in high school?

What are some local organizations or companies that you might like to work or volunteer for?

If you could have any career in the world what would it be? What kind of training or preparation do you think you might need in order to get that dream job? What is the very next step to take for someone who would want to have that job in the future? (Or, if you don't know, who is someone who could help you answer those last two questions?)

If you could go to any college, which one would it be? Do you know what their GPA and admissions requirements are? Do you know anyone who goes there or who might know?

Where would you like to travel? Which languages do you want to learn?

Now, name two people at least two years older than you who you think "have it going on" and figured out.

Here are some sample questions to get you started: who has a job you want or a passion you share? Think of the different circles and clubs or extracurricular activities you belong to and the types of groups you hope to belong to in the future – who is someone who belongs to these groups? Who is someone in your life that you admire and why? Who has your dream job? If you have a specific name of someone, great. If not, go ahead and be as specific as you can (i.e. a dentist, a social worker who works with homeless youth, a travel writer, someone who works at the Santa Fe Opera, etc.).

Write down two people who might have the best information for how to get to where you want to be in high school. (For instance, if you want to be a starting player on the soccer team, then write down the name of the coach or else a current starting player you could get in touch with. Or, maybe you want to be a veterinarian when you grow up – can you find the names of local vets or get in touch with a high school student who works at a vet to ask him or her how they got the job?)

1. Name:

What is it that you admire about this person?

How could you get in touch with this person?

How might this person be able to help you accomplish or further your goal?

What are some questions you would like to ask this person?

2. Name:

What is it that you admire about this person?

How could you get in touch with this person?

How might this person be able to help you accomplish or further your goal?

What are some questions you would like to ask this person?

TALK TO YOUR FUTURE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The best interviews come not just from the most interesting subjects, but from a combination of great subjects who are asked great questions. Your job in this next assignment will be to do both: find an “expert” subject and ask that person the best possible questions to get the information you need in order to attain one of your goals in high school.

In addition to the questions you came up with in your brainstorm worksheet, choose 5 more questions from the list below. Feel free to tweak these questions to fit your specific subject or situation. Remember, it’s always best to have a few extra questions as back up in case your subject doesn’t open up right away.

Please see Tips for Journalists Handout or visit mediahelpingmedia.org/training-resources/journalism-basics/475-20-interviewing-tips-for-journalists for interviewing tips.

Don’t forget to thank your interview subject when you are finished!

Potential Interview Questions

What type of education or experience or training is necessary to attain the position you have? Are there additional qualifications or certifications someone needs who wants to do what you do?

What advice would you give someone who wanted to follow in your footsteps? What advice would you have given yourself at the beginning of high school?

What can someone like me do now, as a high school student, in order to get a head start on getting to where I want to be in the future? (i.e. Any internship programs or volunteer opportunities? People or organizations to become familiar with? Good books to read for more information?)

Is there anything you know now that you wish you had known in high school?

What are the best decisions you made to get to where you are today?

How did you stay motivated to continue achieving your goals when you encountered roadblocks or setbacks?

What do you do today to stay positive and healthy?

The Future Talks Back Letter Assignment

Once your interview is complete, use The Future Talks Back Letter Template to write a one-page letter from your future self to your current self. This future self will be someone who has achieved the goal of the person you interviewed, and this future self has all of the experience necessary to give your current self the best possible plan of action for getting to where you want to be. Be sure to include quotes from your interview in your letter and to be as specific as possible in detailing the steps to get from where you are today to where you want to be. You may also include additional research from the internet (as long as it’s accurate and comes from a reliable source!), as well as general advice for making the right types of decisions necessary to become your future self. The tone should be confident but it may be relaxed, like a letter from a teacher, mentor or good friend. Give yourself some good advice but don’t forget to give yourself some good old-fashioned encouragement for getting there, too.

This should be single-spaced, typed, and is due at the beginning of class on the due date. Please be prepared to share a part of your letter with the class (your best paragraph or piece of advice).

THE FUTURE TALKS BACK LETTER TEMPLATE

[Your Name]

[Your Future Title (Drama Club President, High School Yearbook Editor, Volleyball Captain, etc.)]

[Future Company or Organization Name (Varsity Soccer Club, Santa Fe Opera, etc.)]

[Address of Future Company or Organization]

Today's Date

Dear [Name of Recipient (Your Name)],

Short introductory paragraph (2-3 sentences), stating who you are and the purpose of your letter.

1-2 paragraphs with specific examples and steps for how to further or accomplish your goal in the next 5 years. **You should use at least two quotations from your interview in these paragraphs.** For example, if your goal is to be a summer intern at the Santa Fe Opera and you interviewed someone from the Santa Fe Opera, you might incorporate their advice like this:

Jane Doe, a soprano who has been singing with the Santa Fe Opera for 5 years, offered this advice, "You must never, ever ever ever drink or smoke before a performance. My voice is my business and my source of income and if I do anything to jeopardize that, I get fired and go broke."

Or,

Pelé Lobo is the starting goalie for the UNM Lobos Men's Soccer Team and he said, "The only way to get better is to be disciplined and to do your very best no matter what happened the last time around. Study films of the great players and watch lots of matches. Read interviews with the great coaches. But above all get out there and play with people of all skill levels to improve your game."

A closing paragraph with parting advice and encouragement from your future self.

Sincerely,

[Sign here]

[Your Name]

[Your Future Title]