

How to Conduct a Good Interview

Before You Go to Your Shoot:

- Email or talk with the CTE teacher or business owner about the project.
- Ask the teacher or business owner about activities. It's best to shoot on a busy, action-packed day.
- Ask the teacher to help select students to talk about CTE and how it relates to their career goals. You can also pick out students to interview, once you're in the classroom.
- When talking to a business owner, ask them about former or current CTE students who work for them. These students make a good interview.

Choosing an Interview Location:

- Choose a dynamic background, not a blank wall.
- Have some objects in the frame, but not too cluttered.
- If you have a plain background, punch it up with props (maybe tools, or a blueprint, or something they've built).
- Sound is something to consider when choosing a location; find somewhere quiet but not boring.
- Showing motion in the background is great, as long as it's not distracting.
- Outdoors shots can help tell a story. But sound quality can be an issue.

Background example:

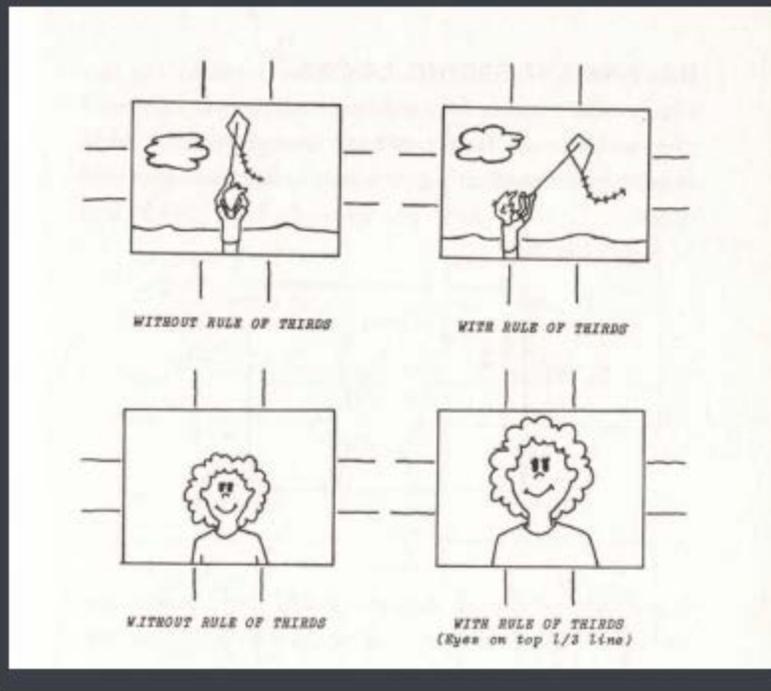


In this video, check out the background in the auto body shop. There's lots of activity, but the interview location is quiet.

Composition for Interviews:

- Film the interview subject straight on or at an angle (45 degrees is ideal). Filming straight on requires that you place the interviewee in the left third or right third of the camera's screen. (See Rule of Thirds guide below.)

Rule of Thirds guide



- Have the interview subject speak directly to the person asking the questions, NOT directly into the camera. Treat it like a conversation.
- Sit near the camera (within 45 degrees), but not behind the camera.
- DO NOT move the camera angle at any point in the interview. Once you're set up, keep it locked in.
- If you have a tripod, *always* use it!

Interview Setup example



Lighting an Interview:

- Where possible, position the subject at a 45-degree angle with any side light source.
- Avoid odd shadows on subject's faces.
- Avoid sunlight in the camera, subject's eyes.
- Too dark? Turn on lights, open a window.

Picking Up Sound:

- Before starting, test to make sure you can clearly hear the subject's voice.
- Record a test video. Then, based on playback, adjust input volume, ask subject to speak louder, or move closer.
- Your camera should have a visual way to monitor sound, measured in decibels (db). Don't go into the **red** area!

Preparing Your Subjects BEFORE Rolling:

- Consider giving interviewees a list of questions or subjects that you would like to discuss a couple of days ahead of the actual interview.
- First, talk to interviewees without the camera. This will help them relax.
- Ask them to speak to you (like a conversation), and NOT to look into the camera.
- Stand slightly to the right or left of camera so they can talk to you.
- When interviewees are ready, begin the interview.
- Ask them not to move when they speak.

How to Conduct an Interview:

- Relax. If you're relaxed, you will put your interview subject at ease and they will relax.
- Be confident. Come prepared with questions and arrive early to the classroom or business.
- Shake hands and set a positive tone.
- Never interrupt interviewees. When they naturally finish answering, allow a 2-second pause before asking your next question. This will help in the editing process.
- Never say "yeah" or "right" or other interjections while they're talking. To show you're listening and engaged, use facial expressions such as nodding or smiling.
- If an answer wasn't clear the first time, don't be afraid to ask for a shorter, clearer response. It makes for a better sound bite.
- Ask questions with enthusiasm and interest.
- Remember, you won't use the full interview. Tell your subject you'll pick only the best parts.

At the End of the Interview:

- *Always* thank interviewees for their time.
- See if they have any questions for you.
- Before allowing interviewees to leave, briefly review the footage to make sure there weren't any recording problems.