

3. Carrying out interviews and surveys

You can gather information about a topic when you question people about their knowledge of the subject or when you ask them for their opinion.

You can ask:

- specialists – if you want to find something specific about a subject;

or

- people who don't have any special expertise in the subject but you are interested in knowing what they think about your topic.

Interviews or surveys are best done together in a small group. That way you can help one another with the questions and with recording the answers.

Go through the following points on the checklist:

- Write down a short answer to every question.
- Mark the questions to which you don't have an answer.
- Discuss any open questions with your class.

Steps to take:

1. The goal

- What is our topic? What do we want to know?
- What should the final product look like?

2. Preparation

- Who should be interviewed? How many people? Does age or gender play a role?
- How do we choose the right people?
- When should the interview/survey take place?
- How should it take place?
- Who has to be informed or who do we have to get permission from?
- How will the answers be recorded (on tape, notes, questionnaires)?

3. The questions

- What questions shall we ask?
- How many questions can we ask? How much time do we have?
- Put the questions together to form a survey.

4. Conducting the survey/interview

- How do we begin with the questions?
- Who plays what role in the group (asking questions, noting down answers, starting and stopping the tape recorder)?
- How do we end the interview?

5. Evaluation

- If you interviewed a specialist, think about the most important things he or she said and note them.

- If you asked several people about the same topic and would like to know how many people gave similar answers, then sort the answers accordingly.

6. The presentation

Decide whether the presentation will be for:

- sharing in class; or
- writing a newspaper article; or
- creating a poster; or
- something else.