1. Focus

**Explain Formulating Questions and Recording Answers**

**Say:** Let’s say you have a topic for a persuasive letter and a knowledgeable and credible source to interview. What do you do next? You prepare yourself for the interview. You need to know enough about your topic so you can ask smart questions. You’ll think about what you want to find out for your persuasive letter, so you can ask questions that will give you the information you need. To help you stay on topic, you’ll write down your questions ahead of time. You’ll get ready to record the answers to your questions accurately. Today we’re going to practice creating interview questions and recording answers together.

**Model Formulating Questions and Recording Answers**

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

**Interview Steps**

1. Write down your questions before the interview. Make sure the questions are clear and open-ended.
2. Ask one question at a time and take notes.
3. Make sure to write down a quote accurately. Read it aloud to check.
4. Look over your notes to see if anything is unclear. If it is, ask questions to clarify.
5. Thank the interviewee for his or her time.

**Modeling Text**

**Sample think-aloud. Say:** I’m going to write a persuasive letter to the mayor because I want to turn a vacant lot in my neighborhood into a garden. I’ve lined up an interview with the lead gardener at the park. I’ve checked out this person’s credentials and now I need to figure out what to ask him. I know my questions need to be clear and concise. I know I want to learn from him what we’ll have to do to turn the vacant lot into a garden. Also, I want to know what plants we can grow. I want to ask open-ended questions. But I don’t want to ask any questions with obvious answers. I’ll write down my questions before the interview. During the interview, I’ll ask one question at a time and take notes. If I want to quote the source directly, I should read the quote back to the lead gardener to make sure I wrote it down correctly. After the interview, I’ll reread my notes. If any information is unclear, I can ask the lead gardener more questions. And, finally, I will thank the interviewee for his time.
**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**
Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. You will want to work with them individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.

**Intermediate and Advanced**
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

**All Levels**
If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share the following English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the lesson focus: credible/creíble; expert/el experto/la experta.

---

**Interview Questions**
- What do we need to think about before we begin our garden?
- What will be our first step in creating the garden?
- What kind of plants would be best for us to choose?
- How long will it take?

**Sample List of Interview Questions**

**Say:** The first question I’m going to ask is what we need to think about before we begin our garden. We need to know how to get started. (Display the question on the chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.) Then I’ll ask what our first step will be. Model writing the question on the list.

---

2. **Rehearse**

**Practice Formulating Questions and Recording Answers**

Ask student partners to think of interview questions they could ask the lead gardener and to write their questions on a note card. Tell students to take turns imagining they are the gardener while their partner asks them a question. Students should try to record the answers accurately. Tell students that if they don’t know the answer to a question, they can make up an answer.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

**Share Ideas**

Invite volunteers to share their questions and answers. Add the questions to the list you started earlier. If a student’s question is off the topic, discuss why it is not the best question to ask. Ask students whether their partner recorded their answers accurately. Ask students how they can apply this strategy to their independent research.

---

3. **Independent Writing and Conferring**

**Say:** Today we learned about creating interview questions and recording the answers accurately. We write down our questions before the interview. Interviewing experts is a good way to get information for your persuasive letters, as long as you ask good questions and write down the answers accurately.

Encourage students to formulate questions for an expert during independent writing time. Reinforce students’ research strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. **Share**

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to share questions they would like to ask an expert.