

## To Interview or Not to Interview Webinar Notes

Interviews are not required in the historical process of your NHD research, but if the student wants to do an interview, then here is a few tips on how to go about conducting an interview.

1. First the student must decide if they want to do an interview. Students can determine if an interview is necessary for their projects by asking themselves if the interview would make their argument stronger.
2. Interviews are best used if the student conduct an oral interview. Oral interviews are considered to be a primary source because the person who the students are interviewing was present at the time of the event.
3. If the student wants to interview an expert or a historian about their research on their subject, then the student needs to prepare for the interview by doing research ahead of time so they can get a better understanding of the subject and the time period of with the event occurred.
4. When contacting a person you want to interview, here are some things you want to keep in mind:
  - Know exactly who you need to contact to set up an interview
  - Do not catch the person off guard by making them feel rushed to do an interview. Give them time to check their schedule and to gather information on your subject.
  - If the student is doing a phone interview, then the student needs to call from ideal conditions.
  - When a student emails a historian for an interview, the email needs to be formal and be free of grammar and spelling errors.
  - When emailing a historian, open up with an explanation of who you are, why you are contacting them, what National History Day is, say exactly what you want to accomplish, and your specific topic you are researching.
5. During the interview, students should use open ended questions to prompt the interviewee to give details of the event. Students can form questions from their secondary source research. Some examples of open ended questions are:
  - What was it like?
  - How did you feel?
6. When you are going into an interview, be sure that you bring spare equipment in case you experience technical difficulties.
7. Remember, when you are contacting and interviewing, you are acting as ambassadors of your school and of National History Day.