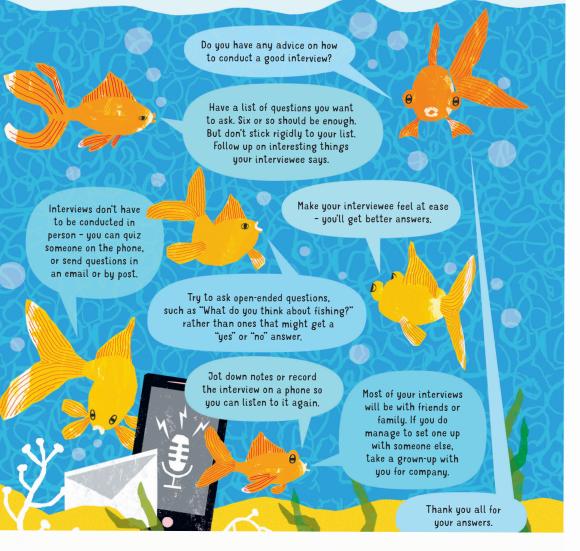# Interviews

If you want to write about a person, you could interview them and use their own words. You could ask friends or family members if you can talk to them – or make up an interview with a fictional character, such as Sleeping Beauty or a character from a cartoon.

Do you have any advice on how to conduct a good interview?

Have a list of questions you want to ask. Six or so should be enough. But don't stick rigidly to your list. Follow up on interesting things your interviewee says.

Interviews don't have to be conducted in person – you can quiz someone on the phone, or send questions in an email or by post.

Make your interviewee feel at ease – you'll get better answers.

Try to ask open-ended questions, such as "What do you think about fishing?" rather than ones that might get a "yes" or "no" answer.

Jot down notes or record the interview on a phone so you can listen to it again.

Most of your interviews will be with friends or family. If you do manage to set one up with someone else, take a grown-up with you for company.

Thank you all for your answers.

Writing it up

You don't have to include everything that was said when you write up an interview. Cut it down to just the most interesting and exciting bits.

The Big Sleep

A conversation with fairy tale star Sleeping Beauty

– A J Pineapple

I met Sleeping Beauty at a truly magical cafe. Fairy cakes fluttered around our heads as we spoke.

AJP: You must get asked this a lot – what was it like to sleep for a hundred years?

SB: Um. Well. It actually felt just like an ordinary night's sleep. That made waking up incredibly strange. I didn't feel like I'd been asleep long, yet everything was different ... Beyond the sleeping castle's walls, the world had changed completely. I'd missed world wars, women getting the vote, Harry Potter, the invention of computers, mobile telephones and so many other things.

Make it clear who's saying what.

Cut out any pauses, hesitations and filler words.

Start by setting the scene and introducing your interviewee.

If you cut part of the interview, insert a '...' to show where text has been removed.

Write a couple of sentences at the end of the interview to sum it up. You could say whether your interviewee was as you'd expected, and if not, how he or she was different.

On the record?

Some things in an interview may be said unofficially – or 'off the record' – with the understanding that you won't include them in your magazine.

Always show your interviewee the finished article before you print it. That way any mistakes can be corrected.

Between you and me, all Prince Charming did was set my alarm clock – and he really isn't very charming.

Usborne Activities

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