

# Interviews, question & answer

Getting the Story · By Simon Townsend · 2 min read

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## I'm against Q&As

I recommend against writing an interview as a Q & A.

Most publications are not interested in such a style. Do not send a Q & A-style article to a publication unless you are CERTAIN your target publication publishes Q & As.

Q & As are question-and-answer interviews in print where only the questions asked and the answers given form the whole of the article. It's a verbatim report of all, or most, of the words spoken during an interview.

Here's an example (BR are the initials of the interviewer and MN are the initials of the interviewee):

BR How did you make your first million?

MN It was with my second movie role, as an idiot detective in *Soulmate Dead*. I asked for three mill.

Bit cheeky! They offered half a mill, and we settled on one mill. Truth is, I'd've done it for

\$1000 because I was so keen.

BR And now you're earning twenty million a movie. Is that true?

MN Nah. That was three movies ago. On my latest, my fee was twenty-five mill. See the article on Article components. It contained a kind of "map" showing the three components of a well-structured journalistic article.

The three components are: narrative, direct quotes and indirect quotes.

Narrative is you the writer telling the story. Narrative usually makes up most of a well-structured article, interspersed with direct and indirect quotes. Narrative might contain:

- Anecdotes
- Research
- Examples
- Happenings
- Facts you gathered
- Your observations (what you saw during or around the interview)
- Your opinions and thoughts

Direct quotes are a person's almost-exact words as spoken to you and written inside "" (quote marks).

Direct quotes are best when they are about opinions and feelings, rather than about facts.

Indirect quotes (without quote marks) are essentially what the person said, but translated into the writer's words, usually to compress facts and other information.

## **Advice**

- I always recommend to NOT write huge slabs of direct quotes.
- Don't write Q & As: they're hard to sell.
- Don't be a human recorder simply regurgitating spoken words.
- Little talent is involved in transcribing a recording and it's not the best journalism.

"Map" overleaf ?

??Your detailed 15-word heading??

By "(your byline)" Wordcount: ???

## **Opening Narrative**

Maybe a HAPPENING to grab your readers' attention.

**Direct Quote**

**Narrative**

**Fact**

**Narrative**

**Your observations**

**Narrative**

**Direct Quote**

**Indirect Quotes**

**Narrative**

**Your opinion**

**Direct Quote**

**Narrative**

**Direct Quote**

**Narrative**

**Indirect Quotes**

**Narrative**

**Facts you gathered**

**Direct Quote**

## **Narrative**

Description, perhaps a pen picture of the interviewee.

## **Narrative**

## **Researched facts maybe**

## **Indirect Quote**

## **Direct Quotes**

## **Indirect Quote**

## **Direct Quote**

## **Indirect Quote**

## **Narrative**

## **Direct Quote**

## **Narrative**

## **Your observations**

## **Indirect Quotes**

## **Narrative**

## **Direct Quotes**

## **Narrative**

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