

# How to Prepare

The effective interviewer knows what he or she wants from an interview. That's what John Brady, author of "The Craft of Interviewing," thinks. The interviewer is like a chess player, he says, never moving a piece or asking a question without a greater purpose.

## Here's what to ask yourself at the outset of reporting:

- What do I want to know?
- What does my audience need to know?
- Who is most likely to give me what I need?
- Who is closest to the action or issue -- the city councilwoman or the neighborhood resident, the police spokeswoman or the crime victim's spouse?

Every story idea generates its own set of interviewing possibilities. Try an approach Don Murray used in his long career as a reporter and magazine writer: In the front of your notebook, write a list of the five or six questions that readers would ask about your story and number them in the order that readers would ask them.

## Here's the story so far:

"A local chemical plant is shutting down, but it's still full of waste-water -- 200 million gallons of it. The owners of the plant, desperate to get rid of the water, have proposed that it be dumped into the city's reclaimed water system. The city council will vote on the proposal tomorrow."