

A few simple questions

LINKS TO:

Stage 3, Module 1

 Learning Object 2: *What's your question?*

Exercise 1

1.1 What medium do you think this interview is for? Give reasons for your answer.

This interview was conducted on radio. This is clear because the interviewer welcomes Mr Wagan Watson to the radio program. The interviewer describes visuals, rather than assuming the listener can see them. The interview is clearly oral, since both the interviewer and Mr Watson use some 'unedited' language, particularly when they greet each other.

1.2 What is the focus of the interview?

The focus of the interview is Mr Watson's experiences as a poet. The interview includes questions about Mr Watson's experiences in Indonesia.

1.3 What types of language are used in this interview? For example, what register do the participants use when addressing each other?

It is clear that this interview is conducted between two people that have met before. The language used is quite formal, they used the term 'Anda' and 'Saya' to address themselves and each other, but that is more because the setting of the interview is quite formal, that is, it is a radio broadcast that will be heard by their listeners everywhere. The flow of the conversation itself, shown by the interviewer last comment for example, demonstrates that the two people are very relax with each other.

1.4 How does the interviewer introduce the interview?

The interviewer introduces the program first, by saying *Selamat datang dalam acara Bincang Buku di Radio ZYX. Di sini Linda Abdullah dan hari ini kita akan mengunjungi Australia, tepatnya kota Brisbane, untuk bertemu dengan penulis Sam Wagan Watson.* She then welcomes Mr Wagan Watson to the show.

1.5 What kinds of questions does the interviewer ask of Sam? Give examples from the text. Why do you think she uses these types of questions?

The interviewer asks a lot of open questions, such as *'Bagaimana sampai Anda bisa menjadi seorang penyair?'* and *'Apa pengaruh latar belakang Anda sebagai orang Aborigin Australia terhadap tulisan-tulisan Anda?'* Open questions such as these can often be answered in more than one way and often ask for an interview subject's thoughts, feelings or opinions.

1.6 How does the interviewer conclude the interview?

The interviewer concludes the interview by thanking Mr Watson, reminding the listeners of the titles of his books and the publishers he has worked with. She then restates the name of the radio station, the program and finally her own name.

Exercise 2

2.1 What medium do you think this interview is for? Give reasons for your answer.

Unlike the first interview, this is an edited interview produced for a newspaper or magazine, either for print or online. This is clear in the way the interview is presented, with a title and byline. It is also clear because the quotations from the person being interviewed are interspersed with prose by the interviewer.

2.2 What is the focus of the interview?

The interview is focused on Sam's new role as the writer-in-residence on 98.9 FM, an Indigenous radio station.

2.3 How does the interviewer introduce the interview?

The interviewer introduces the interview by stating that the subject has taken up a role as writer-in-residence at the radio station. This concise, concentrated introduction establishes both the topic of the interview and who is being interviewed.

2.4 What kind of questions does the interviewer ask Sam?

The questions that the interviewer asked Sam are not explicitly stated. However, from the reported responses provided by Sam, we can infer that they were open questions. These allowed Sam to discuss the opportunities his role at radio 98.9 FM have provided him to get his works as a poet across to a wider audience and to talk about his family background.

2.5 How does the interviewer conclude the interview?

The interviewer concludes the article by stating how the reader can access and listen to radio station 98.9 FM where Sam Wagan Watson is in residence.

Exercise 3

3.1 What are the similarities and differences between the two interviews?

The radio interview is more detailed and complex, with the interview subject allowed to speak for longer in his own voice. The newspaper article is more concise and focused. Both articles emphasise some of the challenges faced by Indigenous peoples, though in different ways. The radio interview allows Mr Watson to talk about the research behind his work, while the newspaper interview is shorter and more focused.

3.2 How do the similarities and/or differences you have identified reflect the medium in which the interviews were conducted?

The newspaper article is short and succinct and seems concerned with getting the facts across as briefly as possible, whereas the radio interview uses the medium to allow listeners to hear the author speak in his own voice, guided by the interviewer, in a more exploratory way. In the radio interview, the interviewer takes more of a facilitating, backseat role, whereas in the newspaper article, the writer expresses their own opinions more forthrightly, and more overtly organises and shapes the article.