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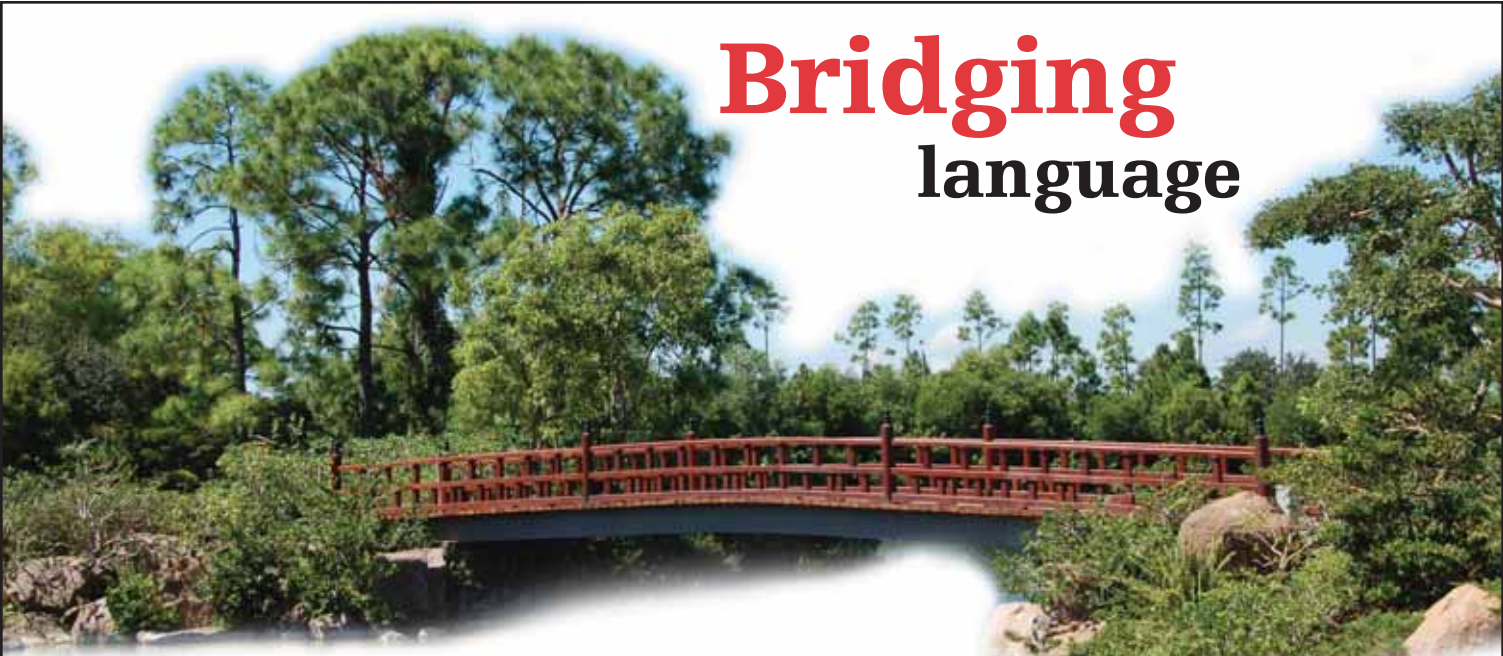
**Canada's Capital University**

# Media Training – Television

**Department of  
University Communications**



# Bridging language



A bridging phrase helps you acknowledge a question or statement and then lead an interviewer back to your message.

1. ...The real question that needs to be addressed is...
2. ...What's even more important to discuss is...
3. ... I'd like to talk about something that I'm more familiar with...
4. ...The real crux of the matter is...
5. ... I might say it differently...
6. ...That's one view/perspective. I believe...
7. ...The goal here is to...
8. ...What concerns me even more is...
9. ...The fact of the matter is...
10. ... Another way of looking at this is...
11. ... My opinion is...
12. ... My research suggests...
13. ... Down the road, we plan to...
14. ... I'd like to stress another point...
15. ... (on a panel) I'm wondering what my co-panelists think...
16. ...What's significant is...
17. ... I think people/your audience will really want to know about...
18. ...While I understand the concern about X, we can't forget that...
19. ... It's important that we remember the major issue/point/problem is...
20. ... But we can't overlook the fact that...
14. ...The facts are...
15. ... Here's another way to say it...
16. ... From my perspective...
17. ... Here's an even tougher question...
18. ... Looking ahead...
19. ... Opinions can differ, but I believe...
20. ...Our goal is...
18. ...That's one view. Mine is...
19. ...The critical issue is...
20. ...The question should be...





# Messaging

## Key messaging

*Any media interview is an opportunity to enhance Carleton's reputation and reinforce key messages, regardless of the subject matter.*

*Your goals will often differ from those of interviewers, but you can seize the opportunity instead of simply answering questions.*

## Remember –

- Decide in advance which key message(s) you want to convey.
- Prepare sound bite(s) in advance limited to 10 seconds.
- Don't worry about repeating your messages but use slightly different language each time.
- Bridging is an effective way to get back on track to your messaging.

## Getting the word out

*Naturally you want to address the topic at hand, whether it's your research or your comments on a significant news development. But you can still tell the Carleton story.*

*The university's strategic plan is a good place to start when deciding what you want to say. Consider these themes that we are using to identify Carleton as a university of choice:*

- Innovation – Carleton is an active, multidisciplinary agent of change
- Location – Proximity to government, business, culture, hightech.
- Engagement with the community – We care and contribute
- Solutions to real-world problems – We make the world a better place

*Think of how you can mention significant developments at Carleton that enhance our reputation, such as the jump in undergraduate registration this year, new programs, the Batawa-Carleton Initiative or our new Emergency Notification System.*

*You are an ambassador for the university and you need to have your bragging points at your fingertips, on camera and off!*



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# More TV tips looks matter

## 1. Match clothes to the setting.

Suits work nicely in a studio but look out-of-place while traipsing through a bog.

**2. Iron your clothes.** Pull down your suit jacket so it won't ride up during the interview. Try to wear clothes that fit properly.

**3. Pastel colours work nicely, while whites tend to glow.** Blacks suck up the light. Reds tend to bleed. Avoid stripes or checks.

**4. Avoid distractions such as dangly earrings and other flashy jewelry.**

**5. Wear makeup.** Be prepared to do your own makeup, as TV stations may not provide that service. Use powder on your nose, forehead and face to mask light glare and sweating. Make sure the powder you use is the same color as your skin. If you are bald or balding, be sure to powder your head. Don't wear lip gloss or shiny makeup.

**6. Comb your hair. Keep your hair out of your eyes and avoid flipping it.** Mustaches obscure your mouth, teeth and facial expressions.

**7. Wearing glasses is fine.** If possible, get glare-proof glasses or have your existing glasses glare-proofed. Don't wear tinted glasses.

**8. Look at the reporter.** Don't look at a TV monitor during an interview. Don't look at the camera unless a producer tells you to do so. If you need a break, look down instead of up - you'll look more thoughtful. Don't look at notes while you are live.

**9. When interviewed standing, don't move your feet, stand on the balls of your feet or sway back and forth.** When sitting, choose a chair without rollers that doesn't swivel. Place your feet flat on the floor so that you can stand up without moving your feet.

**10. Don't lock your hands together, fidget or put your hands in your pockets.** Don't gesture too much. Don't gesture above your chin, wider than your shoulders or below your mid-chest.

**11. For studio interviews, ask for a glass of water.** Coffee can make your throat constrict.

**12. Make sure your earpiece fits properly.** If it pops out during a live interview, simply put it back in place and act like it's no big deal. If you lose the volume, quietly say that you can't hear and the producer should be able to solve the problem.

**13. You should communicate your top message in the first 30 seconds.** Any additional time should be spent expanding on your basic points. Really listen to the interviewer's questions. Use the bridging technique to get back to your message.

**14. Be likeable. Never lose your cool.**

**15. TV can suck the natural energy out of your voice, so speak with more energy than usual, but don't yell.** Don't drop the volume at the end of a sentence.

**16. The more interviews you do, the better you will get.** Watch other people being interviewed and critique their performance. Critique your own interviews. Review with the sound off. Do you like the way you look? If not, why not?



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## What is a **good** media **story?**

### **1. A good media story contains the five Ws.**

A media story needs to have the Five Ws—who, what, when, where, and why.

### **2. A good story may focus on five other Ws.**

Glen Dromgoole, editor of the Abilene, Texas, Reporter-News, says there are at least five other Ws to consider:

- **Worthwhile:** stories that readers find useful; information that can help them improve their lives.
- **WOW:** stories that are out of the ordinary and evoke a “wow” response.
- **Well...:** as in “Well...now what are you going to do about it?”
- **We:** Stories that help the audience to connect with their community and to some extent their province, country, and world.
- **Watch:** Media may also be interested in stories that maintain their role as a watchdog and independent observer of others.

### **3. A good story matters.**

Ask yourself: “Why should they care?” “We’re looking for stories that appeal to the heart, health, and pocketbook.”—Rob Snow, CFRA. Other media like to appeal to the “head” by offering thought-provoking and analytical stories that take the listener/reader/viewer beyond what they already know.

### **4. A good story is interesting.**

Be honest about how interesting your “story” would be for others! Think about stories that engage, are provocative or unexpected, evoke an emotional response.

### **5. A good story is simple and to the point.**

Use the “focus” technique. You should be able to explain your story in one simple sentence that answers the questions: (a) Who (b) Is Doing What (c) Why.

### **6. A good story is newsworthy.**

What’s the news peg? A news peg often is the selling point for the media and gives them a reason to publish/broadcast that story on a certain day. Some examples are anniversary date; event such as Convocation; success story, e.g., just won an award, published a paper, completed research study.

### **7. A good story is credible.**

Relevant and factually correct background needs to be included.

### **8. A good story is low on promotional content.**

It is important to consider your key messages but don’t overdo it.

### **9. A good story is personalized.**

You need to target a story pitch to a particular show. Editors and reporters know what appeals to their audiences.

### **10. A good story needs a good storyteller.**

Contact information needs to be included.



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### 1. Confirm Details

- Confirm if program is live or taped and if it will be edited.
- Consider program format (talk show, news, variety, panel, call-in). If a panel, find out who the other panelists are and points they will be making.
- Ask if there is a studio audience and audience make-up (specialized, general).
- Find out interview length. The shorter the interview, the more critical it is that you condense your main messages into sound bites of 10 to 20 seconds.
- Ask pre-interviewer about angle/focus of particular topic and his/her expectations of you.

### 2. Focus on your key message(s)

- Write these down in advance. Draft concise, to-the-point statements, or sound bites that highlight these points.
- During the interview, take the opportunity to re-state these messages.
- Think about the one quote or message you want the audience to remember.
- Use analogies, related stories and personal experiences to help everyone understand your point of view.
- If the interviewer or reporter is coming to your location, create a visually enhancing environment to help emphasize your message. Use props or stage a working environment.

### 3. Prepare

- Fill out the Interview Prep Form.
- Role play in advance.
- Practise delivering your sound bites and examples in a mock interview with a colleague or friend or even in front of a mirror. Practise delivering each of your answers in under 20 seconds.
- Prepare for worst-case questions.
- Keep an eye on current events re: your topic, especially if story is breaking news.

### 4. Make Yourself Comfortable

- Arrive at least 30 minutes early for interviews held at a studio.
- Arrange to meet the interviewer or reporter before the program and ask how you will address each other during the program (i.e. first name basis).
- Adjust and test any equipment before the program begins. If you are speaking into a microphone, maintain a distance of at least six inches.
- If a long interview, ask for a glass of water on the set. Avoid cola, chocolate, dairy.
- Choose a comfortable chair that doesn't swivel.

### 5. Follow Best Interview Practices

- Be yourself. Be natural.
- Speak in lay terms. Don't use any high tech language or industry jargon.
- Assume that you will be on the air for every second of the program. (Don't make a gesture or say something you don't want broadcast.)
- Assume that anything you say to the reporter could be brought into the interview, even if it's a casual remark made during a pre-taping chat.
- Keep the real, at-home audience in mind. Direct your remarks to them.
- Look at the reporter not the camera.
- Limit your answers to about three sentences.

### 6. Avoid Bad Interview Practices

- Don't look at the monitor during the interview.
- Don't speak for someone who isn't present.
- Don't let any misleading statements trap you.
- Avoid nervous habits.
- Never fill in 'dead' time; that's the interviewer's job.

### 7. Remember that TV is pictures

- Wear comfortable clothing. Bright, solid colours look best on camera. Avoid small, busy patterns or shiny fabrics. Don't wear overpowering scarves or ties. Avoid wearing large, dangling, shiny jewellery.
- Makeup, powder, and lipstick will help you avoid looking "washed out" by the bright lights.
- Comb your hair.
- Check your appearance on the TV monitor beforehand, if possible.

### 8. Avoid confrontation

- Don't get into an argument. Never become defensive or angry. Maintain your composure at all times.

### 9. Never say Never

- Never say "no comment."
- Never offer any information "off the record" or "just between you and me."

### 10. Evaluate yourself.

- Ask others for feedback.







# Ten Tips for a better interview

1. Before the media call, be prepared. Use the Interview Prep Form available online. Write down your key messages. Think of quotable quotes.
2. Consider the Medium. TV is pictures, so consider visuals that enhance your story and wear appropriate clothes (e.g., don't wear white or complicated patterns). For radio, think about appropriate sounds/music/tone of voice/emotion/silence that could support your story.
3. During the interview:
  - avoid jargon and keep it simple;
  - keep your answers brief;
  - there is no such thing as “off the record;”
  - avoid saying “No comment;”
  - tell the truth. Never guess at an answer; and
  - be friendly, don't lose your temper, and don't be defensive.
4. Answering tough questions:
  - if you sidestep a tough question, you may appear to be evasive or untrustworthy. Message the positive. Stick to your own agenda of answering each question with a direct factual statement followed by a relevant key message. Don't be afraid to admit mistakes. A useful phrase is: “What I can tell you is...”; and
  - when you answer, do not repeat “negative” questions.
5. Answering complex questions:
  - patiently answer run-on questions one at a time or choose the question you want to answer; and
  - you can always rephrase the question, e.g., “If I understand your question correctly, you're asking...”
6. Building a relationship with a particular reporter, over time, can result in a trusting and mutually beneficial relationship. Never ask a reporter to preview the story with you.
7. Presentation is important: be aware of good eye contact, sitting, clothing, avoiding nervous habits.
8. Reporters need to consider:
  - their deadline;
  - how to pitch your story to their editor or producer; and
  - whether their audience will care about your story, e.g., stories that affect the heart, head, health, and pocketbook.
9. Reporters are often looking for the sexy, juicy angle. The story you want to tell may not be the story they want to tell. The media may say “no” to a story you think they should tell. Media want to control a story and how it is delivered.
10. No interview is ever perfect. It's good to evaluate your performance so you continue to improve.

