

GATHERING AND REPORTING INFORMATION

GOT A NOSE FOR NEWS?

Let's say that you are a reporter. Your editor calls you in and says, "We want an article on the most newsworthy event among your friends and family in 2008. See what you can dig up. Give me at least 75 words—but no more than one notebook page. Also, suggest an image that we can run along with it. Now get going!"

Your first step should be asking around to find out what your friends and family consider the biggest or

most important change or event in their lives. Then choose the one you want to write about.

Go back and interview the person (or persons) involved in the topic that you are writing about. Be sure to get direct quotes to include in the article. During your interview, take care to get enough information to answer the top questions that every news article should answer: who, what, when, where, how, and why. Use this checklist to help you keep track.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST *(Questions can be asked and answered in any order.)*

- **Who** was involved in the incident or event? _____

- **What** was important or memorable about the incident or event? _____

- **When** did it take place? _____

- **Where** did it take place? _____

- **How** did it begin and end? _____

- **Why** was it noteworthy? _____

- **Direct quote #1:** _____

- **Direct quote #2:** _____

- **Direct quote #3:** _____

Once you have all the information you need, write up the article for your editor. Start with a rough draft, not worrying about word count. Then revise your story

as many times as necessary to get it ready to turn in to your editor. Don't forget to include a headline, byline, and suggestion for a photo or an illustration.