

## HELPFUL HINTS

Dear Contest Entrant,

Thank you for choosing to enter our contest. Our goal for you is to challenge you to use your imagination. We ask you to interview a person from an article in our archives of articles from our newsletter

We suggest that, first, you choose your interview subject wisely. Go to **irish-society.org**, the home page of our web site, and click on Hedgemaster Archives. Look first at the articles labeled “People” to find a subject that captures your imagination. Who will you enjoy interviewing, Gene Tunney (boxer), Enya (musical star), one of the Five Sullivan Brothers (World War II), James Joyce (writer), Nellie Cashman (from America’s Old West), or someone else? Think, too, about going beyond the biographical articles to other listings. For instance, the “Batallon de San Patricios” article is about a group of Irish born American soldiers who deserted to the Mexican side during the Mexican-American War. One of those soldiers would make a fascinating subject for an interview. Later in this letter we will mention other articles that can yield excellent subjects for an interview.

Second, decide who the interviewer will be. You, of course, can be the interviewer. You can be a high school student eager to learn from the subject of the interview, or you can be a high school interviewer with an attitude. Perhaps you want to give a media person the position of interviewer. There are many interviewers on TV and the radio and in newspapers and magazines. Charlie Rose on channel 13 is on every week night; sports, entertainment and political stations feature interviews. *Time* magazine has “Fast Chat” and *Newsday* has “Q and A” and “Fan Fare.” Check the media you read for examples of interviewing models.

Third, set the tone for the interview. Will the interviewer be serious and sincerely interested in the subject? Will the interviewer be aggressive and pugnacious? Will the interviewer listen carefully and probe into incomplete responses or controversial statements? Will the interviewer be an admirer of the work or accomplishments of the subject, such as U2, Sean O’Casey or William Mulholland?

Fourth, use your imagination to create a personality for the subject of the interview. Will your Grace O’Malley (aka, the Pirate Queen and Granuaile) or Ned Kelly be defiant? your Roger Casement or Daniel O’Connell, serious and statesmanlike? Look upon your subject as your creation in a drama.

On the next page are some notes on some, but certainly not all, interview possibilities.

### **Non-biographical subjects**

- The Hedge Schools interview a hedgemaster (teacher)
- The Traveling People interview a person with an itinerant lifestyle
- The Five Points interview a resident of this notorious slum
- Grosse-Ile interview a passenger on a “coffin ship”
- The Apprentice Boys interview a heroic teen who helped save a city
- Escape from Australia interview one of the escapees from an Australian prison
- Mother Ireland interview a Long Islander who spent his early years In Ireland
- The Book of Kells interview a monk who illuminated this renowned book
- Irish Children and the Orphan Trains interview a youngster sent to the West from NYC

### **Biographical subjects**

- Sean O’Casey, James Joyce, Brendan Behan great Irish authors
- Fathers Sheeran and Corby Chaplains in the American Civil War
- Maurice Prendergast, William Harnett Irish artists
- Mary Walker, Dan Daly, Audie Murphy, Medal of Honor winners  
John Kedenburg
- Alexander Turney Stewart founder of Garden City
- Wolfe Tone; the Big Fellow (Michael Collins) Irish revolutionaries

Our list above is certainly not a complete list of interview possibilities. Let your guide be your good instincts as a writer who wants to entertain a reading audience. Have fun with this; be different.

We appreciate the time and talent you will expend in writing your interview. Reading what you write will be our pleasure.

Best wishes,

John Walsh  
Contest Chair