

Assignment 1

Vox Pops

The term "vox pop" comes from the Latin phrase *vox populi*, meaning "voice of the people". The vox pop is a tool used in many forms of media to provide a snapshot of public opinion. Random subjects are asked to give their views on a particular topic and their responses are presented to the viewer/reader as a reflection of popular opinion.

For video and television vox pops, the interviewer approaches people "in the street" and asks them simple questions about the topic. These people will be new to interviews and will often be nervous, flustered, giggly, etc. It's therefore important to make them feel comfortable and relaxed.

When asking people to participate, fast is best - don't give them time to worry about how they look or what their friends will think. Use a short, sharp standard question such as "Would you mind answering a couple of quick questions about genetically modified food for TV3 news tonight?". (*Note*: Everyone will want to know what channel you're with and when the programme will be broadcast, so it helps to get that out of the way quickly.)

As always, ask [open-ended questions](#) and avoid [leading questions](#). At the same time, you must be specific enough to obtain brief answers.

Camera shots are usually framed as an [MCU](#) or [close up](#). It's important to think about the guest's looking direction, and get an equal number of left-facing and right-facing subjects. These can then be alternated in post-production. Some producers go so far as to get all answers with a particular opinion facing one way, and answers with an opposing opinion facing the other way. Whether or not you think this is effective is up to you — you may feel that it is too contrived.

It pays to ensure that an accurate mix of genders and races are represented, appropriate to the population being surveyed.

Source: www.mediacollege.com

Your assignment is to go on campus and interview six subjects, asking them the same question.

How to:

Make sure you have tape in the camera and the battery is charged full.

Wear headphone to monitor your audio.

Get the camera close enough. If you have a shotgun mic, then three feet from subject is good. Move closer if using the built in camera mic.

Be quick and confident as you approach your subjects. Have the camera powered up and ready to shoot. You don't need a tripod for vox pops, but do hold the camera steady.

Frame your shot first. **Do not** put the subject in center of frame. Instead have them looking in from the left or right side of the frame. Make sure you are color balanced.

Watch your backgrounds for distractions such as pole or tree limb growing out of your talking head. Also, be aware of unwanted noise such as traffic behind subject. Turn your subject away

from the noise.

Look for soft light and avoid harsh shadows.

Ask your question. If subject has no solid opinion, then move on to someone else.

Bring your tape to class for a group critique.

You will be graded on:

Did you have six solid vox pop interviews?

Did you place your (in focus) subject left and right in the frame?

Were your audio levels strong enough?

Did you hold the camera steady?