



AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Interacting with the Media in a Nutshell

Preparation

- Know the basics of how journalism works (see, e.g., <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/what-is-journalism>)
- Get media training from your institution's press/news/media/communications office
- Know your interviewer (do a little online research)
- Know your audience and shape your message and language accordingly
- Practice, practice, practice!

The Message: Content

- Focus on a few main points
- Repeat your main points in different ways
- Create clear and concise messages
- Include methodology/processes
- Avoid too much information
- Qualify when necessary
- Put message into perspective (answer the "so what?" question)

The Message: Style

- Use examples, analogies, metaphors; give meaning to numbers
- Use clichés sparingly, and make sure they're appropriate/inoffensive
- Visualize: Use pictures, graphics, tables, animations, and movies
- Talk from the heart; show passion and enthusiasm
- Use humor

The Message: Language

- Use simple and short words and sentences
- Avoid jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations
- Use sound bites

Adapted from "An Instrument for Assessing Scientists' Written Skills in Public Communication of Science," by Ayelet Baram-Tsabari (Technion–Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel) & Bruce V. Lewenstein (Cornell Univ., Ithaca, NY, USA), *Science Communication*, Feb. 2013, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 56-85.

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