



# Plan an Interview with General Tom Thumb

Have you ever wanted to be a reporter and interview a famous actor? This activity will show you step-by-step how to conduct a good interview.



Charles Stratton (aka General Tom Thumb)

Today you will interview P.T. Barnum’s most famous actor, General Tom Thumb. Of course, “General Tom Thumb” is just a stage name. His real name is Charles Stratton. You can pretend Charles is sitting in this tiny chair. It was made just for him to use on stage when he was young.



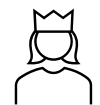
Charles Stratton's Stage Chair

## Step One: Do Your Research



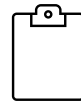
You need to learn as much as you can about your interview subject. This helps you think of good questions to ask. Here are some facts about Charles Stratton that might help you write good questions.

- ✓ Charles was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1838.
- ✓ Charles is small because he was born with a condition that made him almost stop growing when he just a few months old. Today a person with this condition is called a *little person*.
- ✓ Charles’s friends call him Charlie.
- ✓ He was about five years old when he met P. T. Barnum and began his career as an actor!
- ✓ Charles loves to sing and tell jokes on the stage.
- ✓ Charles met the Queen of England when he was six years old!
- ✓ By the time Charles was ten years old, he had traveled to many places in America and to many foreign countries.
- ✓ His clothing, carriages, and most things he uses had to be made especially for his size.



**Did you know?** If you call a *little person* a midget or a dwarf, you will hurt their feelings. Midget and dwarf are the *wrong* words to use.

## Step Two: Write Your Interview Questions



A good interview question is open-ended. That means the person you are interviewing cannot answer the question with a “yes” or “no.” You want him or her to think about your question and give you a longer, more interesting answer.

The best question words to use are who, what, where, when, and how. For example, “How did you feel the first time you performed on stage?”

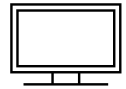
**Think of 3 questions to ask Charles Stratton based on your research. Write them in the spaces below.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Step Three: Conduct Your Interview



Ask a friend or family member to pretend to be Charles Stratton. Give them the facts about Charles Stratton so they know more about who they are pretending to be.

You can pretend to be a news reporter, a podcaster, or a youtuber to make it more fun. Perhaps you can record your interview on the computer or your phone. Invite your guest to have a seat and then introduce yourself. Now you are ready to begin asking your questions.

At the end, don't forget to thank “Charles” for his time!