[**Making Yourself Clear Slideshow**](https://docs.google.com/presentation/u/0/d/1Fkln-hpZ8qRaUNV10cFXoiwKv2H6nFQmh4w7LzGsutw/edit)

This worksheet is designed to help you solidify your message before speaking to the media. Please contact [Rachel Kremen](mailto:rkremen@pppl.gov) and [B. Rose Huber](mailto:rhuber@pppl.gov) before speaking with any media, as the majority of interviews need to be vetted by the Department of Energy. We are also happy to help you refine your message in person or via Zoom. Don’t hesitate to reach out for help!

**Initial questions for the reporter**

You should ask the reporter a few questions before committing to an interview. You can ask these yourself or ask the reporter to contact [Rachel Kremen](mailto:rkremen@pppl.gov) and [B. Rose Huber](mailto:rhuber@pppl.gov) directly, and we can pose them. The answers should help you and the PPPL Communications team determine whether you want to do the interview.

1. “Why are you writing the piece now?”

1. “Have you ever covered this field before?”

1. “Who else is being interviewed?”
2. “Where can I find your work?”
3. “What’s the best way to reach you?”
4. “Is it okay if I record our conversation?”
5. “When is your deadline?”

**Questions to help you prepare for the interview**

1. Start by thinking about why your research should matter to non-experts.   
   Why would someone who does not work in the field care about your work? How might it impact their lives?

1. How would you describe your biggest finding in one or two sentences?

1. Copy and paste the sentences from your answer above into the Dejargonizer at <http://www.scienceandpublic.com>. Rewrite the description with the identified jargon eliminated or explained. This may require additional sentences.

1. If the description is more than four sentences or if it seems impossible to eliminate a particular word because there is no easy way of explaining its meaning to a non-expert, write a basic glossary of the problematic terms to send to the reporter after your interview.

1. Repeat steps 2 and 3 again if there was an important secondary finding.
2. In two or three sentences, how would you tie your biggest finding back to the mission of Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (and any other institutions that you are a part of)?

The U.S. Department of Energy’s Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL) is a leader in the science and engineering behind the development of fusion — a clean, safe, and virtually limitless source of energy. PPPL also uses its expertise in plasma to serve as an economic driver of innovation — using novel plasma technologies to produce computer chips, advance quantum computing techniques and contribute to a net-zero world. We strive to understand plasma from the lab to the cosmos.

1. How does your work fit into the field? Is there an aspect of your research that is a “first”? Is there an aspect of the work that a reporter might confuse as yours but was foundational work done by another researcher? Whose work does it build on?

1. How do you want to be identified in the piece and what are the links to each institution’s websites? If you have multiple job titles that must be included, be sure to note this to the reporter.

**Tips for During the Interview**

1. Record the interview so you have a record of what was said. Letting the reporter know you are recording the interview also lets them know they \*have\* to get it right!
2. If you don’t agree with the premise of a question, it’s okay to say so!
   * *“That’s not an issue actually.”*
   * *“That’s not quite right.”*
   * *“A better question would be…”*
   * *“Let’s reconsider your question. I don’t agree with the premise.”*
   * *“I’m not prepared to talk about that at this time.”*
3. Be honest if you aren’t sure about the answer.
   * *“That’s not my area of expertise.”*
   * *“I’m not the best person to answer that question. Try Ms. X…”*
   * *“I don’t know about that. What I do know is…”*
   * *“Can I get back to you with an answer on that? I just want to confirm.”*
4. Stay on the record and stay on message until you leave the room.
5. If timing is uncertain or likely to shift, opt for percent completion.
   * “[*NSTX-U is XX% complete*](https://www.pppl.gov/research/projects/nstx-u)*.”*
6. Be transparent without oversharing. There is no need to lie or avoid talking about past mistakes. We can provide straightforward and clear information without storytelling.
7. For general information about the Lab, and photography point reporters to our For the Media webpage at <https://www.pppl.gov/news/media>. (Fact sheets are at the bottom!)