Hard vs soft news

Hard news

- Informative and critical function of journalism. Factual approach.
- Current and time-sensitive events
- Political, economic, or social issues with political, economic implications (crime coverage, law and order issues).
- INFORM
Hard vs soft news

Soft news

• Human interest stories, lifestyles, entertainment, sports, celebrity gossip and society pages.
• Less time-sensitive and less serious or less societal impact
• ENTERTAIN (+ INFORM)
Story ideas

- Hardest part
- Use your own experience & be on lookout
- People you know (beware of bias + embarrassing them)
- Trending topics / rumours (but cross check)
- Media content
- Follow up on stories already covered
- Check published info

(http://www.investigative-journalism-africa.info/?page_id=182)
Test your idea

- Is the story idea interesting or new?
- For what audience?
- Why now?
- Is it possible? (Constraints of time, location, money)
- What might be consequences of your news story?
Testing newsworthiness

- It will have great impact on people.
- It’s unusual or unexpected.
- It’s the first of a kind.
- It’s timely.
- It’s controversial.
- It involves prominent people.
- It deals with death or tragedy.
- It has to do with your country.
- It concerns an important issue.
- It is of human interest.
- It’s useful.
- It’s “out there.” (As in getting widespread interest elsewhere.)

Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production, Jonathan Kern
The interview

- Open-ended questions to encourage complete, meaningful answers (e.g. 'Why' or 'How' or phrases such as 'Tell me about...')
- Closed questions to elicit short or one-word answers such as 'yes' or 'no'. (To be avoided except for a dramatic effect. 'So, after three deaths in as many years, are you going to resign?')
- Follow-up questions to pick up on answers given and explore further one aspect of it.
- Leading questions to prompt answer in a particular way. contain affirmations or interpretations that slant response. --> undesirable as it is not objective and is often manipulative.