

SUMMARY OF THE REID INTERROGATION TECHNIQUE¹

SET UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Contains instructions on how to set room up before interrogation so that suspect is in plain view.▪ Once seated, interrogation begins; just before interrogation begins, have rapport stage; Nonconfrontational interview (20-45 minutes);▪ Use of Bait Questions (Is there any reason why witnesses would be telling us you were at the crime scene?)▪ Use of Behavior Provoking Response Questions (What do you think should happen to the person who committed this crime?)▪ Gives instructions on how to interpret verbal and non-verbal behaviors (which attributes dishonesty to many non-verbal behaviors that are typical manifestations of anxiety).
STEP ONE: THE POSITIVE CONFRONTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Confront suspect with guilt▪ Repeat several times▪ Look for signs of deception▪ Even without evidence, assure suspect he or she is guilty▪ Persuade suspect he or she is caught and powerless to change situation▪ Shift from rapport-building to confrontation mode occurs quickly, suddenly: “We’re not here to talk about whether you committed the crime, but why you did it.” – MESSAGE CONVEYED: “We think you’re guilty; we have evidence that you’re guilty, and confession would give you some benefit later.”
STEP TWO: THEME DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Minimize suspect’s guilt▪ Show sympathy▪ Gain trust (“I know you’re not a bad person.” “We want to help you out.”)

STEP THREE: HANDLING DENIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interrupt all statements of denial ▪ Innocent denials are “spontaneous, forceful, direct” ▪ Guilty denials are “defensive, qualified, hesitant” ▪ (Not true, but keep interrupting to show control over suspect)
STEP FOUR: OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We know you did it, doesn’t matter what you say, we know ▪ When the suspect says something like, “I wouldn't steal money. I'm an honest person,” the interrogator then incorporates the objection into the theme, such as: “Yes, of course you are an honest person; that's why we're sure you'd only do this because of your desperate financial straits.”
STEP FIVE: PROCURING AND RETAINING THE SUSPECT’S ATTENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not lose suspect’s attention ▪ Keep suspect talking and alert; touch them; use eye contact; get closer
STEP SIX: HANDLING THE SUSPECT’S PASSIVE MOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Show sympathy; urge suspect to tell truth ▪ “Just help us out.” “We just need you to help us and tell us what happened.” “We know you’re not a bad person.”
STEP SEVEN: PRESENTING AN ALTERNATIVE QUESTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The two choices are both guilty, but one is the maximized version that is presented – the one the interrogator says everyone will assume occurred if there is no confession – and the other alternative is the minimized version per the theme developed ▪ E.g., angry and wanted revenge vs. accident
STEP EIGHT: DETAILING THE OFFENSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get suspect to provide details of crime/things only the criminal would know

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Often done by giving suspect photos of crime scene; telling suspect about the crime; taking suspect to crime scene; anything to get suspect to share info
STEP NINE: ELEMENTS OF ORAL AND WRITTEN STATEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get written and signed confession ▪ Once written, police type up their own version of the confession and purposefully insert errors; cross them out; get suspect to initial them; and get suspect to sign each page (this makes it appear that suspect read and edited the statement)
CAUTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instruct students that they should not use unless reasonably certain of the suspect's guilt ▪ Instruct investigators to "use caution" when using the technique with juveniles (but also say that same rules that apply to adults apply to youth)

¹ These "steps" are outlined on JOHN E. REID & ASSOC., http://www.reid.com/educational_info/critictchnique.html (last visited June 27, 2012) ; the titles of each step come from the Reid informational brochure; *see also* Fred E. Inbau, CRIMINAL INTERROGATIONS AND CONFESSIONS (4th ed. 2004). The summary of the steps was created by an attorney familiar with the technique who is not affiliated with John E. Reid Interrogations, Inc.