The Funnel

Types of Questions

1. Open Questions
   - Describe... Explain... Please tell me...
   - Examples:
     1. What happened?
     2. What time...?
     3. Were you alone?

2. Follow Up
   - Examples:
     2. What lane...?

3. Closed
   - Examples:
     3. Was he injured?
     4. You were traveling less than 25 mph weren't you?
     5. Let me make sure I have all the reasons the other driver was at fault:
        a)... b)... c)...

4. Leading
   - Examples:
     Your son was the only passenger?

5. Summary

As shown in the diagram, a lawyer will start with an open question to elicit a broad response. As the lawyer learns more about the client's situation, the lawyer will move from open questions to follow up and then closed questions. When the lawyer thinks she has obtained a fairly clear picture of the situation, she then begins to ask a few leading questions to confirm that she has learned the necessary details. Finally, after she has a complete picture of the client's situation, she then asks some summary questions to verify that she does in fact have the complete picture and has not misunderstood or forgotten any of the important facts. By asking these five types of questions in an orderly pattern, the lawyer has "funneled" the information and ensured that she has gotten all the important details as well as the entire picture.