



## INTERVIEW STEPS

### PREPARATIONS

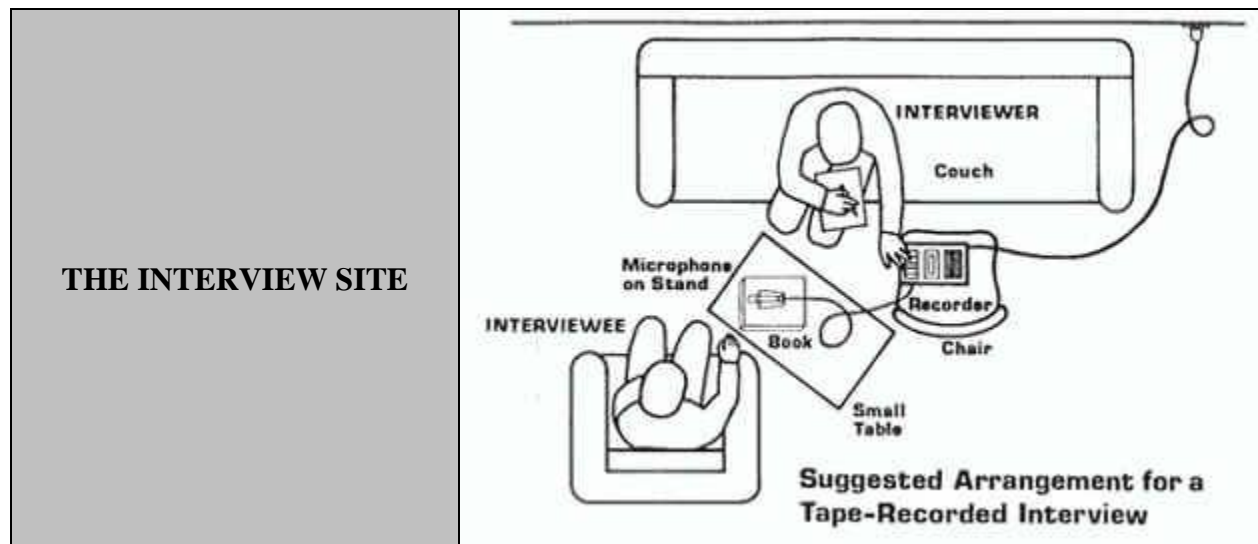
- **Contact a prospective narrator.** Explain the significance of your study or project and see if they have pertinent information they would like to share.
- **Familiarize yourself** with the major events of the period to be discussed so you can formulate clear questions. Gain as much background on the narrator as possible.
- **A brief pre-interview meeting** may be arranged if you feel this would put the narrator more at ease. Make an appointment in the not too distant future to conduct the interview.
- **Prepare an outline** of topics to be discussed. Share these with the narrator.
- **Pre-interview mechanics - The Cassette Tape Recorder**
  1. Read through the owner's manual.
  2. **Practice** using the machine.
  3. Use good-quality, Type I C-60 (30 minutes per side) or Type I C-90 (45 minutes per side) cassettes.
  4. Use an external microphone.
  5. Use electrical power rather than batteries wherever possible; if batteries must be used, make sure they are fresh or recently charged.

### • Take with you:



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> audio recorder   | <input type="checkbox"/> batteries (take extra)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> external microphone  | <input type="checkbox"/> agreement forms                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> extension cord   | <input type="checkbox"/> topic outline and prepared questions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> labeled cassette tapes (low noise, hi output; Type 1; for spoken word) | <input type="checkbox"/> pencil and paper                     |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> rubber band                          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> camera                               |

## SEATING ARRANGEMENTS



- **Arrive on time and well rested.** Polite, friendly behavior will put your narrator at ease.

Interviews should not begin abruptly. Take time to introduce yourself and your project once again. Talk about the weather, for example, as an ice-breaker.

- **Minimize external noises** (singing birds, chiming clocks, appliances) at the interview site. Your recorder will hear and record everything.
- **Test machine** to make sure it is working properly
- **Try to have only three participants in the interview:** narrator, you, and the recorder. Position the microphone near the narrator. Unless another person is needed to translate or facilitate the interview, tactfully mention that oral history interviews are usually with one person at a time.
- Review **IRB consent form** and ask narrator to sign **BEFORE** beginning oral history.
- Put **agreement form** and rubber band in view.

## THE INTERVIEW

- **Formally begin the interview** by recording the introduction: name of narrator, interviewer, date (including year), place, and project name. Also describe the setting, what kind of a day it is (i.e. sunny and warm, cold and dreary, etc.).
- **Ask one question at a time** and do not rush the narrator to respond. Silences will make for a better interview; pause 10 seconds before asking another question.
- **Ask as many open ended questions as possible.** These require more than a yes/no answer and encourage the narrator to tell stories.

- **Listen actively to the narrator and then ask follow-up questions** like "What happened next?" or "How did that make you feel?" Respond appropriately to the narrator. Pause or say something like "That must have been difficult" if the narrator relates a painful memory.
- **Visually encourage the speaker.** Take notes unobtrusively so you can return to a topic. Turn tape over or change tapes without disrupting the middle of a story if possible.
- **Ask if there is anything the narrator would like to add.**
- **Record your thanks on tape.**

#### **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

- **Check that you have the agreement forms signed and dated.**
- **Avoid making promises** you may not be able to keep.
- **Thank the narrator** by mail.
- **Make a list of proper names for transcriber.** (Proper Name form)
- **Label** tapes and box
- **Duplicate original tape**
- **Create *Tape Log***
- **Create *Field Notes***
- **Create *Document and/or Photograph Description***
- **Transcribe** tape (if required)
- **Create Index** (if required)
- **Save** textual documents and/or images to CD (see detailed instruction page)