

Conducting your Interview

Helpful Interviewing Tips

Write or discuss a list of open-ended questions that allow the interviewee to give a lengthy answer. For example, "What was it like when you came to Carroll County?", rather than "Was it nice coming to Carroll County?"

Come up with phrases that will encourage interviewees to give the most complete and specifically detailed answers. Interviewers should generate responses like, "Can you tell me more...Can you give me an example of..."

Allow enough practice time for use of the equipment available (tape recorders, camcorders, film, or other) to familiarize yourself with the basic function of the cameras and microphones. This will include conducting simple sound and visual checks.

Interviewers should create a checklist of all the materials they need: interview questions, tape or video recorder, extra batteries, extra tapes, talent release form, paper and pencil.

When meeting the interviewee, interviewers should introduce themselves and thank the person for their time.

Begin each interview with an introduction of the interviewee, and a comment about gathering background information. This provides valuable information and a warm-up for both.

After gathering background information, move into open-ended questions, being careful to listen, encourage follow-up questions, and not cut off answers. If an interviewee digresses too much, students can always return to the topic by repeating or rephrasing a question, for example, "Let's return to your arrival in Carroll County...."

During the interview, students should remain respectful and polite, and never disagree, argue, or judge the interviewee.

Interviews run between one-half hour and one hour. Thank the person at the end of the interview.

Immediately after the interview, label all tapes with the person's name, your name, and the date.

Be sure to collect the signed consent forms with the tapes.

If you experience any technical difficulties while conducting your interview, contact 410.386.4415 to reach the CMC during its business hours (M-F 8:30-6).