Tips for Interviews

Questions

• Try to develop one good lead question to open your conversation.
• Include background info that must be collected.
• Jot new questions as they occur during interview.

Interview

• Be friendly.
• Listen rather than trying to impress the subject with your knowledge.
• Get information in the person’s own words. Pause after answers to give the subject the chance to elaborate. Sometimes the best follow-up question is no question.
• Be responsive: make eye contact, nod, and smile!
• Be polite. If the subject starts to ramble, listen. When they pause, then you can change the subject.
• Focus on answers, not questions.
• Let an answer lead naturally to next question rather than worrying about what else you want to ask. You can refer to your list of questions at a break or pause to get conversation going again.
• At end, take a minute to briefly review your questions to ensure you got needed background info, or remembered to ask crucial questions.

Notes

• Don't focus so hard on taking notes that you miss answers. Notes are to jog your memory later. You don't have to get down every word.
• Use abbreviations, shorthand, and quick phrases rather than full sentences.
• Take more careful notes on anything you might want to quote. You can leave out obvious words like the. Put potential quotations in quotation marks so that you will remember that it is a quote.
• If having trouble getting something down accurately, ask the person you’re interviewing to pause for a minute, and read back the words. No one wants to be misquoted.