

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.