

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

TEST

Take a few moments to set up and test your equipment; use this time to chat with the narrator to ease both of your nerves.

INTRO

Introduce your tape, so you can recognize it later.

"THIS IS _____, INTERVIEWING _____ ON
(DATE) AT (PLACE) FOR (NAME OF PROJECT)"

QUESTIONS

Ask simple, open-ended questions that allow the narrator to tell a story, not just answer 'yes' or 'no.' Good questions to start with are:

- > CAN YOU TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT WHERE YOU COME FROM?
- > WHAT WAS (EVENT, PLACE, PERSON) LIKE? CAN YOU DESCRIBE _____ ?
- > WHAT WAS A DAY IN YOUR LIFE DURING THAT TIME?
- > CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT AN IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP OR PERSON IN YOUR LIFE?

TIPS

> Silence is okay! It may feel uncomfortable at first, but it gives the narrator a chance to think or share more, and gives you a chance to collect your thoughts and reflect.

> If you can't think of a next question, don't panic! You can say "I'm still thinking about what you just said," or ask a simple follow-up question.

> Keep your body language open and engaged. Give visual affirmation (like nodding), and occasional verbal feedback ("that was really interesting," "thank you for sharing that,").