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.

Introduce your tape, so you can recognize it later.

"This is _________, interviewing _________ on (date) at (place) for (name of project)"

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?

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,”).