

## Conducting an Oral History Interview

When students are ready to conduct their interviews,  
share the following tips with them:

### Interview Tips

1. Arrive promptly and with an outline of topics you would like to cover. However, be sure to allow for flexibility. Some of the most fascinating stories may be revealed when seniors stray from your outline.
2. Have the interviewee sign a release form; recollections and other information in the interview cannot be used if a form is not signed.
3. Allot two hours for the interview. The interview will not last this long.
4. However, time is needed to work into and wind down from the interview session.
5. Ask clear, open-ended questions beginning with Why, Who, What, Where, When, or How. These usually require the interviewee to give a more detailed answer rather than a simple "Yes" or "No."
6. Be attentive and polite during the interview. A person is more likely to share information when the interviewer is interested and sharp.
7. Do not interrupt interviewees. Let them finish their thoughts or stories, then ask them to repeat what was missed.
8. If something is said with which you do not agree, keep your opinion to yourself. Remaining neutral will prevent arguments.
9. Do not ask emotionally sensitive or personal questions.
10. Ask interviewees if they have any photos or material objects that may compliment their interviews. Seek guidance from a museum professional as to the proper handling techniques of any donated or loaned artifacts.
11. Photograph interview sessions and other intergenerational activities to supplement your oral history project.
12. Thank the interviewees for their time and let them know when you will be in touch with them next. They are probably very anxious to see what you will do with their interviews.

**Now you are ready to write up your biographies!**