

## Interviewing for Research - Preparing for an Interview

- Points to consider
- Check List
- Practise interviewing

### Points to consider

Before the interview you should :

- Have done some homework on the topics to be talked about. Depending on the circumstances of the interview this will vary from a thorough knowledge of the subject and its literature to a basic awareness of relevant terminology etc.
- Have put together an outline of the questions/topics you are going to ask about. Your questionnaire or study guide doesn't need to be huge, but should cover major topics and related issues.
- Have a think about the structure of the interview. Whether you are conducting a three, two, or one interview format, you will need to have an idea of whether you are going to let the interviewee decide the topics, follow a chronological path through certain events, or concentrate on specific topics.
- Be able to use correctly all your recording equipment.

### Check List

Many interviewers like to draw up a check list of things they will need to take to the interview. For example:

- Directions and/or a map
- Some form of identification
- Recording equipment
- Spare batteries, cassettes etc.
- Notepad and pen
- Relevant documents/literature

### Practice Interviewing

There is a lot to do in an interview. An interviewer will listen to and remember what is being said, be aware of the developing themes of the interview, look for non-verbal cues, and often monitor a recording. The only way of getting used to doing this is to go out and interview people. To banish the nerves of the first few interviews it is advisable to have a practice interview or two with colleagues or friends.

Paul Thompson's life history interview schedule for his 'Edwardian Lives' project can be found here:

<http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/online/data/Edwardians/schedule.asp>