



General Recording Tips

- Before you start the event, a sound check (where you record a few words from each subject and then listen to make sure the result is clear) is helpful. When doing a sound check, make sure to speak at the distance from the microphone that you will be at during the entire interview and be sure to check all participants.
- Try to minimize background noise. Some common sources of background noise include:
 - Traffic, construction and other street noise coming through open (or even closed) windows.
 - Noise from adjacent rooms or hallways.
 - Machinery running in the background, e.g. fans or air conditioners.
 - TV sets and radios.
 - People making noise in the background.
 - Pets or other animals.
 - Clocks with audible tones.
 - Doors shutting.
 - Coughs, sneezes, etc.
- If anyone is leaving or entering the room during the conversation, encourage them to close the door softly and encourage speakers to pause while the door is being opened.
- Place the microphone(s) as close to the speaker(s) as possible and have the microphone(s) pointing directly toward the speaker(s).
- If in an interview with only one microphone, direct the microphone towards the interviewee. Typically, it is less of a concern to miss out on the transcription of the questions than the answers.
- If you are using lapel microphones, make sure they will not brush up against a piece of clothing and that they are able to record the speaker's voice when his or her head is turned.
- If it is important to correctly reference people, places, web sites, organizations, etc. that the layperson might not know or be able to easily distinguish, it is ideal to repeat them clearly or spell them out.
- Alternatively, if your project involves many references to technical terminology, consider sending Landmark a list of terms likely to have been used. The more context the we have, the more accurate we can make the finished product for you.
- If you are concerned about sound quality of a recorded interview, please consider having the interviewer(s) repeat important responses.
- If an interviewer(s) is using a standard list of questions, please consider providing that list with the recorded interview.



Additional Tips for Multiple Speaker Situations

- It is very important to have a microphone for each speaker. This is commonly done in conferences, but often overlooked in focus groups, group interviews or other smaller settings. Having a speaker a material distance from a microphone almost guarantees that their contributions will be obscured by background noise.
- If you have multiple speakers, it is ideal to be able to identify each speaker each time she or he speaks. The speaker or the facilitator can do this; having identification makes it possible for Landmark to label each speaker individually in the transcript. At the very least, it is preferable for the speakers to introduce themselves at the beginning in their own voice for this identification purpose.
- An active facilitator is very important when recording focus groups. These groups often devolve into overlapping conversation and the result can be the of lost information in the transcription. In addition, parsing multiple speakers apart adds to the cost of the transcript. Repeated requests to speak one at a time usually result in a much more complete and useable transcript.
- If you have an audience asking questions and are not using a separate microphone for them, you can ask your speakers to repeat the question that has been asked, before answering it.