



Unit II Classroom Applications of Fieldwork Basics  
Lesson 3 and 5

## Transcribing an Interview Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Select a short portion of a tape to transcribe in the text box below, or on notebook paper. Before starting, write the number on the tape counter at the beginning point. Transcribe until you fill all the lines in the text box. When you have finished filling up the text box, write the ending number on the tape counter. Here are some points to remember:

1. Write down each word you hear. Stop the tape when needed, rewind occasionally and listen to the same section as you read along, making sure you wrote the words in the correct order. You may need to do this several times. If you can't understand the words, ask another person to listen or simply leave a blank space.
2. Each time a new speaker talks, use their full name and then initials so readers can follow along. Maria Hernandez would be MH, etc.
3. People talk much differently than they write. They begin new sentences without finishing the old one. They may add a lot of extra words (called "crutch words") such as "you know" and "yeah." If you think the words are crutch words and you want to leave these out of your transcript, say so at the beginning. "I removed crutch words and false starts from this transcript." Also say whether you are including all the "uhs" and "ums" and "ahs."

Some hints:

- Sometimes sentences aren't complete. That's okay. Just write what you hear. When a sentence is not complete, put a dash at the end (-).
- To add your own comment or explain something that the interviewee didn't fully say, put brackets [ ] around your words. For example, "I learned how to do it [to crochet] when I was nine years old."
- Don't try to make your transcript sound better by adding your own words or correcting grammar.
- Use standard spelling and don't try to write in dialect or "how it sounds." In other words, write "that" instead of "dat," even if "dat" is what you hear.
- Sometimes it's not easy to see where one sentence ends and another begins. Just write it the best way you can. The main idea is that the transcript is accurate and comes close to how the speaker really sounds.
- If you can't hear the words, leave a blank and come back to it later or have someone else listen to the tape. If you still can't figure it out, use ellipses . . . three spaced dots . . .to represent something left out.
- If you want to emphasize a word, use *italics*.

Here's a sample transcript:

Anna Hernandez: Aunt Maria, well, I was wondering what kinds of vegetables you use in your chicken soup?

Maria Hernandez: I like to use celery, parsnips and carrots mostly, but I always use, see, like these here. I always use carrots. If we have potatoes, of course I throw those in. [Tastes the soup].

AH: How do you cut up the vege—

MH: --Carrots—I always put carrots in, you know, in thick slices, but it doesn't much matter how I do the potatoes. No special way, really.

You'll find that transcribing a tape is an art in itself. No two people will transcribe the same tape the same way.

