



Our Elders' Stories

Week 1 and 2 Choosing your elder, preparing for the interview and giving the interview.

Our elders are very important in our lives.

They show us love and teach us. You are

going to interview an elder in your family and

tell their story.

Tasks:

- Interview your elder and take notes (interview means to just talk to your elder about their lives)
- Use those notes to write their story
- Draw a picture of your elder.

Step One: Choosing someone to write about ...

Hopefully you have more than one elder in your family that you can learn more about. Before you decide who you want to write about...

- Choose someone who is 60 years old or older. It can be anyone in your family, grandparent, aunt or uncle, etc...

Step Two: Prepare...

- If you can record your interview, that will help you. You can go back and listen again. It also makes a great family keepsake.
- Have paper and pencil ready... You can have someone help you take notes too.
- I have given you interview questions. You can add your own too.

- If you elder speaks a different language than you, a parent can ask the questions and take the notes. They can then interpret the notes for you later and you can write them in English

Step Three: The Interview...

- Set up a time with your elder. It can be in:
 - Person
 - By phone
 - By email
 - By computer Skype/Messenger etc..

With this information you will organize the details of their lives into a biography. It is your job to “show” that these people were important and that their lives were unique, interesting and affected you and your culture.

Tips for your interview

- **Learn how to listen.** A wise man once said, “If one of our elders passes away, it is just as though a library has burned to the ground.” It’s really important to sit at the knee of our elders and learn.
- Biography will be 4 parts **Spring (birth-18), Summer (19-40), Fall (41-60), Winter (60-Present).**
- **Have questions prepared,** but remember that some of the best stories are the ones that come naturally. You don’t have to follow the questions.. If you think of some as you talk, ask them, even if they are not on your list.
- You do not have to ask all these questions and you do not have to use all of them in your writing. These are just ideas.

Interview Questions

Spring Questions: (birth-18)

1. What city were you born in?
2. Describe your childhood home. Tell me a memory about growing up in that house.
3. Where did you grow up and what was it like there?
4. As a child, did you have pets? Were any special to you?
5. What did you enjoy doing as a child?
6. What was your favorite outdoor activity?
7. How did you celebrate holidays/special occasions?
8. Tell me a story about your favorite holiday memory.
9. Did you attend any religious services (church, temple, mosque etc...) What was it like? Were you in a youth group?
10. Describe your brothers and sisters. Tell me some stories
11. Describe you parents. What were they like? What did they do?
12. Where did your father work? What is your favorite memory of him?
13. Did your mother have a job? What is your favorite memory of her?
14. Describe your grandparents. What did you enjoy most about them?
15. What was school like for you? Did you enjoy it?
16. What was your best and worst memory of school?
17. Who were some of your friends growing up and what kind of things did you enjoy doing?
18. Did your friends ever get you in trouble when you were younger?
19. What were some of your chores (house responsibilities) and did you get an allowance?
20. How old were you when you went on your first date? Where did you go?

21. What were some of your first jobs? How much did you make?
22. What did you like to do in your free time?
23. What were some of the crazy fads (dress styles) you or your friends went through?
24. Did you like a famous person? What did you like about them?
25. Were you poor growing up? How did that affect you?
26. What did you always want to be when you grew up?
27. What is your favorite/least favorite childhood memory?
28. Tell about a time you got in trouble by your parents?
29. Tell about a time you got in trouble at school?
30. Did you have any jobs as a teen?
31. Did you go to any kind of school or training after high school?
What was that like?

Summer Questions (19-40)

1. Have you been in the military?
2. How did you meet your husband/wife and what did you like about them?
3. What are some of your best memories about dating them?
4. What was your wedding like?
5. What jobs have you had as an adult? Which did you like the best/least?
6. What was it like when you had your children? What are your favorite memories with your kids. (if it is a grandparent, the kid would be your mom or dad)
7. What hopes did you have for my mom/dad when she/he was born?
8. What kind of activities did you do as a family?
9. How did you celebrate holidays/special occasions with your kids?
10. What is one thing you wanted to do differently with your kids from your parents?
11. What kind of activities did you like to do as a young adult?

Autumn Questions (40-60)

1. What was it like when you had grandchildren? (this might be you)
2. What are some fond memories you have of your grandchildren?
3. What were/are your dreams for retirement?
4. If you could go back and change on thing about your life, what would it be?

Winter and Extra Questions: (60-present) and extra

1. What is your favorite thing about being retired?
2. What are some favorites? (color, food, ice cream, book, movie, song, sport, etc)
3. Is there something you wish you could do over again?
4. What things do you find yourself doing that you said you'd "never" do.
5. Tell me about a time in your life you will never forget.
6. What are some of the changes in the world that you have seen in your lifetime?
7. What great historical events you have experienced in your lifetime?
8. What is something that you are really proud of and why?
9. What are the goals you are still working toward?
10. When people look back at your life, how do you want to be remembered?
11. What is the best advise your parents gave you?