



THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN
TEACHER TOOLKIT
2016

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FOR **TEACHERS**

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FOR **STUDENTS**

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Dear Teachers,

Thank you so much for downloading the 2016 Great Thanksgiving Listen toolkit. Last year was a watershed year for us as we introduced the StoryCorps app and were at last able to scale the StoryCorps experience through The Great Thanksgiving Listen (TGTL).

When I started StoryCorps 13 years ago, I wanted to give everyday people the chance to be listened to and leave a record of their lives for future generations. It's always been a very simple idea: Find someone you want to honor with an interview—a grandparent, a sibling, a mentor, or a friend—sit across from them for 40 minutes, ask important questions, and listen carefully to their answers. Many people think of it as: “If this was to be our last conversation, what would I ask of or say to this person who means so much to me?” The interview is uploaded to the Library of Congress so that someday, through your voice and words, your great-great-great-grandchildren can meet you and the person you chose to honor in this recording.

In 2015, we asked high school students studying American History and their teachers to work together to create an oral history of the contemporary United States by interviewing an elder or someone else in their lives over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Thousands of students from all 50 states embraced the challenge by recording and uploading over 50,500 individual interviews. Together, we preserved thousands of important personal histories as well as helped create a valuable resource for future generations. Nothing close to this scale has ever been achieved before in the history of oral history.

Following the 2015 TGTL, we talked to teachers about their and their students' experiences. Ninety-nine percent told us that they would both participate again in the years to come, and recommend participation to another teacher. Those numbers are driving us to make the 2016 TGTL even bigger and better. At StoryCorps, we know the significant impact you can have on the lives of your students and those they choose to honor with a TGTL interview. By taking part, together, you can help them create a precious gift whose impact will be felt for centuries to come.

Thank you again for your interest in The Great Thanksgiving Listen.

Warm regards,



Dave Isay

President and Founder, StoryCorps



ABOUT THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN

The Great Thanksgiving Listen (TGTL) is a national education project that empowers high school students to connect with an elder over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend and record an interview using the free StoryCorps app. With consent of all participants, these treasured recordings will be entered into the StoryCorps archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, where they become an invaluable resource for future historians and provide families with a priceless piece of personal history.

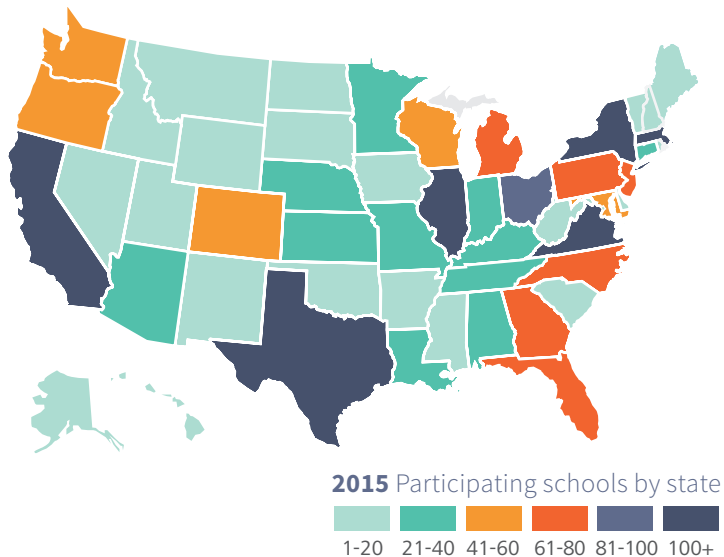
In TGTL's pilot year of 2015, thousands of high schools from all 50 states participated and preserved over 50,500 individual recordings at the Library of Congress. In 2016, StoryCorps is again working with educators around the country to preserve the voices and stories of an entire generation of Americans over a single holiday weekend. The project is free and open to all students age 13 and over, whether in private, public, charter, homeschool, or any other educational environment. College students and professors are also welcome to participate.

This toolkit, and our website at thegreatlisten.org, contain everything you need to get started. We look forward to making history with you!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM YEAR ONE

School districts nationwide participated, including:

- ✓ Chicago Public Schools
- ✓ District of Columbia Public Schools
- ✓ Boston Public Schools
- ✓ Atlanta Public Schools
- ✓ School District of Philadelphia
- ✓ The Los Angeles Unified School District
- ✓ Austin Independent School District





TEACHER TESTIMONIAL

“Without exception, my students reported this as a positive experience, even saying that this was **the best and most in-depth conversation they had ever had with their family member**. I will be utilizing this app for many, many years to come. Thank you, StoryCorps!”

—SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER, 2015

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

The Great Thanksgiving Listen uses technology to help students improve:

- ✓ Research, interviewing, and planning skills
- ✓ Speaking skills that enable them to express ideas clearly
- ✓ Listening skills that reflect increased comprehension, lead to critical analysis, and advance discussion

TGTL 2015 BY THE NUMBERS

We surveyed teachers who participated in 2015 and the response was amazing. Here's what they told us:

99% would participate again

99% would recommend to other teachers

92% observed increased connectedness among students, families, and communities

74% said students developed an increased interest in learning

PARTICIPATING EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS 2015

We partnered with major national education organizations, including:



ABOUT STORYCORPS

Founded in 2003, the nonprofit organization StoryCorps has given more than 250,000 people the chance to record interviews about their lives, pass wisdom from one generation to the next, and leave a legacy for the future. StoryCorps shares edited excerpts of these recordings with millions each week through popular weekly NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. StoryCorps' mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.




BACKGROUND INFORMATION

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

- The Great Thanksgiving Listen was developed for high school students studying American History, but we actively encourage teachers to customize it to any other class or extracurricular activity.
- Introduce the project at least two weeks prior to Thanksgiving to provide time for students to plan their interview and practice using the app.
- Under the app's terms of use: Children *under the age of 13* may NOT participate in TGTL, and parental consent is required for students *under the age of 18* to register for a StoryCorps app account.
- Currently the StoryCorps app is only available in English, but students may record in any language.
- Students should not be required to publish their interviews in order to receive credit. This is to preserve participant privacy. The lesson plan contains recommendations for those who prefer to keep their recordings private.

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Students will need access to a smartphone (Apple iPhone or Android device) with both the latest software and the most recent version of the free StoryCorps app (available through the iTunes store or the Google Play store).
 - Students will need desktop access to the StoryCorps.me website either at home or in the classroom, as well as a strong Wi-Fi signal to upload interviews. (Please note: Some schools block internet access. This will require students to access StoryCorps.me from either their homes or another public site.)
 - iPads ARE NOT recommended for use with the StoryCorps app due to technical limitations.
 - StoryCorps DOES NOT recommend students use a shared classroom device.
 - For students without access to a device or without parental consent (see below), teachers can easily modify TGTL to allow for basic participation. Modifications are noted in the lesson plan.
-  **Tip:** Before assigning this to your students, familiarize yourself with the app by publishing a short test upload (5-10 seconds). You'll receive an email from StoryCorps when your upload is complete.

PARENTAL CONSENT

If you choose to require a parental permission slip, we have included a sample one in this toolkit that you can easily customize to your needs. (Please note: The permission slip is for school use only and SHOULD NOT be submitted to StoryCorps.)



STUDENT PRIVACY

After recording, students will have the option to publish their interviews. If published, the interviews will be entered into the StoryCorps archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and appear publicly online at StoryCorps.me. If the students do not want to publish their interviews, they can save the interviews to their devices. (Please note: Only interviews published to the StoryCorps.me website are archived at the Library of Congress. Even after publishing, a student will always have the option to remove the interview from StoryCorps.me.)

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

The StoryCorps app and the StoryCorps.me website contain user-generated content that is not reviewed before it is posted online. While we adhere to a strict set of Community Guidelines and work to maintain a culture of tolerance and acceptance, not all published content will be appropriate for all individuals. We also have a flagging mechanism in place to help further identify content that violates our Community Guidelines. We ask teachers to familiarize themselves with StoryCorps.me, to review the Community Guidelines listed there, and to use discretion in adopting the project.

STORYCORPS.ORG AND STORYCORPS.ME

StoryCorps.org is StoryCorps' signature website and contains an archive of our broadcasts, our animations, and an overview of our different initiatives and programs.

StoryCorps.me contains information and resources for users of the StoryCorps app. Interviews that are published through the app appear publicly online at StoryCorps.me—your students will find their published interviews online here.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Please visit thegreatlisten.org and subscribe to our newsletter. We'll be sending great updates, tips, and recommendations throughout the fall.



QUESTIONS

- If you have questions, or want more information about the app, StoryCorps.me, and TGTL 2016, check out thegreatlisten.org, where you can access our Support and FAQ pages.
- Contact us at contactus@storycorps.org or via social media @StoryCorps #thegreatlisten. Unfortunately, we do not provide telephone support for this project, but if you or your students email us, you will receive a receipt and we will get back to you as quickly as possible during regular business hours.



LESSON PLAN

PARTICIPATING IN THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN

For this project, students will use the StoryCorps app to record an interview with an elder in their family or community. At the conclusion of the interview, the student and their recording partner will have the option to enter it into the StoryCorps archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. This lesson plan provides materials to introduce students to StoryCorps and oral histories, prepares them to conduct their own interviews, and provides ideas for follow-up after the holiday weekend.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-12.2-4

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-12.1-10

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-12.6-9

Use technology, including the internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

LESSON

TARGET GRADE LEVEL 9–12

OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Learn about StoryCorps and the interview concept
- ☐ Use questions to develop a story and express a shared experience
- ☐ Create a primary source using technology (and have the option to enter it into the historical record)
- ☐ Write archive-quality titles, summaries, and keywords

MATERIALS

- ☐ Wi-Fi access (at home or in classroom)
- ☐ Free StoryCorps app, downloaded to an iPhone or Android device
- ☐ Student worksheets
- ☐ Permission slips (optional)



MULTIMEDIA MATERIALS

Please visit StoryCorps.me/about/multimedia for a variety of multimedia materials to help you introduce your class to StoryCorps and TGTL. You will find videos, animations, audio files and tips for learning effective interview skills.

StoryCorps Background

- ▶ An Intro to StoryCorps from our Founder Dave Isay (3 min.)
- ▶ Eyes on the Stars (3 min.)
- ▶ John and Joe (4 min.)
- ▶ Clean Streets (3 min.)
- ▶ No More Questions (4 min.)
- ▶ The Icing on the Cake (3 min.)

The Great Thanksgiving Listen

- ▶ The Great Thanksgiving Listen from StoryCorps & Google (1 min.)
- ▶ Dave Isay's 2016 TED Talk (8 min.)
- ▶ Dave Isay's 2015 TED Talk (22 min.)
- ▶ The Great Thanksgiving Listen Podcast 2015 (21 min.)
- ▶ Interview Tips with Steve Inskeep (3 min.)

TIME NEEDED

- **2–5 hours in class** Most parts of the lesson can be structured for in-class or at-home assignments.
- **1–3 hours out of classroom** Students will conduct their interviews (5–40 minutes) at home or in a location convenient for the student and their partner.

INTRODUCTION (IN CLASS)

- Introduce students to StoryCorps and The Great Thanksgiving Listen using the multimedia materials and student worksheets.
- Obtain permission slips (optional).

PREPARATION (AT HOME OR IN CLASS)

- Students prepare for interviews using the Student Background Worksheet, Interview Planning Worksheet, and Great Questions List.
- Students choose a recording partner and reach out to them to plan a date, location, and time for their interview. When contacting their recording partners, students should describe TGTL and provide a few sample questions to let their partners prepare for the upcoming interview.
- It is a great idea for students to download the app, register for their accounts, and do a practice upload prior to conducting their official interview. If you have Wi-Fi and desktop access in your classroom, you can have students conduct test uploads as an in-class activity by recording a 10-second “test” interview and publishing it. They can also practice this at home. Students will receive an email at the registered account address when their upload has been transmitted to StoryCorps.me. (Please note: Sometimes it can take up to an hour for a published interview to appear on StoryCorps.me.)



OPTIONAL INTERVIEW PRACTICE ACTIVITY (IN CLASS)

- ☐ Watch the animated video *Interview Tips with Steve Inskeep* (available on the multimedia resources page).
- ☐ Introduce a list of follow-up questions (e.g. “Can you tell me more about that?” “Why you think that happened?” “What do you mean by that?”).
- ☐ Choose 5 questions from the Great Questions List and select a student volunteer to interview you in a “fishbowl” style (class sits around you and the student volunteer in a circle).
- ☐ During the interview, students in the outside circle listen, and when they see an opportunity to ask a follow-up question, they “pause” the interview by raising their hands and interject with their question. After a few follow-ups are asked, debrief.
- ☐ Have the students practice on their own by breaking into 3-4 different fishbowls for student-student interviews.

ASSIGNMENT (AT HOME)

- ☐ Students conduct their interview over Thanksgiving weekend.
- ☐ With their recording partner, students choose whether to publish the interview, in which case it will be publicly available online and entered into the StoryCorps archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Students can also elect to keep the interview private and stored on their device.
- ☐ Students who publish their interviews should email you the link to the interview on StoryCorps.me. A complete interview requires a title, summary, and keywords (instructions on the Student Background Worksheet).
- ☐ Students who do not publish their interview should still turn in a proposed title, summary, and keywords for their interview, as well as the length of time of their interview.
- ☐ There are lots of ways to participate in this project. If a student does not have access a smartphone or does not have permission to use the app, they can still complete the project using any digital recorder, or they can conduct an unrecorded interview. They should still use the worksheets and to complete the assignment turn in a proposed title, summary, and keywords for their interview, as well as the length of time of their interview.



CLOSING (IN CLASS OR AT HOME)

Discuss

- How did your partner react to the interview experience?
- What challenges did you encounter during your interview, and how did you work to address them?
- Did you have the chance to go “off script” and ask a follow-up question? If so, what question did you ask and how did that change your interview?
- What question evoked a particularly memorable response?
- What did you learn that changed the way you previously thought about an event, person, or your recording partner?
- What makes an interview different from a text as a historical reference?
- What components contribute to differing perspectives of history?
- What could future historians learn about 2016 from listening to your interview?
- Describe why you chose to publish or not publish your audio file.
- What would you do differently if you were to conduct another interview?
- Who else in your life would you like to interview?

Follow-up Activities

Listen to your interview again.

Share your interviews with us @StoryCorps #thegreatlisten.

Write a reflection paper, a follow-up essay, or a poem inspired by your interview.

Transcribe a part of your interview, and/or use quotes from your interview to support another project or research paper.

Create a TED Talk based on the process of preparing for and conducting an interview and present it to the class.

Edit your interview using free editing software (such as Audacity) to create a two-minute excerpt.

Produce a podcast using excerpts from different interviews

Create a visual storyboard of the process of preparing for and conducting the interview, plus what was learned, and present it to the class.

Draw or paint a portrait of your partner inspired by your interview with them.

Host a classroom listening party.

Hold an assembly to highlight favorite stories from your class.

Coordinate with your school or local library to start an oral history project.

Use the app to investigate a social issue in your community (make a list of “sources” you’d like to interview).



SAMPLE PERMISSION SLIP FOR TEACHERS/SCHOOLS

Dear Parents,

Over the coming weeks our class will be participating in a national program created by StoryCorps called The Great Thanksgiving Listen.

Using near-universally accessible smartphone technology, students will record an interview with a grandparent or other elder using the free StoryCorps app to foster meaningful connections within families, communities, and the classroom, and create a firsthand archive of American history and wisdom.

In order for your child to participate in The Great Thanksgiving Listen, you must acknowledge that they are not under the age of 13. If your child is under the age of 18, after downloading the free StoryCorps, they will need your consent to register for an account in accordance with the terms of use.

I understand that this project will include my child recording an interview with an elder and taking a picture with that individual. I understand that with the consent of all interview participants, my child will have the option to publish the interview and photograph online to a public website at www.StoryCorps.me. I understand that the publication of the interview and photograph will result in them both being archived in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

I also understand that publishing an interview online is not a requirement for credit in this project and that my child will have the option to keep the interview and/or photograph private if they or their interview partner desire.

I hereby give permission for (student's name) to participate in The Great Thanksgiving Listen.

(parent/guardian signature), (date)

For more information, please see thegreatlisten.org.

ABOUT STORYCORPS

Founded in 2003, the nonprofit organization StoryCorps has given more than 250,000 people the chance to record interviews about their lives, pass wisdom from one generation to the next, and leave a legacy for the future. StoryCorps shares edited excerpts of these recordings with millions each week through popular weekly NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. StoryCorps' mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.



FOR TEACHERS
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN 2016

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STUDENT BACKGROUND WORKSHEET (4 pages)

LET'S MAKE HISTORY TOGETHER

Welcome to The Great Thanksgiving Listen! By participating in this project, you will join thousands of students across the United States in interviewing an elder over Thanksgiving weekend using the StoryCorps app. If you choose, you and your recording partner will have the option to enter your recording into the StoryCorps archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, where your interview will become a primary source for current and future historians. You will also have a chance to keep your conversation private if you prefer.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The StoryCorps app archive is housed in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. The Library is the nation's first established cultural institution and the largest library in the world, with millions of items including books, recordings, photographs, maps, and manuscripts in its collections. This project offers you and someone you know the unique opportunity to create a new record and preserve it as part of the Library's collections for generations to come.

GETTING STARTED

- ☐ You will need access to a smartphone (iPhone or Android) and to download the free StoryCorps app to participate. You must be 13 or over, and if you are under 18, you need parental consent to create an account on the StoryCorps app.
- ☐ Your StoryCorps app account and password will be the same for logging into StoryCorps.me, a public website where published interviews can be found online. If you decide to publish your interview, this is where it will go.
- ☐ Get comfortable with the app before recording the conversation of a lifetime! Download the app, register for an account with parental permission, record and publish a 10-second test, and log in to your StoryCorps.me account from a desktop to view your test online. You will receive an email from StoryCorps when your file has uploaded. (Please note: it can take up to an hour for published files to appear online, so if you don't see it right away, check back in a little while).
- ☐ Experiment with editing the title, summary, and keywords of a test interview from a desktop computer or your app.
- ☐ Prepare for your interview by reading this sheet all the way through and using the Interview Planning Worksheet and Great Questions List.



TITLE, SUMMARY, AND KEYWORDS

After you conduct your official interview, you will want to give it a great title, summarize it, and add keywords (like tags) to make it easier for your friends and family to find it online. These details will add to the historical archive and serve as guideposts for future scholars who will use keywords to search for and discover your interview in the Library's digital collections. This section provides some tips on writing great titles, summaries, and keywords.

Title: Interview titles are one sentence and refer to the main idea of the interview.

Example: *John Grey and his friend Virginia Brown talk about growing up in Montgomery, Alabama.*


Summary: Summaries are 4–5 sentence descriptions of the interview. Include the location and date of the interview, the names and basic autobiographical details of the participants, and a general overview of the topics discussed.

Example: *In this interview, conducted in November 2016 in Montgomery, Alabama, John Grey (17) interviews his friend and neighbor Virginia Brown (82) about her childhood in the city they both call home. Ms. Brown shares stories about her involvement in the civil rights movement and the effects of the Vietnam War on her family. She also talks about her favorite hobbies as a child (swimming) and as an adult (cooking), and at minute 38 she discloses the secret to her legendary peach pie. At the end of the discussion, Ms. Brown and Mr. Grey share their wishes for the future.*

Keywords: Keywords should include basic places, people, occupations, names of events (especially historical events), and any other important themes or concepts mentioned in the interview.

Example: *Montgomery, AL, civil rights, Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War, hobbies, swimming, cooking, peach pie, wishes for the future, neighbors, friendship, Booker T. Washington Magnet High School, TheGreatListen2016*

- ☐ Try to provide 5–15 keywords
- ☐ If you record in a language other than English, enter that language as a keyword (e.g., Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic).
- ☐ Enter your keywords, along with TheGreatListen2016, in the “general” keywords field. Add your state abbreviation (e.g. AK, CA, TX) in the “places” field.

 **Tip:** To edit your title, summary, or keywords from a desktop computer, log in to your StoryCorps.me account, go to “View Profile” and click on the edit icon (✎) in the upper right hand corner of the interview. To edit from a smartphone, log in to the app, click on (⋮) in the lower right hand corner of your test interview and choose “Edit Interview.”



INTERVIEW DAY

Now that you know how to use the app and write great titles, summaries, and keywords, you're almost ready to record! Prepare your questions and read through the checklist below before the big day so that you know what to expect.



- ☐ The app has a built-in timer and question selection mechanism. You can follow the prompts in the app or use your worksheets as a guide during your conversation.
- ☐ **Prepare your questions in advance**, but be ready to ask follow-up questions and go “off script” if you hear something interesting.
- ☐ Try to **find a quiet place** to conduct your interview.
- ☐ Ask your partner for **permission to record** them before you start.
- ☐ Begin your recording by introducing yourself and ask your partner to introduce themselves. **State the location, date, and year where and when you are conducting the interview** (e.g. Today is November 24, 2016 and we are in Grandpa's living room in Lexington, KY.).
- ☐ The app will prompt you to **take a picture with your partner**. If you'd prefer, you can take a picture of an old photograph of your partner or a piece of paper with the interview date on it.



- After your interview, discuss your options with your partner:
 - (1) **Choose to publish** the interview and photo. Both will appear **publicly** on the StoryCorps.me website and be transmitted to the Library of Congress (you can always remove it from public view later).
 - (2) **Choose NOT to publish** the interview. The audio file and photo will remain local on the device.
- 🔊 **Tip:** If you have trouble publishing over Wi-Fi (don't worry, it happens sometimes!), check the FAQs pages of StoryCorps.me for step-by-step guidance on extracting the audio file from your device and manually uploading it from a desktop or laptop computer.
- **For students who publish:** After uploading, login to your StoryCorps.me account from a desktop or laptop. You can edit your title, summary, and keywords and email your teacher a link to the interview on StoryCorps.me.
- **For students who choose not to publish:** If you decide to keep your interview private (or participated using a digital recorder) email your teacher with the interview duration and provide a sample title, summary, and keywords.
- Remember to **thank your recording partner and send them a link to your published interview.**
- 🔊 **Tip:** You are welcome to conduct as many interviews as you like.
- 🔊 **Tip:** If you change your mind after recording, you can remove your interview from public view by logging into your account at StoryCorps.me and deleting it. **Be sure to create a backup by saving the file to your desktop before you delete it, as once it is deleted from StoryCorps.me we cannot recover it.**

We at StoryCorps thank you for making history with us!



QUESTIONS

- If you have questions, please check thegreatlisten.org, where you can access our Support & FAQ pages. You will find the answers to most of your questions there.
- If you have any trouble, we invite you to reach out to us via email at contactus@storycorps.org. You will receive a receipt for your email that you can provide to your teacher while you wait for us to respond promptly.
- We do not provide phone support for The Great Thanksgiving Listen, but we will do our best to respond promptly to every email inquiry.



INTERVIEW PLANNING WORKSHEET (1 page)

GETTING STARTED

(Q) Who will you interview?

(A)

(Q) How old is your interview partner?

(A)

(Q) Why did you choose this person?

(A)

QUESTION PREPARATION

In this section you will prepare 10–15 questions that you will ask your partner.

Using the app or the Great Questions List, write out the questions that you will ask your partner. If you are using the app, you can select and store your questions in the app, but also write them down below:

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

(8)

(9)

(10)

(11)

(12)

(13)

(14)

(15)



GREAT QUESTIONS LIST (2 pages)

GREAT QUESTIONS FOR ANYONE

- Tell me about one of the most important people in your life.
- Tell me about the person who has had the greatest influence on your life. What lessons did they teach you?
- Who has been the kindest to you and why?
- Share some important lessons you've learned in life.
- Share some of your earliest childhood memories.
- Are there any funny stories people tell about you from when you were growing up?
- What have you accomplished so far—personally and professionally—that makes you proudest? Why?
- Tell me how you would like people to remember you.
- Would you be willing to share a happy or sad memory with me?
- Thinking about future generations, and knowing that they may hear this recording, is there wisdom or advice you would like to share with them?

FAMILY HERITAGE

- Tell me about some traditions that have been passed down through our family. When and how did they get started?
- Are there any classic family jokes, stories, or songs you can share with me?
- What do you see as our family's legacy?
- Where were our ancestors born? If they moved to the United States, when did they arrive?
- What are some of the jobs/careers held by past generations in our family?
- Of all the family members you have either known or heard stories about, who do you think lived the most interesting life? Why?
- What are your favorite family holidays, and why?

GRANDPARENTS

- Tell me about your parents.
- Tell me about your grandparents.
- Where did you grow up, and what was your childhood like?
- Share with me the story of how you and grandma/grandpa met.
- Tell me about when you found out you were going to be a mother/father.
- What was my mother/father like when she/he was growing up? Do you have any favorite stories about her/him?
- Do you remember any songs you sang to her/him when she/he was a baby? Can you sing any for me now?

GROWING UP & SCHOOL

- Tell me about where you grew up and what your childhood was like.
- Did you like going to school? Why/why not?
- What are your most vivid memories of school?
- Tell me about a teacher or other adult that impacted your life while you were growing up.
- What did you do during the summer when you were off from school?
- What jobs did you have when you were a teenager? What did you do with the money you earned?
- If you could go back and relive your teenage years, would you? Why/why not?
- Did you have a nickname? What was it and how did you get it? Does anyone still call you by that nickname?
- Has your life been different from what you imagined as a teenager?

LOVE & RELATIONSHIPS

- Tell me about the love of your life.
- How did you meet your wife/husband/partner?
- Describe your first date with your husband/wife/partner.
- Describe your marriage proposal.
- Tell me about your wedding day. Did it go as you imagined?
- Where did you spend your honeymoon?
- What have you learned from your wife/husband/partner?
- Tell me about your happiest moments together.

WORKING

- What job do you currently hold, and what jobs have you held in the past?
- How did you find your way to your current job/career?
- Thinking of the jobs you've held, is there one that stands out as your favorite?
- When you were younger, what did you imagine your job would be?
- What lessons has working taught you?
- If you could choose any career, what would you pick? Why?



ELECTIONS & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- How do you feel affected by this election?
- What elections stand out in your mind, and why?
- If you have voted before, what was it like to vote for the first time?
- Has there ever been a time in your life when you wanted to vote, but were not able to? What was that like?
- What issues do you consider when choosing a candidate?
- What advice would you give to a first time voter?
- What does civic participation mean to you?
- Has a changing role in your community, job, or home ever affected your civic participation?
- Over the years, have you changed your opinion about any major political issues? If so, which issues and why?

MILITARY SERVICE

- When were you in the military? Which branch did you serve in?
- What motivated you to join the military?
- Tell me about basic training. Were you prepared for military life? What were you unprepared for?
- Describe your daily life while in the service.
- What is the most difficult part of being in the military?
- Did you serve in a war zone? When and where?
- What lessons did your service teach you that you still carry with you?
- Describe your transition from military to civilian life. Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- If given the opportunity, would you serve in the military again? Why?

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

- When you were growing up, what role did religion/spirituality play in your life?
- What does religion/spirituality mean to you, and what role does it play in your life today?
- Have you ever had a profound religious/spiritual experience? Will you tell me about it?
- What important lessons have your religious/spiritual beliefs taught you? Will you share them with me?
- Do you have any favorite religious holidays? What do they mean to you?