

What Has Passed and
What Remains

Curriculum Guide

Provided by

Northern Arizona Writing Project



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

And



Sharing cultures. Enriching communities.

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Overview

The Ecological Oral Histories Project has been collecting narratives from long-time residents and observers of life in Northern Arizona since 2005. The interviews are professionally transcribed and video, audio, and print versions are archived at the Colorado Plateau digital archives at Northern Arizona University's Cline Library (<http://library.nau.edu/speccoll/index.html>).

Parts of the interviews are also available through the book *What Has Passed and What Remains: Oral Histories of Northern Arizona's Changing Landscapes* edited by Peter Friederici, an exhibit at Flagstaff's Pioneer Museum, and online at www.whathaspassed.net.

This curriculum guide was created by teachers for teachers as part of the exhibit and book launch by the Northern Arizona Writing Project at Northern Arizona University (www.nau.edu/nawp).

The Curriculum guide provides activities, lesson plans, and teaching strategies that can be used across disciplines and that can be adapted to a variety of grade levels (K-college). We've broken the guide into four parts:

1. Activities and Information on the book, *What Has Passed and What Remains*
2. Activities and lesson plans to use in conjunction with the exhibit
3. Activities and lesson plans for use with the website and Colorado Plateau archives
4. Information and resources on Oral History

The Ecological Oral Histories Project provides a great resource to teachers across Northern Arizona. It is our hope that this guide will help teachers across the state to help understand ways in which they can best utilize these stories and the stories of their students as the precious resources they are.

The creation of this curriculum has been underwritten by the Arizona Humanities Council and by the State of Arizona ERDENE fund, which is supported by sales tax revenues approved by voters under Proposition 301.

Using the Text

What Has Passed and What Remains: Oral Histories of Northern Arizona's Changing Landscape edited by Peter Friederici offers teachers and students 13 written accounts of key oral history interviews collected and stored on the Colorado Digital Plateau archive with an introduction by the editor, Peter Friederici.

The interviews vary in length, and are probably most suited for grades 6-12 in terms of reading level- if students will be reading on their own. However, the complete interviews are all located on the Colorado Plateau archive at NAU and students can listen to the interviews there, or the teacher can read the interviews aloud and students may follow along while the teacher explains words and locations that students of younger ages may be unfamiliar with.

The following section includes pre-reading, reading, and post-reading activities and strategies as well as general discussion questions that can be used for all of the interviews.

Book: Activities and Reading Strategies

Pre-Reading

1. Define and Discuss what Oral History is with students (see section on Oral History for lesson plan ideas)
2. Share the Barry Lopez quote on page 8 in the introduction: “If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away when needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other’s memory. This is how people care for themselves.” Have students “unpack” the meaning of this quote and discuss its possible significance to the stories in the book and the collection.
3. Have students view or listen to one of the unedited Oral Histories from the Colorado Plateau Digital Archive. Explain how the interviews in the book were edited for easier reading, and discuss why and how journalists go about editing raw interviews.

Reading

1. Divide the class into groups, and have each group read one of the oral histories. Have them complete general discussion questions on the next page, and then have the students share the information on the oral history they read with the rest of the class.
2. Read selected oral histories aloud to students. While reading the oral histories aloud, have students draw a representation of words and key phrases they heard as the sections were read. Have students discuss the parts that stood out, and share their drawings.

Post Reading

1. Have students discuss/answer the basic discussion questions (page 6).
2. Have students develop their own questions for the oral histories using the bloom’s taxonomy starters (pages 7 and 8).
3. Have students listen to the raw interviews in the Colorado Plateau Digital Archive and discuss the differences they heard and the questioning techniques of the interviewers.
4. Have students write a research report on one of the areas or events mentioned in the oral histories.
5. Have students write a letter to the interviewee telling them what they learned from their oral history and what they thought about what they had to say.
6. Have students collect and share their own oral histories detailing a place or event that is related to something they read or thought about in the oral history interviews.

General Discussion Questions

1. Tell me about the interviewee. Where are they from? What's their background? What do they do?
2. What places were mentioned in the interview? Have you personally been to any of these places?
3. Did the pictures in the section help you understand them, or what they were talking about? What other visuals would you like to see to help make the story more vivid?
4. What events are described in this interview and when did they take place?
5. What changes are described in this interview?
6. How did the change or event described affect the person being interviewed?
7. Have you heard of anything similar to what this person is talking about?
8. What do you think is the most important or interesting part of this person's story and why?

Bloom's Taxonomy

QUESTION STARTERS

Level I: REMEMBER (Recall)

1. What is the definition for.....?
2. What happened after.....?
3. Recall the facts.
4. What were the characteristics of...?
5. Which is true or false?
6. How many...?
7. Who was the...?
8. Tell in your own words.
9. Describe the...

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Level I: REMEMBER (Recall)

1. Make a time line of events
2. Make a facts chart
3. Write a list of ...steps in...facts about...
4. List all the people in the story.
5. Make a chart showing...
6. Make an acrostic
7. Recite a poem

Level II: UNDERSTAND

1. Why are these ideas similar?
2. In your own words retell the story of...
3. What so you think could happen?
4. How are these ideas different?
5. Explain what happened after.
6. What are some examples?
7. Can you provide a definition of...?
8. Who was the key character?

Level II: UNDERSTAND

1. Cut out or draw pictures to show an event.
2. Illustrate what you think the main idea was.
3. Make a cartoon strip showing the sequence of...
4. Write and perform a play based on the...
5. Compare this _____ with _____
6. Construct a model of _____.
7. Write a news report.
8. Prepare a flow chart to show the sequence...

Level III: APPLY (applying without understanding is not effective)

1. What is another instance of...?
2. Demonstrate the way to ...
3. Which one is most like...?
4. What questions would you ask?
5. Which factors would you change?
6. Could this have happened in...? Why or why not?
7. How would you organize these ideas?

Level III: APPLY (applying without understanding is not effective)

1. Construct a model to demonstrate using it.
2. Make a display to illustrate one event.
3. Make a collection about...
4. Design a relief map to include relevant information about an event.
5. Scan a collection of photographs to illustrate a particular aspect of the study.
6. Create a mural to depict...

Bloom's Taxonomy

LEVEL IV: ANALYZE

1. What are the component parts of ...?
2. What steps are important in the process of ...?
3. If...then...
4. What other conclusions can you reach about...that have not been mentioned?
5. The difference between the fact and the hypothesis is ...
6. The solution would be to ...

LEVEL IV: ANALYZE

1. Design a questionnaire about ...
2. Conduct an investigation to produce...
3. Make a flow chart to show...
4. Construct a graph to show...
5. Put on a play about...
6. Review...in terms of identified criteria.
7. Prepare a report about the area of study.

Level V: EVALUATE

1. In your opinion...
2. Appraise the chances for...
3. Grade or rank the ...
4. What do you think should be the outcome?
5. What solution do you favor and why?
6. Which systems are best? Worst?
7. Rate the relative value of these ideas to ...
8. Which is the better bargain?

Level V: EVALUATE

1. Prepare a list of criteria you would use to judge a ... Indicate priority ratings you would give.
2. Conduct a debate about an issue.
3. Prepare an annotated bibliography...
4. Form a discussion panel on the topic...
5. Prepare a case to present your opinions about...
6. List some common assumptions about... Rationalize your reactions.

Level VI: CREATE

1. Can you design a ...?
2. Why not compose a song about...?
3. Why don't you devise your own way to ...?
4. Can you create new and unusual uses for...?
5. Can you develop a proposal for ...?
6. How would you deal with...?
7. Invent a scheme that would ...

Level VI: CREATE

1. Create a model that shows your new ideas.
2. Devise an original plan or experiment for...
3. Finish the incomplete
4. Make a hypothesis about...
5. Change ... so that it will...
6. Propose a method to ...
7. Prescribe a way to ...
8. Give the book a new title.

Exhibit

The “What Has Passed and What Remains” exhibit will remain on display indefinitely at the Pioneer Museum in Flagstaff, Arizona. This provides students and teachers a wonderful opportunity to view words, photographs, audio and visual, and artifacts associated with the oral histories of Northern Arizona. The Exhibit consists of 22 panels with quotes and pictures on various topics archived in the Colorado Plateau Digital Archive, and the book. Downstairs the exhibit has an interactive screen with visual interviews from subjects different from those in the book (these interviews are also found on the website www.whathaspassed.net).

Pioneer Museum

2340 N. Fort Valley Road

Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Phone 928-774-6272

Fax 928-774-1596

E-mail AHSFlagstaff@azhs.gov

Hours: Monday-Saturday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Sunday

Admission:

Adults \$5

Ages 60+ \$4

Ages 12-18 \$4

Ages 11 and younger free

AHS members free

Free admission the first weekday of each month for Arizona residents

The following section includes pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities and strategies as well as general discussion questions that can be used along with the exhibit.

Exhibit: Activities and Teaching Strategies

Pre-Viewing

1. Define and Discuss what Oral History is with students (see section on Oral History for lesson plan ideas)
2. Have students view or listen to one of the Oral Histories from the Colorado Plateau Digital Archive as an example of oral history.
3. Have students go to the website www.whathaspassed.net and watch one of the oral history interviews featured in the exhibit prior to arriving at the exhibit. Have the group research information on the speaker, and the location they are talking about, and then have that group of students present the information after the other students see the exhibit.
4. Have students conduct prior research on topics addressed upstairs on the exhibit panels (one panel on each topic): Sawmill work, cattle ranching, mining, foresting, outdoor recreation, fires, the night sky, wildlife, homesteaders. OR let students know prior to seeing the exhibit that they will be completing a research paper on one of these topics, or another topic they find interesting from the exhibit.

Viewing

1. Begin with the panels on the importance of oral history, downstairs. Read the panels to the students as a class, and ask them what they think about the quotes and ideas in the panels.
2. Have all students listen to and the nine oral history interviews on the interactive screen as a class. Have small groups of students familiar with each interview prior to arrival, and have those students responsible for presenting additional information on the interview.
3. Divide the class into small groups, and have groups start at different areas of the exhibit. Have them fill in boxes on provided sheet as they look at panels on information they find interesting or facts that they learn about (see lesson one).
4. Create a research assignment centering on the exhibit and other artifacts within the museum that have connections. Tell students to take field notes on things they find interesting (using connections sheets).

Post Viewing

1. Have students complete their own Oral History Projects (see section on Oral History)
2. Have students write a research report on one of the areas or events mentioned in the oral histories.
3. Have students complete their own exhibit and gallery walk based on the exhibit (see lesson plan).
4. Have students write a letter to the interviewee telling them what they learned from their oral history and what they thought about what they had to say.

Lesson One

“Connecting Ideas: Viewing the Exhibit”

Objective:

- Identify important information within the exhibit.
- Discuss connections between historical events and information in the exhibit.
- Produce a list of newly learned information.
- Compare historical events and information in the exhibit.

Arizona State Social Studies Standards:

7th Grade- Strand 2, Concept 1, PO.1, PO.2, PO.7; Strand 2, Concept 8, PO.3

8th Grade- Strand 2, Concept 1, PO.1, PO. 2, PO.7; Strand 2, Concept 8, PO. 2

High School- Strand 2, Concept 8, PO. 4, PO.5, PO. 6; Strand 2, Concept 1, PO.4, PO.7

Arizona State Language Arts Standards:

Grade 7-12-Reading Strand 1, Concept 6, PO.3, PO.4, PO.5; Reading Strand 3, Concept 1, PO.3, PO.4, PO.5, PO.6

Anticipatory Set:

This lesson is designed to be used as the students go through the exhibit. By this time, the teacher should have read the gallery guide and be prepared to present illuminating information for the panels- to be a “tour guide” of sorts.

Prepare the students by handing out the provided materials with instructions on how to complete them and encourage them to focus all their attention on the next block of time spent in the exhibit. Tell them that there will be a lot to read, listen to, and write.

Make certain everyone has a writing utensil and a hard surface to write upon. Once they’re prepped, head into the exhibit.

Teaching Process:

The teacher has several options regarding the manner in which the exhibit is explored. Here are some options:

- Have students go through the exhibit on their own for 15-20 minutes. Bring them back as a group, then provide the lecture or “tour guide” portion of the presentation.
- Have students spend about five minutes reading a panel at a time. After those five minutes, provide the “tour guide” information and ask questions.
- Go through the exhibit with the students reading the material on the panels as you go.

Once you’ve decided on your exhibit routine, explain that you’d like them to take notes on the information while you go through the exhibit. Before finishing with the exhibit, ask clarifying questions to check for understanding. Answer any questions the students may have. After you finish looking through the exhibit, see what the students learned and check their notes.

Hand out the sheet entitled, “I know...” On this sheet, instruct students to fill in all the boxes with pieces of information they gathered from the exhibit, as well as words or images they found interesting from the panels.

After the sheet is full, instruct the students to draw lines in between boxes of connected information, or common ideas they see between the notes they took from the panels.

Now, on the sheet entitled, “Connections,” have student cite and explain four of the connections they made. If the didn’t find any between the panels in the exhibit, have them come up with their own connections. How do these ideas and quotes relate to things taught in class, or things they’ve experienced?

If you prefer, have students write a response about what they learned in the form of an essay, or report.

Evaluation:

It is recommended that students be evaluated on their behavior while viewing the exhibit. Students should also be evaluated on the quality of their “I know...” and “Connections” activity, or their writing activity.

Closure:

Answer any remaining questions.

Explain to students that just as different incidents in their lives are connected, so to are historical events in given time periods. In making those connections the historian can see cause and effect, relationships, and gain a larger understanding of the rhythms of a time period.

Extensions and Related Activities:

Before viewing the exhibit tell the students that they will be completing further research on an issue, event, or person they see in the exhibit. Ask that they write two topics that they could research further; help them to pick the best one, and follow up with further lessons on how to research and write a research paper.

Connections

Directions: On the activity labeled “I know...,” draw a line between connected pieces of knowledge. You should make at least four connections using a total of eight squares. For each, explain how the pieces of information are connected below (example: Knowledge piece X is connected to knowledge piece Y because they both relate to Hitler’s rise to power).

Connection:

Explain this connection:

Connection:

Explain this connection:

Connection:

Explain this connection:

Connection:

Explain this connection:

I know... (Write 12 things you learned in the exhibit – 1 per square)

Lesson Two (Post-Viewing)

“Timeline Activity”

Objective:

- Identify chronology of events.
- Create a timeline.
- Formulate directed criticism and corrections to others’ work.

Arizona State Social Studies Standards:

7th Grade- Strand 2, Concept 1, PO.1, PO. 2, PO. 3 PO. 7; Strand 2, Concept 8, PO. 3

8th Grade- Strand 2, Concept 1, PO.1, PO. 2, PO. 3, PO.7; Strand 2, Concept 8, PO. 2

High School- Strand 2, Concept 8, PO. 4, PO.5, PO. 6; Strand 2, Concept 1, PO.4, PO.7

Arizona State Language Arts Standards:

Grade 7-12- Reading Strand 1, Concept 6, PO.3, PO.4, PO.5; Strand 3, Concept 1, PO.4, PO.5, PO.6

Anticipatory Set:

Tell students to make a list of 5 important things that have happened to them in their life. Ask students to take those events and place them on a time line of their life starting at birth and going to their present age.

Ask, “Why is it important to know the sequence in which events occurred?” This question should lead you into the timeline activity.

Teaching Process:

(Before lesson) Create a large timeline using a long piece of butcher paper or even a line of masking tape to act as the timeline. It is not necessary that years are put on the timeline incrementally, rather a maybe a start date and an end date (they can be very broad).

(In class)

- Divide the class into groups.
- Give the whole class 10 minutes to review their notes from the exhibit or perhaps provide a ten minutes review session on the major topics of the exhibit and from Oral Histories read and viewed in class. After 10 minutes, instruct students to put away their materials for the remainder of the activity.
- After reviewing, have each group decide what the top 10 most important events are from what they’ve learned and to decide or discuss the time periods and dates that are associated with those events. Have them write these down on sticky notes to add to large timeline
- After they’ve decided on the most important events and dates, have them come up and put timeline events onto the class timeline.
- Discuss the choices of events for the timeline, and explain how some events are more relevant because they have a direct impact on the rest of the events whereas some are more subtle- they add to our understanding, and are important, but don’t necessarily need to be on a timeline.

Evaluation:

It is recommended that students be evaluated on their total participation. If they find it hard to guess timeframes of some of the narratives, help guide them to key words.

Closure:

Answer any remaining questions. Have students add to/ or correct timelines if needed.

Extensions and Related Activities:

Take the corrected timeline and have the students write out, in narrative form, the topics covered. When covering the topics, students should add commentary between the topics alluding to how one event led to another.

Return to the Anticipatory activity, where you had them write important events from their lives. Have them re-examine these, and see if they can find a pattern in their lives where one event led to another (or several others). Have them write a personal narrative explaining the impact of one or all of the events, and how they influenced the other events or their life in general. (Writing Strand 3, Concept 1, PO.1)

Make a detailed timeline of ten events from their lives, or (as a research component) that of another person (a friend, relative, historical figure, etc.) using a program on the computer (such as at http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/materials/timelines/).

Lesson Three (Post-Viewing) **“Classroom Gallery and Gallery Walk”**

Objective:

- Display information in a creative way
- Formulate directed criticism and corrections to others’ work.

Anticipatory Set:

Journal topic: “What images stood out to you about the exhibit or website? How do these images enhance the power of the words?” Have students write and reflect, and then share their thoughts.

Explain, “We will be creating our own classroom exhibit modeled after the Ecological History Project Exhibit. It will be important for you to consider the most powerful pieces of the exhibit you just saw, as you put together your own exhibit pieces.”

Teaching Process (over several days):

- Have students work individually or as groups. This can be a culminating activity for your own classes Oral History Project, or a way for students to display research on a topic previously discussed in class or from the exhibit. You may assign them the subject, or they may already have their own (for example- if they are completing their own Oral History Project, have them find an image that goes along with an important piece of the interview they want to highlight.)
- Panel Draft: Have students Plan a panel for their classroom exhibit:
 - What words will be included in this panel?
 - What image or images will enhance this?
 - Where will they get the images?
 - What sort of layout will this panel have?

Have students submit their draft, and offer them feedback on how to improve the panel.

- Panel Production: Over the course of a few days, give students time to produce their panels based upon their drafts.
- Panel Display and Gallery walk: upon completion of panels, have students hang up in the classroom, hallways, or library. Have student walk through the gallery as they did the original exhibit, writing down things they learned images that they thought were powerful, or general critiquing comments.

Evaluation:

It is recommended that students be evaluated on their total participation and planning of the panels.

Closure:

Answer any remaining questions. Have students critique and discuss their work.

Extensions and Related Activities:

Have students act as “tour guides” and open the student gallery for other classrooms or a parent night to display the work of the students.

Website

“What Has Passed and What Remains” also has a companion website with information about the project, book, exhibit, and events associated with the Ecological Oral Histories Project at www.whathaspassed.net

This website contains information and content that can be used by educators to enhance the viewing experience of seeing the exhibit in person, or can provide enhancement to the text if a visit to the Pioneer Museum cannot be arranged.

The website has the nine oral history interviews that are contained in the physical exhibit, and these may be viewed by student prior to visiting the exhibit, or as a companion piece to the written narrative in the book.

Oral History Projects

By far the best classroom complement to this exhibit would be for teachers to carry out their own Oral History Project with their class. Oral history not only enriches our understanding of the past, but also holds the potential to dramatically enrich the classroom experience. Oral history projects can help students from early primary grades through the college level learn an amazing range of content knowledge and skills.

The following Student workbook will help provide some insights into how to lead students through an oral history project of their own.

Guidelines for Oral History Interviews

Student Workbook

(Adapted from Michael Gatto and The History Chanel lesson plan)

Why do some students hate to study history?

History too often seems like the study of long lists of names, events and dates. Students seldom get the chance to act as historians who record and interpret history for themselves and for others. Historians often act like detectives who are trying to solve intriguing puzzles. They search for information and collect it, but most important, they draw conclusions from facts. Students can write their own histories of an important place, event or person. They can examine documents, letters, diaries, photographs, maps and folk songs to get closer to people and events of the past. Explaining and understanding the past connects us to our families, communities and country. We probably can never really fully understand those who lived before us, but the effort helps us understand our society, and perhaps finally, ourselves.

Connecting With the Past

Many people have a hard time understanding events that they, themselves, have not experienced. Students, especially, must learn the connections between their own experiences and past events, people, and places. Too often, young people miss out on a golden opportunity to learn about the past, because they seem to be cut off from their elders. Conducting an oral history offers students an opportunity to reach out to the older generations in their own families and communities, in order to learn more about the past.

Instructions for Students

Picking an Interview Topic

First, you must decide upon some event or period of history about which you want to learn more. You may draw upon something that you have heard or read about in class or at home. By narrowing your topic, you will give your interview a focus and will encourage your interview subject to give details and put a personal stamp on the interview.

Picking Someone to Interview

Who remembers?

Remember that for an oral history, the person whom you are interviewing must have lived through that event or time period and must be able to recall details and other memories. If you want to learn about the Great Depression, for example, you must find someone who was at least in his or her early teen years during the 1930s. This means that the person must be at least 80 years old today. This is not as hard as you think; older people are all around you. They are your relatives, neighbors and family friends. You can always interview someone about a less distant event, too, like the Civil Rights Movement or the Vietnam War. In any case, most people will be thrilled that you are interested in their experiences and will go out of their way to make the interview an experience that you will not forget.

Who should you choose to interview?

- relative
- friend
- neighbor
- member of a veterans organization
- retired teacher or administrator
- member of a senior citizens group
- resident of assisted living facility

Names of Three Possible Interview Subjects:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Who is your final choice for your interview?

You should record the name, address, and telephone number of your interview subject, so that you can contact the person, before or after the interview, if necessary.

Name _____

Address _____

Town/City _____

Zip Code _____

Telephone number: () _____

Email: _____

Directions to interview site:

Make an Interview Appointment:

Circle Day:

Monday -Tuesday - Wednesday - Thursday - Friday -Saturday - Sunday

Date: ___/___/___

Time: _____a.m./p.m.

Remember that the interview is probably an important event to your subject. Set up a special time and date so that both of you can prepare for the meeting and so that you will have time to review your final product. It may be helpful, when you speak with your subject on the phone, to ask him or her what he/she would like to talk about. This will help you prepare your questions for the interview. You even may want to send your subject a list of possible interview questions before you meet with him or her. This will help spark the person's memory about the names of people and places that he or she may want to share with you.

Confirmation Example:

Dear _____,

Thank you for agreeing to an interview on audio- or videotape.

I will meet you:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

I would like to ask some questions about the topic of:

I would enjoy seeing and hearing about any photographs, letters, or other keepsakes that you would be willing to share with others.

Yours truly,

Telephone Number:

Preparing for the Interview

Background Reading: What have you found out about your interview topic?

“Just the Facts”: Taking Notes

After doing some background reading, one of the best ways to begin sorting through the information that you have just learned about your focus topic is to fill in answers for the five “w’s:” who, what, when, where and why. Start by writing your focus topic in the title box at the top of the page. Then, write, in your own words, quick notes that answer the five “w” questions listed down the side of the page. Most likely, you will find a lot of information about your focus topic in books, movies, and on the Internet. It is up to you to sift through the information and choose those facts that will help you the most to prepare for your interview. Remember that the goal of this exercise is to help you come up with the most useful questions to ask your interview subject.

Note-taking Example

Title: Sit-in Movement of the 1960s

Who? Started by college students across the country, the sit-in movement later was coordinated by SNCC (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee).

What? An act of civil disobedience by African Americans who sat down at segregated lunch counters and refused to leave until they had been given service.

When? The sit-in movement began in February, 1960.

Where? Started at a Woolworth’s store in Greensboro, North Carolina, but quickly spread across the southern United States.

Why? To gain equal treatment for African Americans at lunch counters and other establishments that refused to serve customers on account of their race.

Writing Interview Questions

Memory Questions:

After you have decided on a focus topic and done some background reading, you should carefully consider and write down the questions that you plan to use in your interview, using your own worksheet or the one provided with this manual. Your interview should begin with several memory questions. First, memory questions should help relax your subject and get them in a mood to reminisce. Second, these questions will help you gather information about your subject's personal experiences.

Note that your topic and questions will be shaped by the subject(s) you choose to interview. You will get the best answers if you ask your interview subject to talk about his or her own experiences, so encourage your interviewee to provide personal stories, sad and funny memories that you will not find in the standard school books.

- Your Job is to Record and Interpret History
- Write and ask good questions.
- Get good stories that are told in an interesting way.
- Examine and understand the different beliefs, interests, hopes and fears in follow up questions.
- Evaluate your evidence to make conclusions.

Writing Additional Questions:

In order to learn as much as possible from the interview experience you should write several questions that will encourage your subject to expand and explain their feelings and ideas. The second stage of questions should encourage your subject to dig deeper into the stories to explain why things happened and how they relate to other events.

Below are some basic questions to help you get started. Use your own worksheet to write your own complete questions.

Explanation Questions

- What caused this event...?
- Why did this happen...?
- What happened next...?
- Can you describe the scene in one word...?
- Can you compare two events...?
- Explain the reason for...?
- What conclusion can you draw...?
- What is your point of view about...?
- Can you describe the scene...?
- Can you explain a photograph...?

Judgment Questions

The last group of questions should offer your subject a chance to talk about the “big picture” by telling about what was good or bad, important or less important. These questions should be asked last because they allow the interview subject a chance to sum up and make conclusions. Remember that this is your subject's opportunity to give his or her own opinion—you may or may not agree with the conclusions.

Judgment Questions

- What was the happiest (funniest or saddest) memory?
- What was your biggest accomplishment?
- What actions would you change if you had a chance to re-live those years again?
- What mistakes did people make during this period or event in history?
- What should people today remember about this time/event?

MEMORY + EXPLANATION + JUDGMENT = SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

Even with your best efforts some people may need some extra questions to encourage them to tell the full story. Don't be afraid to ask for details or explanations.

Back up Questions:

- Why was this important?
- How did the story begin or end?
- What else do you want to tell me about this?
- What important question did I forget to ask you?

Interview Tips

Proper Attire

You want your interview subjects to relax and tell their best stories. Your clothing should not distract your subject from the purpose of the interview. You should be neatly dressed in comfortable clothes.

Practice

If you are not familiar with audio- or videotape recorders, you should make a practice tape at home.

Set Up

If you are videotaping your interview, the camera will be set up on a tripod. Put the camera as close to the interview subject as possible. If you have a camera operator ask him or her to keep the camera as still as possible. Use the zoom button only when a close-up seems to help the audience understand the story being told. (Do not put the camera more than ten feet from the subject unless you have a special microphone that is attached to a jack.)

Identify

Whether you use an audio- or videotape, you want to be sure to identify your project. Speaking clearly, say, "My name is _____ and, I am interviewing _____ on the topic of _____. The time is _____ a.m./p.m. and the date is _____."

Conducting the Interview

Let your interview subject know that this is an important project and that you are very interested in his or her personal experiences. Treat the interview as serious work. Ask each question from your list and wait respectfully for an answer. (Don't be afraid of silence! Sometimes it may take your subject a moment or two to compose an answer.) Look directly at the person who is giving the interview. Nod and smile to show that you are listening and understand the story. If you don't understand, ask a follow up question. Remember this probably will be your only chance to get these stories on tape.

Interview Skill: Active Listening

If you find that your interview subject needs to be assured that you are listening and understand his or her story, try to paraphrase (repeat in your own words) an important part of the interview. This will let your storytellers know that you are connecting with them and their stories.

Example:

Interview Subject: "My assignment during the sit-ins was not to leave the lunch counter until we had been served. This meant that we had to keep our seats and remain nonviolent, even when people started yelling and throwing food at us."

Your paraphrase: "You were determined to stay at the lunch counter until you had achieved your goal."

Checking the Tape

When you feel the interview is complete. Stop the recorder and rewind the tape. Replay the tape to check to see that the recording can be seen and/or heard. Ask your subject if he or she wishes to erase or add any comments before you leave. Once both of you are satisfied, ask your subject to sign the following permission form. This is an important final step of the interview (This will allow you to show the interview to others.)

Before you leave, smile and say, "Thank you!"

Sample Permission Slip

I give my permission for: _____ (student interviewer) to show this tape to his/her class and family members. I release all claims and rights to this tape. _____ (interview subject)

Date:

Written Transcript of the Tape:

You should make a written transcript of some part of the taped interview that you think is especially important. When you think back on the experience, which story comes to mind first? These stories are probably the best parts to transcribe on paper. Remember that a transcription is the exact words from the tape. In order to be true to your subject's wishes and to be historically accurate, do not change words.

Thank you note: Write a thank you note after you view or listen to the tape. Quote an important part of the interview in the note to let the subject know that you spent the time to listen and think about his or her story.

Conclusion: After the interview tape and transcript are complete it is a good idea to take a quiet moment to think about what you learned from the experience.

Write a thoughtful response to these sentence stems:

My most important job in this assignment was...

The most important thing I learned was...

I didn't know that...

One thing I did well was...

If I had another opportunity, I would improve...

