Conducting an Oral History with a Community Partner

*Use the Guidelines for Conducting an Oral History

Choose a family member, someone in your community, teacher, or other person at school who you would like to interview.

Choose an historical event you would like to ask your interviewee about. Your interviewee must have been alive and have memories of this event.

Examples:

- When President Obama was elected
- September 11th
- When man first landed on the moon
- The assassination of President Kennedy or Dr. King
- You are not limited to these examples!

Ask your chosen community partner if they would like to be interviewed. If they agree, set up a time and place to interview them. If you’re interviewing someone outside of your family, ask your parent or guardian to join you.

Your oral history can be as long as you’d like, but you should be able to have 10 minutes worth to share with the class.

Create a list of questions based on the chosen event and what you know about the interviewee. Your questions should be open ended and shouldn’t hint at an answer.

For Example:

- Instead of asking “Were you sad when Dr. King was killed?” you could ask, “How did you feel when Dr. King was killed?”

- If you know your grandma was in high school during WWII, you may want to ask, “Did your school do anything to commemorate those lost during Pearl Harbor, if so, what did it do?

We will develop the questions in class, so if you need any help with your questions, feel free to ask me!

You should use the Guide to Conducting Oral Histories to see how you should interview your community partner. See attached rubric for grading guidelines.
Rubric for Conducting an Oral History

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__Introduction is concise, effective, original and appropriately explains who is being interviewed and why.

__Questions are appropriate and illicit deep responses.
__Interview retains strong voice of interviewee.
__Interview focuses on topic; doesn't ramble.
__Interview details significant as well as concrete details.

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__Introduction provides adequate lead-in.
__Questions are appropriate but illicit shallow responses.
__Interview retains some voice of interviewee.
__Interview focuses on topic; generally doesn't ramble.
__Interview details some significant as well as concrete details.

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__Ineffective or inappropriate introduction.
__Questions are inappropriate and illicit short and shallow responses.
__Interview retains little voice of interviewee.
__Interview may not focus well on topic; may ramble.
__Interview details little significance; mostly concrete details.

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http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/foreducators_lesson_plan_09.html