

ORAL HISTORY QUESTIONS

(Adapted from http://www.youthsource.ab.ca/teacher_resources/oral_question.html)

Here are a series of questions that you can use when interviewing a family member.

Basic Questions

What is your full name and why were you named this?

What are the names of your parents and siblings?

What is the date and place of your birth?

What was your schooling like? (That is, how did you get to school, what classes did you take, and what was your favorite subject?)

Did you get married? If so, to whom? When and where?

What major illnesses or health problems do you remember having?

Do you have any health problems that are considered hereditary in nature? If so, what are they?

Family History Questions

Do you remember hearing your grandparents describe their lives? What did they say?

Do you remember your great-grandparents? What do you know about them?

Who is the oldest person you can remember in your family from when you were a child? What do you remember about that person?

Lifetime Changes

What would you consider to be the most important inventions during your lifetime?

How is the world different now from when you were a child?

As you see it, what are the biggest problems that face our nation and how do you think they could be solved?

Family Life

NOTE: If your interviewee did not have children, then rephrase the next three questions to ask about nieces and nephews.

Do you remember anything that your children did when they were small that really amazed you?

What is one of the most unusual things that one of your children did regularly when he or she was small?

What is the funniest thing that you can remember that one of your children said or did?

Where have you lived as an adult? List the places and years that you lived there.

Why are you living where you are today?

Do you wish you lived somewhere else? If so, where?

Career

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

What was your first job?

What kinds of jobs have you had?

How did you decide on your career?

If you served in the military, when and where did you serve and what were your duties? Were you ever injured in the line of duty?

If so, what were the circumstances and what were your injuries?

Travel/Vacation

What is the most beautiful place you have ever visited and what was it like?

What is the longest trip you have ever gone on? Where did you go?

What was your favorite vacation? Where did you go and why was it special?

What is the favorite place you ever visited and what was it like?

Personal

What person had the most positive influence on your life? What did he or she do to influence you?

Is there a person that really changed the course of your life by something that he or she did? How did it happen?

Do you remember someone saying something to you that had a big impact on how you lived your life?

Who said it, and what did that person say?