

Sit with your family and learn about their histories. Ask them questions about their family, school and their childhood and document their answers. Use mobile applications like StoryCorp to collect the information and use to create stories about your history.

1. From what country or countries did your ancestors emigrate? Why did they come to America? How? When? Where did they settle?
2. What do you remember most about your mother from your childhood? What was she like? What did you learn from her?
3. What do you remember most about your father from your childhood? What was he like? What did you learn from him?
4. Tell as much as you can about your grandparents and great-grandparents. Who were they? What were they like?
5. Every family has its clowns, saints, black sheep or eccentrics, who are either loved or loathed. Who were these people in your family? Describe them.
6. What stories are handed down from generation to generation in your family? Are there any stories known by only a few, stories that are kept secret?
7. What values and beliefs were important to your parents? How do you know they were important?
8. Who came before you in your family? If you had older brothers and sisters, tell about them. When were they born? How much older were they than you?
9. What kind of family did you live in? Describe your family's personality and how it affected you.
10. Where did your family live when you were born? Was it on a farm, in a small town, in a city? Describe the physical setting.
11. When and where were you born? Do you know anything about the birth itself?
12. If you were adopted, tell about your first meeting with your parents. How much time did your parents have to prepare for your arrival? What else do you know about your adoption? When and how did you find out that you were adopted?
13. Tell about your name. Do you know anything about your surname and its history? Why were you given your first name? Does it have any special meaning? Did you have any nicknames? Did you like or dislike your name or your nicknames?
14. What stories do family members tell about your early years?
15. Where did you live? What do you remember most about your home or homes? Was it in an urban or a rural area?
16. Describe yourself as a child. What did you look like? What kind of clothes did you wear? What was your favorite thing to eat? What was your general nature? Was there a difference between what others said you were like and what you felt like inside.
17. Who came after you in your family? If you had younger brothers and sisters, tell about them. When were they born? How did you feel about their births?
18. Of all your relatives, to who did you feel closest as a child? Why?
19. What do you remember with real pleasure from your childhood? Tell about a good time growing up.



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20. What was distressing during your childhood years? Did you experience the death of a loved one, a natural disaster, an illness, an accident of some kind? Tell about a difficult time growing up.
21. What did you do for fun? What games did you play?
22. Did you ever get in trouble? Tell about a mischievous thing you did as a child.
23. What did you want to be when you grew up? Did you have any goals?
24. Was anyone ever mean to you? How did you handle that?
25. How did you spend your days? Describe a typical day in the spring, the summer, the autumn and the winter when you were nine or ten years old?
26. Was anyone outside your family very special to you when you were growing up? Why? How?
27. Describe yourself as a child. What did you look like? How did you dress? How did you wear your hair?
28. What were your favorite games or other play activities?
29. When and how did you learn to read? How did that make you feel?
30. Describe your grade school. What was it like? What were your favorite subjects? What school programs do you remember? Which teachers stand out in your mind?
31. How did you feel about school? Did your family think education was important?
32. Did you have a secret as a child – a secret hiding place, a secret friend or some other secret? Explain.
33. Did you have to do any chores as a youngster? How did you feel about that?
34. Where did you live – on a farm, in a town, in a city? Describe some of the day-to-day activities common then.
35. Were you ever quite sick as a child? Did you break any bones or have an operation? What was medical care like?
36. How did your family take part in the life of your community? Were family members active in church or school affairs? What about clubs, sports, politics or cultural events? Explain.
37. How did your family celebrate holidays? What special foods were prepared? Is there one particular holiday you remember especially well? Why?
38. What were some of your family traditions? Describe them.
39. What was the best gift you ever received when you were young? What was the best gift you ever gave?
40. What birthday do you remember best? Why?
41. Did you go on vacations with your family? Where did you go? How did you get there?
42. Did you ever attend a circus, major league baseball game, vaudeville show, revival meeting, Broadway play, carnival or other exciting event when you were young? Describe what you saw and how you felt.
43. Do you remember funerals from your childhood? How did you and your family deal with death?
44. Do you remember any “firsts” from childhood – first communion, first trip to the movies, first haircut, etc?