

Interviews - Family History What to Ask

There are many question lists for family history interviews on-line, but here are a few suggestions and tips.

- ★ **Be curious.**
- ★ **Be nonjudgmental.**
- ★ **Ask specific questions.** (who, what, when, where, why)
- ★ **Ask open-ended questions.** Try to avoid yes/no questions.
- ★ **End the interview before your family member gets too tired.** You can continue another day.

Don't say: Tell me about your childhood.

Be specific: Focus on one experience or specific memory and try to learn as many details as possible. Remember the power and, often, the real story is in the details.

What is your earliest childhood memory?

Tell me about your brothers and sisters. What were some of your best times with them? What were some of your worst times?

Who were your best friends? What do you remember about them?

Tell me about a time you got into trouble.

Describe your old neighborhood?

What chores did you have to do? What was your favorite, and least favorite?

What games did you play as a child? What were your favorite toys?

Tell me about the best day you ever had.

Did you have any pets? What kinds? What were their names?

Describe your childhood home(s)? Your room(s)?

Did your family ever move? If so, where and when, and how did this effect you?

What are (or were) you afraid of?

Tell me about your school and how you fit in? In what activities did you participate?

Who were your favorite teachers? What made them special?

Who cooked in the family? What were your favorite dishes?

What relatives were especially memorable/unusual/wonderful?

What kinds of cars did the family have. Who taught you how to drive?

What was your favorite holiday? What did you like most about this day?

What important world events happened when you were young? What do you remember about them?

What did you want to be when you grew up?

How/where/when did you meet (husband, wife)?

If you could relive something, what would it be? What would you do differently?

While sharing photos:

Where and when was this picture taken? Who is in the picture? Who is behind the camera? What happened before and after the photo was taken?