

Oral History Project Lessons- Requesting an Interview & Closed/Open-Ended Interview Questions

Cycle 2, Week 3

Objectives:

- Students generate open-ended interview questions.
- Students prepare to write or call potential interviewees requesting an interview.

Materials:

Story Corps Video:

22 min. Listening is an Act of Love https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rgJRzz_zHo

3 min. StoryCorps Intro <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGCD1XR0WPK>

StoryCorps Audio - Immigrant Stories: <https://storycorps.org/?type=listen&s=IMMIGRANT+STORIES>

3 min. <https://storycorps.org/listen/blanca-and-connie-alvarez/> +/or Video: <https://storycorps.org/animation/the-icing-on-the-cake/>

Questions Notes Sheet copies (scroll to last pages)

Sample Communications Sheet copies (see separate doc)

Procedure:

1. **(3 min)** Refresh students on purpose of the project: *to practice listening closely, to connect with people, to get a sense of their real experiences as immigrants, and to collect their stories as a part of honoring and recording the history of humanity.* Play the [storycorps intro video](#).

PART A: Requesting the Interview (8 min.)

2. (2 min) Pass out the Sample Communications Sheet. Go over pointers on how to request the interview: (Write these on the board.)
 - a. Start with your **name** and mention **who referred you** to talk to them.
 - b. Mention **why** you are conducting the interview and the **topic** you want to interview them about.
 - c. **Ask their permission** and tell them about **how long** it will take
 - d. **Suggest times and dates** when you could meet/call. (Ask for the most convenient times/dates for *them* if you have more flexibility.)
 - e. **Thank** them (no matter what their response is)
3. (2 min) Students turn and talk to read the interview request letter with partner.
4. (4 min) Role-play the phone call request with a student volunteer.

5. Independent work: Write a draft of a letter/email (or notes for a phone call if certain this is the method of communication you will use) to request an interview with your potential interviewee.

PART B: Interview Questions (20 min)

6. (2 min.) Share definition and examples of closed and open-ended questions and follow-up questions. Pass out the *Notes: Questions in the Interview + Brainstorm* sheet.
7. (5 min) Instruct students to listen for and record (in their notes) examples of open-ended questions and follow-up questions during the interview(s) in the video(s).
 - a. Show the [Icing On The Cake](#) video. Stop as needed to identify/share examples of open-ended questions that were noticed by the students.
8. (5 min) Students work in table groups to generate at least 4 more open-ended questions one could ask about their interviewee's immigrant experience. (These are added to the notes)
9. (3 min) Share the questions, students record any that appeal to them in their notes.
10. (1 min) Introduce Follow-up Work: Individuals work to generate at least **3 closed questions, 8 open-ended questions, and 4 follow-up questions** they can ask their interviewee. **(Due Wed.)** (Advise students to write a few generic questions they can ask anyone, then add questions that are specific to the individual they will be speaking with.)
11. (3 min) Closing: Share the [Bookmobile Story](#) or [Paul Braun and Philip Morris](#) (video: <https://storycorps.org/animation/paul-braun-and-philip-morris/>)

Differentiation:

Have some students work in pairs to take notes and to do the follow-up. (Pull Diego, Mary, Avis, Trey, Kiwi, Sky, and Alejandro into small groups to do the follow-up work with me or other adult available)

Standards:

See standards listed in the project packet

Notes: Questions in the Video Interview + Brainstorm

Closed Questions YES, NO, or a simple answer	Open-Ended Questions Need an explanation
Were you happy you came to the United States? Where did you first live when you arrived in the U.S.?	Why did your family leave Romania? What was it like to start school in the United States?
Follow-Up Questions	
Can you tell me more about your journey to the U.S.? How did you feel about that? What did you do after that?	

Your Interview Question Plan

Closed Questions (3) YES, NO, or a simple answer	Open-Ended Questions (8) Need an explanation
Follow-Up Questions (4)	