

Family memoir interview workbook

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FIRST CONVERSATION

Narrator: _____

Interviewer: _____

Date and location: _____

Intended readers: _____

Private family edition or public book: _____

Before recording, explain the project, where recordings will be kept, who can access them and how the narrator can review material. Agree whether recording is welcome and which topics to leave out. Keep a record of the agreement. Consent to an interview and permission to use copyright material are separate questions; record both where relevant.

TWENTY OPEN QUESTIONS

Choose a few per conversation. Follow the narrator's pace rather than working through every question at once.

1. What is your earliest clear memory, and what do you remember seeing?
2. Which person made your childhood feel safe or memorable?
3. What did an ordinary day at home look like?
4. Which family saying, meal or tradition deserves a place in the book?
5. What did your first neighbourhood or school feel like?
6. When did you first feel responsible for someone else?
7. Which early choice changed the direction of your life?
8. What did you learn in your first job that you still use?
9. What is a story your family asks you to tell again?
10. Who helped you during a difficult period?
11. What changed when you moved, married or started a family?
12. What have people misunderstood about a decision you made?
13. Which place would you take a younger relative to, and why?
14. What small object carries a large memory for you?
15. Which friendship or relationship taught you something lasting?
16. When did your view of the world change?
17. What are you proud of that few people know about?
18. What would you like future generations to understand about your time?
19. Is there a topic you would prefer to keep private or revisit later?
20. What would you like a reader to feel after the final chapter?

MEMORY AND SOURCE LOG

For each useful story, note an approximate date, the people involved, the recording timestamp and any photo, letter or other source. Mark uncertain dates as uncertain. Avoid silently converting memory into a verified fact.

Story / source: _____

Approximate date / confidence: _____

Recording or photo reference: _____

People to check with / permission needed: _____

Narrator's preferred wording: _____

REVIEW BEFORE SHARING

- ☐ The narrator has reviewed the intended extracts or draft.
- ☐ Names, dates and source references have been checked where possible.
- ☐ Decisions about sensitive topics are recorded.
- ☐ Photo, quotation and other permissions are recorded where needed.
- ☐ Intended readers and distribution are agreed.
- ☐ The approved version and review date are recorded.

NEXT BOOK DECISIONS

Which stories belong together? _____

Which gaps need another conversation? _____

Who reviews the draft? _____

What help is needed: interviewing, writing, editing or production?

Background: Oral History Association, Informed Consent

<https://oralhistory.org/informed-consent/>

Prepared with AI assistance. This original worksheet is a planning aid.

You may share an unmodified copy with this attribution and resource link.

For memoir support and a project proposal: <https://greenfieldpublishers.com/services/memoir-ghostwriting.html>

Find all templates and plan your next step: greenfieldpublishers.com/pages/author-resources.html