



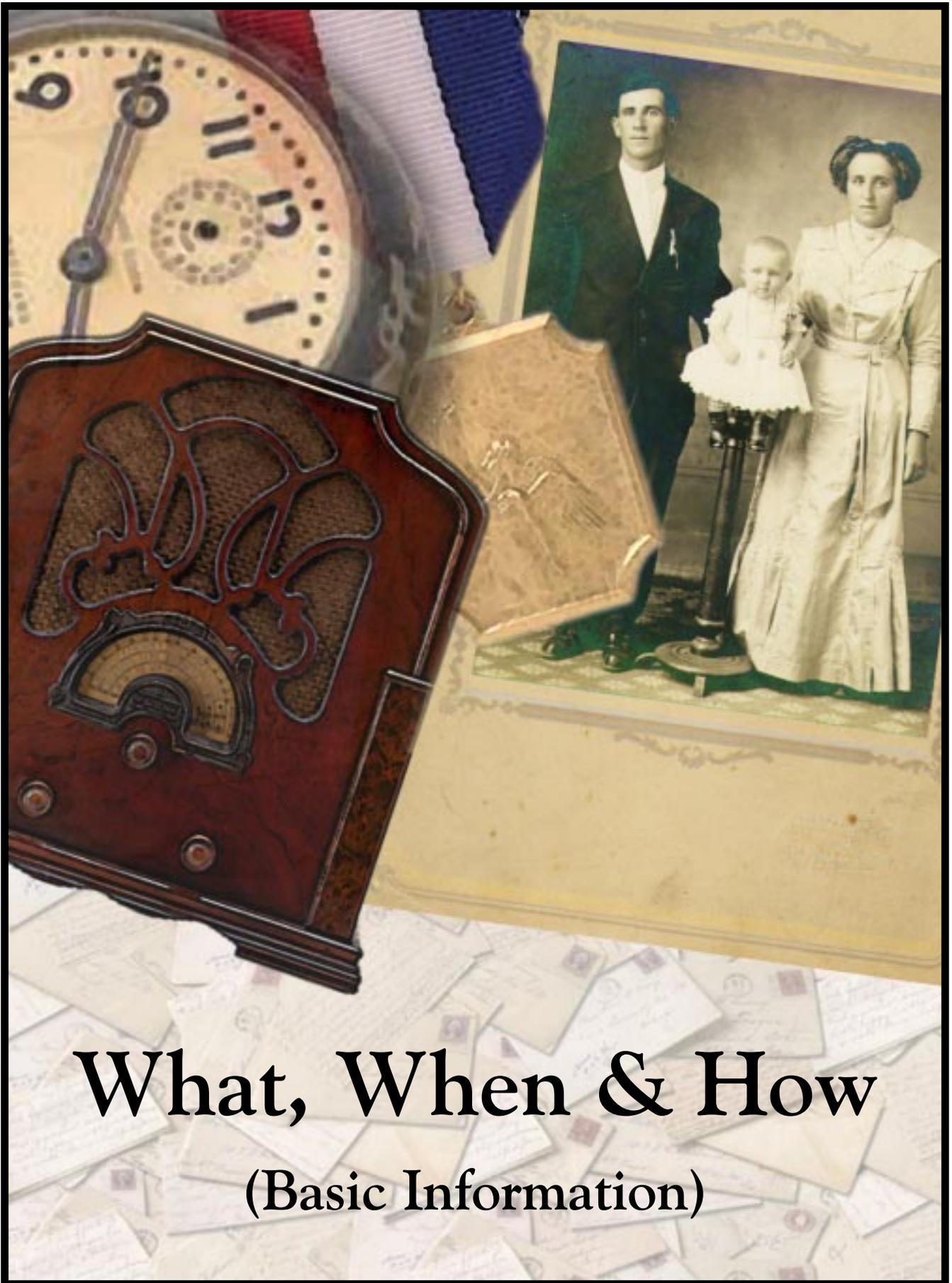
# Speaking of History

Doing Oral History Projects

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# What, When & How

(Basic Information)

# What is Oral History?

Your grandfather served in World War II. Your neighbor was a Vietnam veteran. Your “old aunt” remembers using lye to make soap in the back yard. Have you ever asked them about their experiences? Have you ever wondered what they remember about these adventures? Here is your chance.

History is much more than remembering facts. History is all around us. It’s in our families and in our communities. Doing an oral history project allows you to probe the memories of older people — to ask them to tell you stories about their experiences. It allows you “...to become a **producer of historical knowledge, rather than a passive absorber of historical information.**” (Glen Whitman, <http://www.doingoralhistory.org/whatis.html>)

Oral history records the feelings and impressions of a variety of people and gives a vivid picture of our past. It is a ‘living history’ of our family and our community

- The vehicle for recording the past is to record **interviews** with this irreplaceable first hand information.
- These interviews provide a **shared history** and the opportunity to have **face-to-face** conversations about history.
- Interviews are then put into a **form** that is available to yourself and others.

## Why Oral History?

Oral History allows young people to explore their community and to construct knowledge through that exploration.

- Oral History brings the younger generation and the older generation together and restores a sense of community.
- Events from the past are archived as primary sources.
- Curriculum objectives in language arts — such as organizing information, writing, editing, etc. — are an integral part of the program.
- Curriculum objectives in social studies — such as enabling the learner to gather and interpret information, examine issues from multiple perspectives, responding to cultural diversity, and working with others — are an integral part of the program.
- Student interest is high.
- Integration of technology can be used to facilitate both the interview process and also the final product.

**Let’s give it a try!**



# Issues of Concern

## Bias

Bias is a distortion of judgment that is personal and can affect the outcome of the interview. Interviewers should be careful not to give their opinions during the interview or to edit material so that the opinion of the interviewee is distorted.

## Ethical Concerns

According to Webster ethics is “the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duties and obligations.” What must you do to promote an ethical standard when conducting oral history sessions?

- Interviewees should be made fully aware of how this material will be used.
- Interviewers should guard against compromising or exploiting the person they are interviewing.
- Interviewees should have the opportunity to answer questions as freely as possible.
- Interviewees should be able to withdraw any time.
- When the interviewee asks that the tape be stopped, the interviewer should do so.
- Stereotypes should be avoided
- Information collected should be available to others who have an interest in this topic.

## Legal Concerns

- Oral history interviews are subject to U.S. copyright law (1978) ([www.baylor.edu/Oral\\_History/Introduction.html](http://www.baylor.edu/Oral_History/Introduction.html))
- A general release form should be signed.
- Oral history interviews are subject to libel and slander laws. If slanderous information is given in the interview, the interviewer should be prepared to omit that section of the interview or to omit the name of the person being slandered.

## Popular Memory/Fallibility of Memory/Distortion of Memory

What the interviewee tells you is his/her perception of the topic you are covering. Sometimes what they tell you does not ‘jibe’ with what you know the facts to be. This could be caused by a distortion of the memory of person being interviewed. It could also be that what this person saw may, in fact, be different from what the ‘popular memory,’ (or the memory that is often reported) is. It is important not to correct or interrupt the interviewee.

# Issues of Concern (con't)

## Primary Sources

A primary source is firsthand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation. These may be...

- **Objects:** artifacts, tools, weapons, inventions, fashion, tombstones, etc.
- **Images:** photographs, film, video
- **Audio:** music, audio recordings
- **Statistics:** census data, land surveys, maps, blueprints, architectural drawings.
- **Text:** cookbooks, advertisements
- **The Community:** family photographs, recipes, clothes, oral histories, local historical societies, etc.

## Responsibility to the Interviewee

- Interviewees should be able to withdraw any time.
- When the interviewee asks that the tape be stopped, the interviewer should do so.
- The interviewer must accurately portray the words of the interviewee.

## Responsibility to the Public

Oral historians has the responsibility to

- Maintain the highest standards.
- Not interject bias into either the recording or the editing process.
- Select subjects based on their knowledge of what is being studied.
- Make information available to interested parties.

## Transcription

To transcribe a topic, the interviewer writes a word-by-word narrative of exactly what is said, including pauses.

- Transcripts give the exact wording of the interviewee including whatever grammar was used.
- Transcription is time consuming. If you are just looking for where in a tape something occurs, a rough copy might be sufficient.



# Analysis of Primary Resources

According to Webster, history is “a chronological record of significant events often including an explanation of their causes.” (Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1984) Where do historians get the information that they use to write “history?” Often historians use primary resources. Primary resources are first-hand testimony of evidence coming directly from a source who has knowledge of a topic or an artifact of a event or time in history.

Any time you collect oral history, you are taking information about events of the past. Any time you read history, you are seeing a historians perception, based on oral history and artifacts of the time, of events of the past. Some primary sources are more reliable than others. How do historians determine what information to use in the account he/she is writing?

Historians use two basic rules. The first is the **Time and Place Rule** and the second is the **Bias Rule**.

## Time and Place Rule

To judge the quality of a primary source, historians use the **time and place rule**. This rule says that the closer in time and place a source and its creator were to an event in the past, the better the sources will be. Based on the time and place rule, better primary sources (starting with the most reliable) might include:

- Direct traces of the event;
- Accounts of the event, created at the time it occurred, by firsthand observers and participants;
- Accounts of the event, created after the event occurred, by firsthand observers and participants;
- Accounts of the event, created after the event occurred, by people who did not participant or witness the event, but who used interviews or evidence from the time of the event.

## Bias Rule

The historians’ second rule is the **bias rule**. It says that every source is biased in some way. Documents tell us only what the creator of the document thought happened, or perhaps only what the creator wants us to think happened. As a result, historians follow these bias rule guidelines when they review evidence from the past:

- Every piece of evidence and every source must be read or viewed skeptically and critically.
- No piece of evidence should be taken at face value. The creator’s point of view must be considered.
- Each piece of evidence and source must be cross-checked and compared with related sources and pieces of evidence.”

An additional area of bias is what the reader brings to the source. The preconceived ideas of the event can alter the intent of the author of a document.”

Source is Library of Congress Learning Page: *The Historians’ Sources: Analysis of Primary Sources*. Date of access: 4/17/01. <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/psources/pshome.html>

To find a series of **questions for analyzing primary sources**, go to Section 2A: *Questions for Analyzing Primary Sources* <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/psources/studqsts.html>

# Transcription

A transcript is a written copy of recorded material. Transcription is the process of making that copy. Transcription has specific rules or guidelines regarding how it is done. Transcription differs from note-taking. Note-taking involves writing the essence of what the speaker says and does not necessarily quote the speaker exactly.

Your first task is to determine if you really need a transcript of the interview. Are notes enough to get the “job done” or is your oral history to be direct information from the speaker? Younger students may want to take and use notes.

If you are going to do transcription, you need to follow standards. Although I found variations when I looked at the standards for transcription, there were a few basics that were included in most of the sites at which I looked.

## Try not to change what has been said.

- Omit filler words that have no relevancy like “er,” “um,” etc.
- If contractions are spoken, use the contraction in your transcription.
- Omit comments that the interviewer said like “how interesting.” Do write the questions asked.

## Make the interview easy to understand.

- If a grammatical error does not hurt the understanding of the speaker, leave it in.
- Delete false starts.
- Use correct spelling unless the “flavor” of the words are changed.
- If there is a question about the readability of the transcript, you can put a “V” in to represent verbatim and “E” to represent edited material.

## Punctuation and parenthetical comments ease understanding of the transcript.

- Use parentheses to put in things that explain the interview like (laughter) or (tears in his eyes)
- Use square brackets [ ] for an explanation that you want to make about the interview.
- Be careful not to over punctuate. Ease of reading is important

## Be sure to organize your material.

- If you are transcribing from a tape, be sure to label the tapes (for example, Tape 1, Side 1) and then label the transcript in the same manner.
- At the end of that side of the tape, you will write End of Tape 1, Side 1.
- It is good idea to keep a log using the counter on the tape recorder.

## Allow the interviewee to read the transcript.

- If there were things you did not understand on the transcript, for example names or spellings, ask the interviewee so that the transcript will be an accurate record.

For a complete list of **editing guidelines**, contact the Ohio Historical Society Youngstown Historical Center of Industry and Labor, 1982 Velma Avenue, Columbus, OH 43211-2497. 614-297-2340 or 1-800-858-6878.

# The Interview Process

## Interview Video Clip

The ‘heart and soul’ of oral history is the interview process. This is composed of four specific segments—selecting who to interview, before the interview, during the interview, and after the interview.

## Selecting Who to Interview

Once your class has decided the topic of your oral history project, you will need to select someone to interview. The **objective** is to find someone who has information about whatever your topic is. How do you find someone? Try...

- Asking a **family member** if they know of someone who has knowledge of your topic
- Ask your **school librarian** or the **public librarian** in your city.
- Call the **local historical society** to find out if there are people who have the information you are seeking
- Look in the **phone book** for agencies that might work with people in the area you are researching. For example, veterans group and centers for aging might know of possible candidates.
- Ask your **teacher** for assistance in finding someone to interview

## Before the Interview

- Call the person to be interviewed and **set up a time and a location** to conduct the interview. Explain the **purpose** of the interview. Emphasize the importance of preserving these stories and having them available future generations.
- Make sure you are **prepared** for the interview. Have an **outline of questions** (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~genepool/oralhist.htm>) prepared that will get the information that you are seeking. Make sure questions are open-ended and require more than yes or no answers.
- Do any **background research** you might need to do. If it’s an event you’re interested in, find out some history of the event. If it’s a period of time, find out about that era in history.
- Have a **release form** ready to give to the person being interviewed. It be explained at the initial contact that a release form is necessary so that their history can be shared.
- Check your **recording equipment** to make sure it is operational. Make sure you have fresh batteries, sufficient tape, etc. To select the equipment you will need, go the section entitled Recording Equipment.

## During the Interview

- When you first arrive **introduce yourself** and whoever is with you.
- Explain the **purpose** of the project one more time.
- **Set up your equipment** and make sure it is operational before you the interview. For specific information go the section entitled Recording Equipment.
- Get the **release form** signed.

## The Interview Process (con't)

- **Verify all spellings** such as the name of the interviewee and the names any events
- When recording begins, start out with an **opening announcement** on tape. Give your name, the name of the person you are interviewing the date and the time.
- **Don't interrupt** when a person is talking. Allow the person time to think when answering a question.
- Eye contact is extremely important. Keep focused on the person being interviewed.
- Don't allow the interview to last more than **one hour**.
- **Label the tape** with the name of the interviewee and the date.

### After the Interview

- Write up **'field notes'** immediately after your interview. Included should be...
  - Your **name**, the **name** of person being interview, **date** and **time**
  - A **summary** of the interview. This should include the **location, setting** and anything important or peculiar that happened during the interview.
  - Any **personal reflections** you have on the interview.
  - Send a **thank you** note in writing



# PBS 45 & 49 General and Materials Release

In consideration of the publicity and exposure that I will gain through this project, and for no additional consideration, I agree as set out below. To allow materials and/or performances provided by me and images and/or other recordings of those materials and/or performances created through photography, videography, or other electronic or non-electronic means to be edited, reproduced and distributed for unlimited use, in whole or in part, by PBS 45 & 49. To allow images and/or other recordings created through photography, videography, or other electronic means in which I appear to be edited, reproduced and distributed for unlimited use, in whole or in part, by PBS 45 & 49. I also agree to the use of such images and/or materials or performances by anyone who is licensed to do so by PBS 45 & 49. I understand that the means of distribution envisioned by this release included, but are not limited to, print, broadcast media, "narrow-cast" media, the Internet and the world wide web, and even means of distribution yet to be discovered.

I agree to allow PBS 45 & 49 or others licensed by them, to use my name, city and state of residence, voice, picture, and other information about me for educational purposes, for publicity and promotional purposes, and for other purposes as they determine are appropriate. I also agree that PBS 45 & 49, and licensees, agents and employees of theirs are not liable for any damages due to use they make of any information they learn about me during this project. Or through the use of any material and/or performances provided by me through this project. I affirm that I have all rights necessary to enter into this release.

I enter into this agreement on behalf of myself and anyone who, in the future, would acquire rights from me by inheritance or otherwise. I acknowledge that I have read this release and sign it as a voluntary act.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

## For Minors

I am the parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_. I fully intend that this release be binding upon him or her, me and upon anyone who, in the future, would acquire rights from one or both of us by inheritance or otherwise.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Material \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Video Instructions

## Oral History Project — Student Instructions Final Product: Video

### Your Task:

In a group, you will interview a person who can answer questions about your topic. The interview will be taped, transcribed, edited and then put into a video

- Guidelines:
- You will work in groups of two or three.
- You will need a video camera and one hour of tape. If possible, an external microphone should be used.
- Your group needs to share responsibilities for the entire project.

### Step One:

1. Find someone in your community who has information about the topic you are studying.
2. Make an appointment to interview that person. Make sure he/she is willing to be interviewed, knows that he/she will be videotaped and is willing to sign a release that the tape may be available to the public.
3. Draw up a set of questions before your interview. It is best to use open-ended questions, that is, questions that require an explanation and not just a yes or no answer.

### Step Two:

1. Do your interview.
  - a. The interviewer asks the questions. The interviewee answers them. He/she should be able to answer without interruption and to go on for as long as he or she wishes.
  - b. Show sincere interest in the subject. This will help to establish a good rapport.
  - c. Avoid giving your opinions—even if asked
  - d. Avoid conversation stopping comments like “oh yech!”
2. Don't worry if the interviewee meanders when he/she speaks. Try to draw them back to the topic. Remember, you will be selecting what parts of the interview you wish to include.
3. At the end of the interview, make sure that you have the correct spelling of the name of the person.
4. Make sure that the interviewee signs the Release Form.
5. Ask if you can take the picture of the interviewee.
6. Thank the interviewee profusely.
7. Make sure the interviewee knows that this is part of a class project. The tape will be edited and made into a video. The material will be available to be viewed publicly.
8. Send a thank you note to the interviewee after you have returned to school.

# Video Instructions (con't)

## Oral History Project — Student Instructions Final Product: Video

### Step Three:

1. Watch the entire video and determine what sections you wish to include and in what order they will be.
2. You will then edit the video. This means that you can arrange it in an order that makes sense to you. Add transitions, text and/or music as needed.
3. Have everyone on your team view the video so that you are sure that there are no mistakes.
4. Show the video to your teacher so that he/she can make final corrections.
5. Send a copy of the video to the interviewee and notify them where they can see the video of the entire project.
6. The teacher will put all of the group projects together into one video (with the help of the students). That video will be placed in the location you have already determined. (school library, public library, historical society, etc.)



# Bibliography

This listing is material I used when getting information for this site. For a more complete listing, click on Oral History Hotlist.

**American Memory Historical Selections for the National Digital Library.** Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. Date of Revision: 3/14/01. Date of Access: 4/17/01. <http://memory.loc.gov/>

**The Great Chicago Fire.** Chicago Historical Society and Trustees of Northwestern University. Date of Posting: 10/8/96. Date of Access: 4/6/01. <http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/intro/gcf-index.html>

Karras, Ruth. **Oral History Questions.** Date of Access: 4/6/01. <http://nimbus.ocis.temple.edu/~rkarras/65list.htm>

**National Archives and Records Administration,** Washington, D. C. Written Document Analysis Worksheet. Date of Revision: 5/19/98. Date of Access: 4/17/01

**Oral History Interview Transcription Guidelines,** Fort Lewis College, Center of Southwest Studies. <http://swcenter.fortlewis.edu/Tools/sw-30.htm> Date of Access: 6/1/01

**Rabun, Joanne Todd.** Date of Posting: 5/8/00. Date of Access: 4/6/01. <http://www.rootsweb.com/~genepool/oralhist.htm>

**Teachnology, Inc,** Slate Hill, NY. Web Tools > Rubric Generator. Date of Posting: 2000. Date of Access: 4/17/01. [http://www.teach-nology.com/web\\_tools/rubrics/](http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/)



# Equipment

## For a Class Booklet

**Tape Recorder** — Tape recorders vary in price from about \$400 to \$20. You do not need to have the very best tape recorder, but you also do not want a very cheap one which will not give you clear sound quality.

- Other features that should be available are battery level indicator or record level meter digital tape counter, and the ability to be used with batteries or through a wall socket. A “noise reduction” feature, such as Dolby, is also very nice—but expensive.
- **Microphone.** Most recorders have built-in microphones. These often give poor results.

**Microphones** — There are a variety of external microphones that can be used.

- **Lavalier or lapel microphones** attach to the interviewee’s clothes and have a transmitter that is hidden somewhere on the person’s body (if you’re shooting video). If you want the interviewer’s questions to be heard clearly, the interviewer could also wear a microphone.
- **Hand-held microphones** should be held no more than nine inches from the mouth of the interviewer. (This is good for outside.)
- **Table-microphones** (multidirectional)—If it is necessary to hear the voice of more than one person, a multidirectional microphone could be used.

**Tape** — Use only good quality C-60 (thirty minutes per side) cassette tapes if possible. The C-90 (90 minutes) or the C-120 (2 hours) tend to stretch and will break more easily.

- Do not use tape for the interview that has been used before.
- Be sure to punch out the tabs on the back of the cassette after the interview so that the tape cannot accidentally be erased.
- Store tapes in a cool, dry place. Try to keep them free from dust. Remember to rewind them.

**Book Binder** — Booklets can be taken to the local copy center to be bound or you can use a GBC machine to bind them yourself.



# Equipment (con't)

## For Video

**Video Camera** — Video cameras can be either digital or analog.

- Video cameras should have a 'flip out' LCD screen besides an eyepiece viewfinder.
- They should also be able to use an external microphone as well as one that is built in. Use the built in microphone for interviews only if you are very close (10 ft maximum) to the interviewee; otherwise use an external wireless or hard-wired microphone.
- Use the camera on a tripod whenever possible so your shots are steady.
- On-the-camera lights give a slightly harsh 'newsy' feel to interviews. Use other, softer lights for interviews.

**Microphones** — There are a variety of external microphones that can be used.

- **Lavaliere or lapel microphones** attach to the interviewee's clothes and have a battery pack that is hidden somewhere on the person's body (if you're shooting video). If you want the interviewer's questions to be heard clearly, the interviewer could also wear a microphone.
- **Hand-held microphones** should be held no more than nine inches from the mouth of the interviewer. (This is good for outside.)
- **Table-microphones** (multidirectional) — If it is necessary to hear the voice of more than one person, a multidirectional microphone could be used.

**Video Editing Software** —

- Needs to run on a modern computer with at least 128 megabytes of RAM memory and a 20 gigabyte or larger hard drive. Don't try to edit on an old, slow machine.
- Can be inexpensive and basic (Ulead VideoStudio) or expensive and Hollywood (Adobe Premiere).
- Should have a "Firewire" or "iLink" or IEEE1394" connection—built in (iMac/G4) or plug-in card (PC's)—for importing digital video (NOT analog!) Some Firewire cards come with editing software packages (Orange Micro, Digital Origins).
- IMacs and G4's come with editing software (iMovie, Final Cut) and camera interface (digital, not analog) built in.
- If you must use an analog camera, you will need help finding a good way to get your video into computer for editing.

**CD Burner** —

- Should have the fastest "write speed" you can afford.
- Can be "IDE" (internal) or USB or Firewire or parallel port (external)
- Need software to burn your video or audio onto a CD. It's usually free with the burner but you should check to be sure.



# Equipment (con't)

## Multimedia Presentations

**Tape Recorder** — Tape recorders vary in price from about \$400 to \$20. You do not need to have the very best tape recorder, but you also do not want a very cheap one which will not give you clear sound quality.

- Try to use a recorder that has a socket that takes an external microphone. Most recorders have built-in microphones. These often give poor results.
- Other features that should be available are battery indicator or recorder level, digital tape counter, and the ability to be used with batteries or through a wall socket. A “noise reduction” feature is also very nice — but expensive.

**OR Video camera** — Video cameras can be either digital or analog.

- Video cameras should have a ‘flip out’ LCD screen besides an eyepiece viewfinder.
- They should also be able to use an external microphone as well as one that is built in. Use the built in microphone for interviews only if you are very close (10 ft maximum) to the interviewee; otherwise use an external wireless or hard-wired microphone.
- Use the camera on a tripod whenever possible so your shots are steady.
- On-the-camera lights give a slightly harsh ‘newsy’ feel to interviews. Use other, softer lights for interviews.

**Microphones** — There are a variety of external microphones that can be used.

- Lavalier or lapel microphones attach to the interviewee’s clothes and have a battery pack that is hidden somewhere on the person’s body (if you’re shooting video). If you want the interviewer’s questions to be heard clearly, the interviewer could also wear a microphone.
- Hand-held microphones should be held no more than nine inches from the mouth of the interviewer. (This is good for outside.)

**Presentation Software** — This might include PowerPoint or HyperStudio or another program that you have available

**CD Burner** —

- Should have the fastest “write speed” you can afford.
- Can be “IDE” (internal) or USB or Firewire or parallel port (external)
- Need software to burn your video or audio onto a CD. It’s usually free with the burner but you should check to be sure.



# Oral History Hotlist

## Organizations

- **Links to Outside Sources** — Extensive listing in many areas (genealogy, preservation, etc.) <http://www.ohiohistory.org/links/links.html#hist>
- **National Endowment for the Humanities** <http://www.neh.fed.us/>
- **Ohio Bicentennial Commission** <http://www.ohio200.org/>
- **Ohio Historical Society** <http://www.ohiohistory.org/>
- **Ohio Humanities Council** <http://www.ohiohumanities.org/index.htm>
- **Ohio Humanities Council Links** (Links to councils from other states.) <http://www.ohiohumanities.org/links.htm>
- **Oral History Association** <http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha>
- **Oral History Society** <http://www.oralhistory.org.uk>

## About Oral History

- **Doing Oral History** St. Andrews Episcopal School (middle school and upper school) has an extensive page with sample interviews. Their oral history project is highlighted. <http://www.doingoralhistory.org/index.html>
- **Heritage Preservation** Tips on how to preserve documents and other primary sources. Some lesson plans. <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/>
- **Oral History Association Homepage** Founded in 1967, the Oral History Association has promoted and set standards for oral historians. They encourage creation and dissemination of these primary sources. <http://www.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/>
- **Oral History Hotlist** This site is a hotlist of organizations, publications, centers, and collections. <http://www.baylor.edu/OHA/Othersites.html>
- **Oral History Techniques and Procedures** This is an entire book online. <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/oral.htm>
- **Primary Sources and Activities** Projects created by the National Archives and Record Administration <http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/teaching.html>
- **Save America's Treasures** Dedicated to identifying and rescuing the enduring symbols of America's tradition. <http://www.saveameericastreasures.org/>
- **Southern oral history program How-To** Gives interviewer guidelines and sample formats for field notes, tape labels, etc. [www.unc.edu/depts/sohp/howto.htm](http://www.unc.edu/depts/sohp/howto.htm)
- **Teaching Students How to be Historians:** An Oral History Project for the Secondary School Classroom Glen Whitman from St. Andrew's Episcopal School wrote this article chronicling the school's oral history project. [www.doingoralhistory.org/docs/article.html](http://www.doingoralhistory.org/docs/article.html)

# Oral History Hotlist (con't)

## Sample Sites

These sites give online oral histories.

- **American Bar Foundation Oral History Program** Gives full transcripts and abstracts of the history of the American Bar Association <http://www.abf-sociolegal.org/oralhistory/index.html>
- **American Memory Historical Collections for the National Digital Library** Library of Congress has given us this excellent public domain resource. <http://memory.loc.gov>
- **American Roots Music** A rich library of insight into the music and lives of the players by featuring complete transcripts of these interviews. [http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs\\_arm\\_oral\\_histories.html](http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs_arm_oral_histories.html)
- **Artists Archives of the Western Reserve** Gives a brief bibliography of the artists from the Western Reserve area and shows samples of their artwork. [www.artistsarchives.org](http://www.artistsarchives.org)
- **Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938** This site contains more than 2,300 first person accounts of slavery and 500 black and white photographs of former slaves. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/>
- **CIMS (Center for Immigration and Multicultural Studies) Oral History Page** Gives oral history information from Australia, North America, UK, Ireland, and community projects. <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/~cims/oralhist.html>
- **Duke University Special Collections Library** Offers a wide variety of primary source texts, many related to women of the Civil War, African-American women, the women's lib movement, etc. <http://www.toptags.com/aama/>
- **H-GIG** This hotlist has links to information about many college and university programs. There are also links to Holocaust oral history and to regional centers for study. <http://www.ucr.edu/h-gig/hist-topics/oralh.html>
- **The Magpie Sings the Great Depression:** Selections from DeWitt Clinton High School's Literary Magazine 1929-1942 Presents almost 200 poems, articles, and short stories and many graphics and photographs from The Magpie, literary magazine of Dewitt Clinton High School. <http://newdeal.feri.org/magpie/>
- **Mountain Voices** Transcripts of testimonies given by people from mountain communities (Himalayan's, Andes, China and more!) <http://www.mountainvoices.org/>
- **North American Slave Narratives** Series of narratives, pictures, and more <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/neh.html>
- **Oral Histories Online** Transcripts and photos are available dealing with the free speech movement. <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO/online/unihist.html>
- **Regional History Project** The Regional History Project has been documenting the history of the Central Coast of California and the institutional history of UC Santa Cruz since 1963, through oral history. <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/>
- **Suffragists Oral History Project Online** histories from the suffragist movement <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO/online/suffragists.html>
- **Using Oral History** Download Lesson You can listen to the voices of Women at Work in the 30's, Dancing as Recreation and Americans and Automobiles <http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/oralhist/oraldown.html>

## Oral History Hotlist (con't)

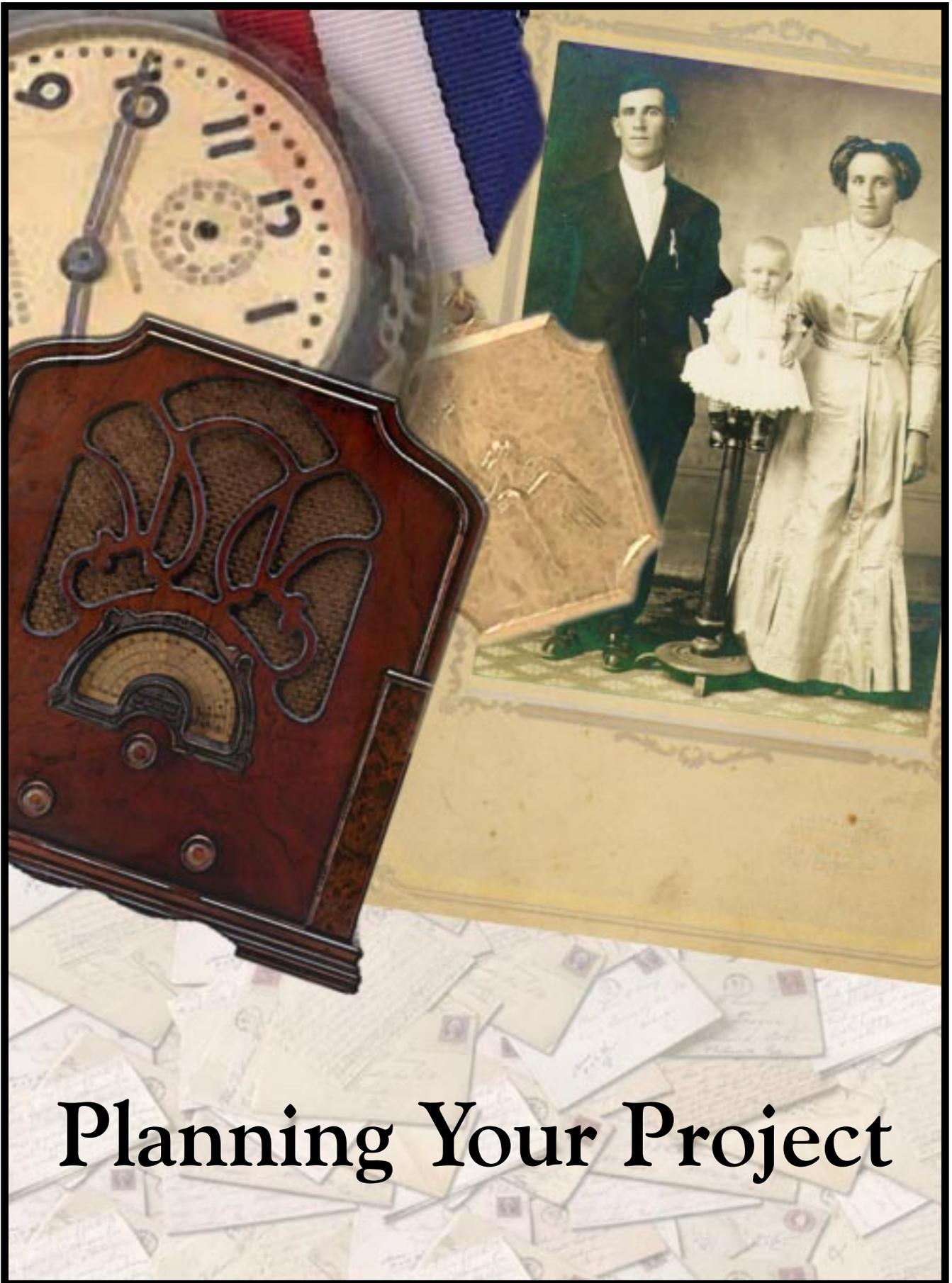
- **War Stories** Journalists discuss what they've seen and heard in covering conflicts. <http://www.newseum.org/warstories/index.htm>
- **Youngstown State University Oral History Collection** Collects and preserves first-person narratives of northeastern Ohioans who have participated in, or closely observed events which have significantly affected both the state and nation. [http://www.maag.yzu.edu/oralhistory/oral\\_hist.html](http://www.maag.yzu.edu/oralhistory/oral_hist.html)

### Oral History Lesson Plans

- **Ancestors: Teacher's Guide** Lots of lessons, ideas and templates for doing family history. <http://www.kbyu.org/ancestors/teachersguide/episode3.html>
- **Countdown to Millennium** Was designed to teach middle and high school students how to use technology to preserve the history of their small communities. A CD and a study guide are available. <http://frognet.net/countdown/>
- **History Firsthand** Primary Source Research in Elementary School Three lessons—Artifact Attributes, Archives and Appraisal and Searching Online Collections <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/97/firsthand/main.html>
- **The Historian's Sources** Teacher and Student lessons on primary sources <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/psources/pshome.html>
- **Historical Treasure Chest** This site gives a model for engaging students in an investigation of authentic material from the past. <http://www.k12science.org/curriculum/treasure/>
- **My History Is America's History** Excellent on-line resources for research collection and preservation, including sample questions, tips, videotapes and classroom and family projects. <http://www.myhistory.org>
- **Rounding the Bases: Race and Ethnicity in America** Students use primary sources focused on baseball to explore the American experience regarding race and ethnicity. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/00/base/>
- **Using Oral History Download Lesson** You can listen to the voices of Women at Work in the 30's, Dancing as Recreation and Americans and Automobiles <http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/oralhist/oraldown.html>

### Primary Sources

- **ProQuest** A collection of historical newspapers, Literature Online for Schools and the Digital National Security Archive. <http://bigchalk.com>
- **Digital Classroom** Provides material from the National Archives including reproducible primary documents and curriculum units. [http://www.archives.gov/digital\\_classroom/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/index.html)
- **Turn of the Century Child** Places middle school students in the role of historians using primary sources from the American Memory Collection. <http://nuevaschool.org/~debbie/library/cur/20c/turn.html>
- **Using Primary Sources in the Classroom** <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/primary.html>



# Planning Your Project

# Selecting a Topic

As in most projects or papers, the most difficult task is to actually deciding what you want to do. What questions do you want answered? What content to you want to cover? What skills do you want the students to gain? These are the defining questions to address when you select the topic of your oral history project. There are two basic approaches to determining the topic your class will cover.

- **The teacher will make the decision on the choice of a topic.** After checking course of study, the teacher can determine what activity ‘fits’ into the curriculum. The guiding factor should always be—**what you want the students to learn.** In other words, the important factor in selecting a topic is how it fits into the course of study.

A secondary, but nonetheless important factor, is student interest. The topic should heighten the enthusiasm of the students taking part in the activity. Although the teacher has made the decision as to what the topic is going to be, the idea of student choice should not be forgotten. There can be many points that involve student planning, from choice of group, selection of person to be interviewed, format of final product, etc.

**The teacher selects two or three topics and then the students decide which topic they will pursue.** This allows the students more input into the decision of what topic to pursue. It also could involve slightly more work for the teacher. In both scenarios (teacher choice or student choice) the teacher will have prepared a **general format** or approach to the topic. This will include the

- expected time frame
- new material or equipment students must learn to successfully complete the interview process
- teaching of the actual interview process
- procedures for the actual interview (class time, outside school time, transportation issues with younger students, etc.)
- acquiring of necessary equipment and or material
- decision as to where this material will be disseminated.

The teacher in this approach will need to have multiple approaches to consider. Once the initial plan is determined, however, the additional work will be minimal.

**Some sample topics and approaches are listed below. They include**

## Games

Is your idea of fun sitting at a computer with the latest game or using your GameBoy to entertain yourself? Is television your choice of entertainment? What did kids do before TV—before computer games? What a perfect opportunity to use oral history to answer this question.

Visit your grandparents or an elderly neighbor and conduct an oral history interview. Ask them..

- About how much time they spent in leisure activities.
- What those activities consisted of.
- If the games and activities were individual or group activities.
- If they still do any of these activities.
- About dating patterns when they were growing up.



# Selecting a Topic (con't)

## Family History

Is there one holiday that your family most enjoys? Why? Is there some tradition that your family follows? Is there a recipe that has come down through the generations and that is always prepared? All of these, and many more, are perfect topics for oral history projects. It is vitally important for students to make connections with their family and their community and a wonderful way to do this is to use the interviewing processes used in oral history.

## Patriotism

Patriotism can be defined as love for or devotion to your country. Does the person today show patriotism in the same way as the person ten, twenty or fifty years ago? What an exciting and challenging way to put oral history to work. Find people of a variety of ages and ask them about their beliefs about patriotism.

Ask them to...

- Give you their definition of patriotism.
- Tell what they do that they consider patriotic.
- Tell what they think others might do to be patriotic.
- Tell you if they think patriotism has changed over the years.

## Local History

Washington, D.C. was a planned community. Streets were laid out in a grid system. These streets have blossomed into a great city with monuments and memorials, as well as office buildings museums, and much more. This city was made by people and has been affected by the times. Science, technology, and growth have all affected the way the city has developed.

The same influences have had an impact on your city or your community. Discover for yourself how your city has become the dynamic center of life for all of the people in your community.

First, do a little research about your community. Find out how and when it was founded. Find out who was responsible for the founding. Find out why the city was founded.

Now let oral history be your guide. Do interviews with community members and find out...

- Who the people are who formed the neighborhoods. Were there ethnic or racial groups who chose to live together?
- How your community has changed throughout the years.
- What the economic structure of your community is.
- If there are buildings or structures who have changed in purpose over the years.
- If there have been changes in the government.

## Selecting a Topic (con't)

### Medicine

What are leeches? Well they're creatures that attach to your body when walking through some swampy places. They suck your blood. Does that sound horrible? Well, at one time, leeches were a medical treatment. Doctors applied leeches to patients to remove the 'bad blood' that was causing the disease.

What else was done in the early days of medicine? You can find out by interviewing both doctors who used many different practices before the modern techniques were invented and patients who had them used on them. You can also find out information about other pieces of equipment that were used in earlier times by interviewing and recording people who possess these 'tools of the trade' of medical history.

### Folk Art

In the past, we were required to make by hand many of the articles that we buy at the store today. Some of these tasks take "know-how" and often specific skills are required. Think about some of things we take for granted. For example, soap is now purchased by the bar in your grocery store. In the past, people mixed lye with other ingredients, cooked them in large pots, poured the mixture into shallow pans, and then cut them into bars. Yarn is also a commodity we currently pick up at the store. In the past, sheep were sheared, the wool spun into yarn and dyed to the color of choice. These were not easy tasks and the people who performed them were very proud of the product of their labor.

Use oral history to interview and record some of the people who are still performing these 'folk arts' or that have performed them in the past. Some areas that you might consider are...

- Quilting
- Needlework
- Farming activities (plowing, seeding, picking, etc.)
- Fashion



# Assigning Tasks

The following jobs must be done when completing your oral history projects:

- **Initial Contact**—Someone needs to call the person being interviewed to set up a time and place to conduct the interview.
- **Interviewer**—This person will ask the questions
- **Person responsible for taping or for videotaping**—This person will need to...
  - Make sure all equipment works before you go
  - Make sure you have all equipment when you go to the interview
  - Be sure a blank tape is available for use
  - Affix microphones to the person being interviewed
  - Tape a few words and play it back to be sure that volume is loud enough.
  - If more than one tape is necessary, change when appropriate
- **Note Taker**—Sometimes it is helpful to keep notes of important points that the interviewer has made.
- **Timekeeper**—This person makes sure that the group completes the tasks when assigned.
- **Transcriber**—If the tape is going to be transcribed, someone needs to be responsible for the actual transcription.
- **Editor**—Whether text or tape are being used, one or more team members must be responsible for editing the interview.
- **Disseminator**—One team member needs to make sure both the edited form of the interview and the original tapes are given to the teacher (who will see that they are stored in the predetermined location).



# Artifacts — Tools of the Trade

What if the information you want is beyond the lifetime of those people currently living? For example, you want to know about how slaves were made to stay where they were. What was used to keep them on the plantations? There may be no people around who actually have first hand knowledge of that information, but there are probably instruments to show how they were kept. A Bell rack was one of these pieces of equipment. It is a long metal pipe that attached around the neck of the slave and also was attached to his/her belt. There was a bell at the top that rang when the slave moved.

If you had access to this piece of equipment, you could take a picture of it and then do research on its use. You could find an authority in your area who could tell you about how a Bell rack was used. This would not be a primary source of information. It would be a secondary source, but would be usable none-the-less.

How does this impact your oral history project? The same situation may occur in your project. You may have possession of some material or equipment of which no one has first-hand knowledge. Can you use these? If you can find a **credible** source who can give you information on this object, you can interview that person about the need for and use of that object. You will need to document how the interviewee has acquired the information that he/she is telling you.

you are doing more than one object or if more than one person is interviewing people about material or equipment, it is necessary to have a template on which to record information. Information needed on the template is...

- Name of the object
- Where it is located and history of how it got there
- Approximately when it was used
- Previous owners (if known)
- Person being interviewed
- His/her credentials (in other words, how does this person know about the object.)



# Artifacts--Tools of the Trade

## Template for Student Recording



<b>Photo of object</b>	Name of Object: _____ _____
	Where Was Object Found? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Owner of Object:	
How to Contact Him/Her:	
Previous Owners:	
How the Object Was Used:	
Time When Object Was Used:	
Person Being Interviewed:	
Credentials of Person Being Interviewed:	
Person Conducting Interview and date:	

# Dissemination of Projects

Your oral history project is completed. You have the most wonderful tape, book, multimedia presentation or video all ready. Now what? What are you going to do with your “masterpiece?” Some sites are available for you to share your work with the community.

- Be sure to give a copy of your work to the person you interviewed.
- Your school library will be an ideal place for your school community to learn from your work. What a wonderful way to share information.
- The public library in your community may be able to make this oral history available to the community in general.
- The local historical society may want to store your information to share with the county population.

It is also important to keep your original, unedited tapes. These should be stored with the edited copy.



# Selecting the Final Format

## Final Format

Before the interviews occur, it is necessary to decide what the final format of your oral history project will be. There are several formats that can be used. The final format will be the determining factor in how the interviews are carried out.

## Booklet

A booklet can be made. If this is the choice of format, some things must be considered. With this format, video equipment is not necessary. A good tape recorder with a microphone is all that is needed at the interview and a computer is necessary for the transcription. A camera (regular or digital) will be necessary if pictures are used.

- Will a picture of the interviewee be taken and used in the booklet?
- Will a complete transcription of the interview be included or will excerpts be used?
- Is there a standard format that will be used or will students determine how they will set up the pages?
- How will the booklet be bound?
- What will be done with the booklet after it has been assembled?
- How will the original tapes be archived?

Go to Student Handout for Booklets on page 30

## Multimedia Presentation

A multimedia presentation can be made. If this is the choice of format, there are, once again, several decisions that must be made.

- Will each student or group make a make a presentation of the interview or will the presentations be combined (or hyperlinked) into one package.
- Will video clips be used? Will the actual voice of the person be on the slide or will there be transcription only?
- Will a picture of the person be used or will there be a video of the person speaking?
- Will there be a standard format for the slides or is each group responsible for their own format?
- What equipment is necessary? Will a video camera be essential or is a tape recorder sufficient?
- What will be done with the multi-media presentations when they are finished? Will they be burned onto a CD or put on a videotape?
- How will the original tapes be archived?

Go to Student Handout for Multimedia Presentations on page 32



## Selecting the Final Format (con't)

### Video

A video can be made of the oral history project. Once again, there are many decisions which must be made.

- Will each student or group make a make a video of the interview or will the presentations be combined (or hyperlinked) into one package.
- Will a picture of the person be used or will there be a video of the person speaking?
- Will there be a standard format set up before the groups begin to tape or is each group responsible for their own video?
- What equipment is necessary?
- What will be done with the multi-media presentations when they are finished? Will they be burned onto a CD or put on a videotape?
- Who is responsible for the video editing process?
- How will the original tapes be archived?

Go to Student Handout for Video on page 34



# Final Product: Class Book

## Student Instruction

In a group, you will interview a person who can answer questions about your topic. The interview will be taped, transcribed, edited and then put into the form of a class book.

### Guidelines:

- You will work in groups of two or three.
- You will need a tape recorder and one hour of tape. If possible, an external microphone should be used.
- Your group needs to share responsibilities for the entire project.

### Step One:

1. Find someone in your community who has information about the topic you are studying.
2. Make an appointment to interview that person. Make sure he/she is willing to be interviewed, knows that he/she will be taped (and photographed) and is willing to sign a release that the tape may be published in your class book.
3. Draw up a set of questions before your interview. It is best to use open-ended questions, that is, questions that require an explanation and not just a yes or no answer.

### Step Two:

1. Do your interview.
  - a. The interviewer asks the questions. The interviewee answers them. He/she should be able to answer without interruption and to go on for as long as he or she wishes.
  - b. Show sincere interest in the subject. This will help to establish a good rapport.
  - c. Avoid giving your opinions—even if asked
  - d. Avoid conversation stopping comments like “oh yech!”
2. Don't worry if the interviewee meanders when he/she speaks. Try to draw them back to the topic. Remember, you will be selecting what parts of the interview you wish to include.
3. At the end of the interview, make sure that you have the correct spelling of the name of the person.
4. Make sure that the interviewee signs the release form.
5. Ask if you can take the picture of the interviewee.
6. Thank the interviewee profusely.
7. Make sure the interviewee knows that this is part of a class project. The tape will be transcribed, edited and will be put into a class book. The material will be available to be viewed publicly.
8. Send a thank you note to the interviewee after you have returned to school.



# Final Product: Class Book

## Student Instruction

### Step Three:

1. Transcribe your interview. Transcription means writing what the interviewee said word-for-word. You can also include the interviewer's questions if you would like to. You do not need to transcribe momentary pauses of the interviewee or words like, "okay" or "you know." (A word processor is a handy tool to make your job easier.)
2. You will then edit the material you have transcribed. This means that you can arrange it in an order that makes sense to you. Make sure grammar and spelling are correct.
3. Have everyone on your team proofread the material so that you are sure that there are no mistakes.
4. Turn in the paper so that your teacher can make final corrections.
5. Type your final copy on standard sized paper. If you took a picture include it on the paper.
6. Send a copy of the final report to the interviewee and notify them where they can see the entire book.
7. The teacher will put all of the group projects together into a book that will be placed in the location you have already determined. (school library, public library, historical society, etc.)



# Final Product: Multimedia

## Student Instruction

### Your Task:

In a group, you will interview a person who can answer questions about your topic. The interview will be taped, transcribed, edited and then put into a multimedia presentation

### Guidelines:

- You will work in groups of two or three.
- You will need a video camera and one hour of tape. If possible, an external microphone should be used.
- Your group needs to share responsibilities for the entire project.

### Step One:

1. Find someone in your community who has information about the topic you are studying.
2. Make an appointment to interview that person. Make sure he/she is willing to be interviewed, knows that the interview will be made into a multimedia presentation and is willing to sign a release that the presentation may be available to the public.
3. Draw up a set of questions before your interview. It is best to use open-ended questions, that is, questions that require an explanation and not just a yes or no answer.

### Step Two:

1. Do your interview. You can either use a video camera or a tape recorder, depending upon how you will present the information in your multimedia presentation. (If you use a tape recorder, you may want to take photographs.)
  - a. The interviewer asks the questions. The interviewee answers them. He/she should be able to answer without interruption and to go on for as long as he or she wishes.
  - b. Show sincere interest in the subject. This will help to establish a good rapport.
  - c. Avoid giving your opinions—even if asked
  - d. Avoid conversation stopping comments like “oh yech!”
2. Don't worry if the interviewee meanders when he/she speaks. Try to draw them back to the topic. Remember, you will be selecting what parts of the interview you wish to include.
3. At the end of the interview, make sure that you have the correct spelling of the name of the person.
4. Make sure that the interviewee signs the Release Form.
5. Ask if you can take the picture of the interviewee.
6. Thank the interviewee profusely.
7. Make sure the interviewee knows that this is part of a class project. The tape will be edited and made into a multimedia presentation. The material will be available to be viewed publicly.
8. Send a thank you note to the interviewee after you have returned to school.



# Final Product: Multimedia

## Student Instruction

### Step Three

1. Watch the entire video and determine what sections you wish to include and in what order they will be.
2. You will then determine how you will present the material in your multimedia presentation. Will you use pictures? Quotes? Transcriptions? Sound bites?
3. Have everyone on your team view the multimedia presentation so that you are sure that there are no mistakes and it is true to the interviewee.
4. Show the presentation to your teacher so that he/she can make final corrections.
5. Send a copy of the presentation (if possible) to the interviewee and notify them where they can see the entire project.
6. The teacher will put all of the group projects together onto one video or on a CD (with the help of the students). That product will be placed in the location you have already determined. (school library, public library, historical society, etc.)



# Final Product: Video

## Student Instruction

### Your Task:

In a group, you will interview a person who can answer questions about your topic. The interview will be taped, transcribed, edited and then put into a video

### Guidelines:

- You will work in groups of two or three.
- You will need a video camera and one hour of tape. If possible, an external microphone should be used.
- Your group needs to share responsibilities for the entire project.

### Step One:

1. Find someone in your community who has information about the topic you are studying.
2. Make an appointment to interview that person. Make sure he/she is willing to be interviewed, knows that he/she will be videotaped and is willing to sign a release that the tape may be available to the public.
3. Draw up a set of questions before your interview. It is best to use open-ended questions, that is, questions that require an explanation and not just a yes or no answer.

### Step Two:

1. Do your interview.
  - a. The interviewer asks the questions. The interviewee answers them. He/she should be able to answer without interruption and to go on for as long as he or she wishes.
  - b. Show sincere interest in the subject. This will help to establish a good rapport.
  - c. Avoid giving your opinions—even if asked
  - d. Avoid conversation stopping comments like “oh yech!”
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3. At the end of the interview, make sure that you have the correct spelling of the name of the person.
4. Make sure that the interviewee signs the Release Form.
5. Ask if you can take the picture of the interviewee.
6. Thank the interviewee profusely.
7. Make sure the interviewee knows that this is part of a class project. The tape will be edited and made into a video. The material will be available to be viewed publicly.
8. Send a thank you note to the interviewee after you have returned to school.



# Final Product: Video

## Student Instruction

### Step Three:

1. Watch the entire video and determine what sections you wish to include and in what order they will be.
2. You will then edit the video. This means that you can arrange it in an order that makes sense to you. Add transitions, text and/or music as needed.
3. Have everyone on your team view the video so that you are sure that there are no mistakes.
4. Show the video to your teacher so that he/she can make final corrections.
5. Send a copy of the video to the interviewee and notify them where they can see the video of the entire project.
6. The teacher will put all of the group projects together into one video (with the help of the students). That video will be placed in the location you have already determined. (school library, public library, historical society, etc.)





# Oral History in Action

Got Roots? ... Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes

Brown Middle School, Ravenna

# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes

Brown Middle School, Ravenna

The lesson plans and student handouts coordinate with the video, Speaking of History...Doing an Oral History Project. Lessons can be used with or without the video. Ric Hughes, Brown Middle School in Ravenna, OH, is lead teacher for this project. He has created the lessons and taught them to his eighth grade students at the SBC Ameritech Classroom at Kent State University. Phyllis Spangler is a co-teacher in the project.

For photos and examples from Mr. Hughes class, go to the Speaking of History web site.

## In this Speaking of History guide

- **Initial Interview:** Lesson Plan, Student Handout, Assignment
- **Importance of Detail:** Lesson Plan
- **Timeline:** Lesson Plan, Student Handout
- **Using Primary Sources:** Lesson Plan, Student Handout
- **You Be the Historian:** Lesson Plan, Student Handout
- **Let's Get Going!:** Lesson Plan, Student Handout
- **Interview (2 days):** Lesson Plan, Vocabulary Handout, Technique Handout
- **Final Project:** Student Handout, Checklist
- **Final Assessment:** Student Handout

On the Speaking of History web site, all of the above items and...

- **Pictures! Pictures! Pictures!**
- **Importance of Detail:** Example
- **Timeline:** Example
- **Using Primary Sources:** Examples
- **You Be the Historian:** Example
- **Interview (2 days):** Interview Video Clips
- **Sample Interview:** Request Letter, Thank You Letter, Another Letter
- **Transcription of five questions:** Example
- **Final Project:** Examples

# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Initial Interview

### Lesson Plan

#### Objective:

Through the interviewing process, students will become more familiar with

- Listening skills
- Note taking skills
- Organizational skills
- Writing Skills

#### Overview:

Students are put into pairs. They will...

- Interview their partner
- organize their notes into a usable form
- write a three-paragraph article about their partner, and
- introduce their partner to the rest of the class

#### Procedure:

1. Students get partners (Select the person they know least well in the class)
2. Students write five questions that they would like to know about their partners and list the questions.
3. They talk about good interviewing techniques. (Click here for directions sheet. (Student Handout))
4. Students then do the actual interview
5. Students make a further list of five questions. This time they are trying to get direct quotes and to delve deeper into information about the person.
6. Students use their notes and their topic sentences to make a presentation about the person they interviewed.
7. Students create a five-slide presentation telling about the person they interviewed. (This could also be done by writing up the interview and taking or drawing a picture of the interviewee.)
8. Present the person you interviewed to the class.

#### Material:

PowerPoint and paper

#### Assessment:

Because this was a practice activity, assessment involved having students

- Write the questions
- Write the responses
- Take a picture of the interviewee
- Make a five-slide PowerPoint presentation.



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Initial Interview

### Student Handout

Name \_\_\_\_\_

#### The First Interview

1. Choose a partner—the person in the room that you know the least.
2. Fold two of the three sheets in half. Number the sheets.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. **Section 1 (3 minutes):** Write down five questions you want to ask your partner to get to know them better. Avoid questions which would yield a YES or NO answer.
4. **Section 2 (5-7 minutes):** Ask your partner your questions. Record his or her answers in Section 2 .
5. **Section 3 (3-5 minutes):** Look over the answers to your questions. What didn't you expect? What surprised you? Intrigues you? What do you want to know more about?

List 5 more questions in Section 3 that FOCUS on that one thing

6. **Section 4 (5-7 minutes):** Ask your questions and record your partner's answers in Section 4. This time try also for direct quotes, significant words that show the voice, the uniqueness of the person. Not body language also. (How does the person respond nonverbally to your questions?)
7. **Section 5 (12 minutes):** Develop a draft of a piece of writing that would help a reader get to know the person you are interviewing, OR about anything you heard your partner say that you would like to talk more about. Follow the writing wherever it takes you. Include at least one direct quote.

Think about your LEAD, the one or two sentences that pull the read in and focus the piece.

It has its advantages, but it's, well, kinda lonely," Becky said, explaining what it's like to be an only child.

Have you ever had the urge to get even? Amanda did.

Amy desires motivation. "I run faster," she says, "if people cheer for me and watch me run.

8. Read your rough draft to your partner. Partner responds to what she/he likes or hears—words, phrases, information—asks questions, confirms interpretation.

### PowerPoint Interview Assignment

Create a three-five slide PowerPoint presentation introducing your partner to the class.

#### Include:

- A strong LEAD
- At least two photographs
- At least two direct quotes which support the uniqueness of your partner.



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Importance of Detail

### Lesson Plan

#### Objective:

Teams of three students will draw pictures based on what their partners tell them. Correctness of directions and oral communication are stressed.

#### Procedure:

Divide the students into groups of three.

Student 1 is given a graphic picture made up by teacher. These pictures contain angles, shapes, polygons in a variety of colors (example). Student one explains one piece of the picture to student 2. (Student 2 may not see the picture.)

Student 2 walks across the room to student 3 and explains what student 1 told him/her. Student 3 then draws what student 2 has said.

This process is repeated three or four times.

Students then compare the original drawing with the drawing made by student 3.

The concept of clear communication is then discussed. The focus is on the importance of detail in recording information.

#### Material:

Markers or colored pencils (or crayons) for each group

Graphics already made up for student #1

Paper

#### Assessment:

The more that the artwork of student 3 looks like the original piece, the better the oral communication is. Teacher can evaluate on the closeness of the drawings.



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Timeline

### Lesson Plan

#### Objective:

Student will create a timeline listing one event for each year of their lives.

#### Procedure:

1. Explain to the students that a timeline is a simple way to organize information about yourself or your ancestors.
2. Have the students take timeline home and write down an event that happened each year in their life. Use the timeline handout.
3. Remind the students that it is not necessary to fill in an event for every year of their lives, but the year must be included even though there is nothing at that location.
4. Introduce the concept of documentation of the source. Students need to take three events in their life and find documented proof for that event.

#### Material:

Timeline chart

#### Assessment:

It is important that students have

- an event for each year of their lives
- documentation of three events.



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Timeline

### Student Handout

Timeline of important events in the life of \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date	
Age 1	
Age 2	
Age 3	
Age 4	
Age 5	
Age 6	
Age 7	
Age 8	
Age 9	
Age 10	
Age 11	
Age 12	
Age 13	
Age 14	
Age 15	
Age 16	
Age 17	

### Documented Proof

Below list three personal events from the timeline above and documented proof.

My Age	Event Description	Documentation

# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Using Primary Sources in the Classroom

### Lesson Plan: What Is It?

#### Objective:

Language Arts: Students will...

- Develop a clear, focused main idea (Grade 10 Writing Competency #1)
- Demonstrate completeness (Grade 10 Writing Competency #2)
- Make connections among ideas, paragraphs and sentences (Grade 10 Writing Competency #5)
- Exhibit standard conventions (mechanics, usage, grammar, and spelling) (Grade 10 Writing Competency #8)

#### Procedure:

1. Bring in an historical object for which students will not know the purpose. Your local historical society may have objects that they will lend
2. Set up the scenario.

“I have an object here that was used in \_\_\_\_\_ Your job is to write a paragraph explaining what you believe this object was used for and who used it. You may want to tell a little bit about the history of the object. When you are finished, you can tell me what you think the object is. Then I’ll tell you what it really is, who used it and we’ll see if any of you are correct.”

(This could also be done using a historical piece of fashion that the students are unfamiliar with.)

3. The students will then write two or three paragraphs about the object. The length and sophistication of the paper is dependent upon the grade level of the students.
4. Students will then share their “guesses” by reading their papers to the class.
5. The writing process can be further carried out by having the students change papers, proofread, return to the students and rewrite.

#### Material:

A unique object or fashion that the students will not know about.



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

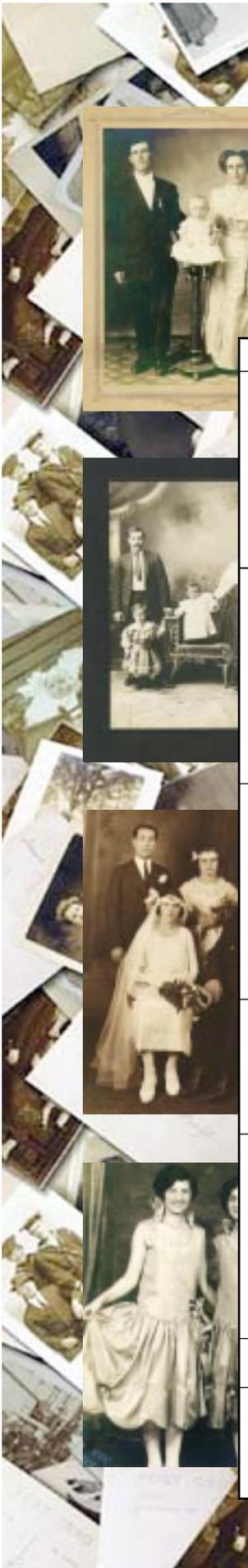
## Using Primary Sources in the Classroom Lesson Plan: What Is It?

Evaluation:  
Sample Writing Rubric

CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	Points
<b>Organization</b>	Sequence of information is difficult to follow.	Reader has difficulty following work because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which reader can follow.	Information in logical, interesting sequence which reader can follow.	_____
<b>Content Knowledge</b>	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with content and is able to demonstrate basic concepts.	Student is at ease with content, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required).	_____
<b>Grammar and Spelling</b>	Work has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	_____
<b>Neatness</b>	Work is Illegible.	Work has three or four areas that are sloppy.	Work has one or two areas that are sloppy.	Work is neatly done.	_____
<b>References</b>	Work displays no references.	Work does not have the appropriate number of required references.	Reference section was completed incorrectly	Work displays the correct number of references, written correctly	_____

**Total Points** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Comments:**



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Using Primary Sources in the Classroom

### Student Handout

1. Thoroughly examine your primary source.
2. Using the computer program of your choice and no more than two 8.5 x 11 inch sheets of paper, record the following information:
  - Name of object
  - Approximate time in history when it was used
  - Photograph(s) of the object
  - Two to three paragraphs explaining
  - where you “found” the object
  - how it was used
  - where it was used
  - who used it

(You might want to include diagrams)

### Evaluation:

1. Logical information with a clear, focused main idea
2. Completeness
3. MUGS (Mechanics, Uses, Grammar and Spelling)
4. Visual appeal
5. Confident presentation—Strong voice, eye contact, knowledge of subject



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## You Be the Historian

### Lesson Plan

#### Objective:

Students will create a narrative in which they are a member of the Springer family explaining what life was like 200 years ago.

#### Procedure:

- Introduce the Web site, You Be the Historian. <http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/hohr/springer>
- Using the Web, students will investigate the life of the Thomas and Elizabeth Springer family in New Castle, Delaware. Students should take notes on what they discover.
- Assign a partner for each student.
- Based on the notes and Web site itself, students should create a narrative (paired writing) in which they are a member of the Springer family. They should explain what life was like 200 years ago.

#### Material:

Web access and assignment sheet

#### Evaluation:

Sample Writing Rubric on next page.



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## You Be the Historian Lesson Plan

Evaluation:  
Sample Writing Rubric

CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	Points
<b>Organization</b>	Sequence of information is difficult to follow.	Reader has difficulty following work because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which reader can follow.	Information in logical, interesting sequence which reader can follow.	_____
<b>Content Knowledge</b>	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with content and is able to demonstrate basic concepts.	Student is at ease with content, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required).	_____
<b>Grammar and Spelling</b>	Work has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	_____
<b>Neatness</b>	Work is Illegible.	Work has three or four areas that are sloppy.	Work has one or two areas that are sloppy.	Work is neatly done.	_____
<b>References</b>	Work displays no references.	Work does not have the appropriate number of required references.	Reference section was completed incorrectly	Work displays the correct number of references, written correctly	_____

**Total Points** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Comments:**



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## You Be the Historian

<http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/hohr/springer>

### Student Handout

Investigate the life of the Thomas and Elizabeth Springer family in New Castle, Delaware. See if you can figure out what life was like 200 years ago.

Take LOTS of notes!

Create a narrative in which you are a member of the Springer family. Pick a period of time in your life...a day, a week, or longer...and through your narrative tell what your family's life is like. (hint...Think back to Harris and Me. Tell your story as "me" did.)

#### Additional requirements:

- believable dialogue
- obvious beginning, middle, end
- detail and description of the time and events
- appropriate word choice
- minimum two pages, Times New Roman, 14, double spaced

Use your notes, the Web site and all the clues and explanations to help you in your writing.



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Let's Get Going!

### Lesson Plan

#### Objective:

Students will write what they think they would like to do as their final project and what equipment they will need.

#### Procedure:

Divide the students into groups

Discuss in groups

- the topic of their oral history project
- who they will interview
- what the final format will be
- what equipment they will need

Each group will fill out the student handout. (Click here to get student handout.)

Report back to the large group and develop a plan of how to proceed. (using student input to direct the plan)

#### Material:

Student handouts

#### Assessment:

This is a planning activity. The only assessment will be completion of the student handout.



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Let's Get Going!

### Student Handout

Name \_\_\_\_\_

What is oral history? Based on what we have discovered so far, tell as much as you can about what oral history is.

Select a topic of focus for our interviews. Possible ideas might be games and play, family history, patriotism, medicine, cooking/recipes. Why did you choose what you did?

Who will you interview in your family and why? How close is this person to you? Ravenna? How will you conduct the interview? What information might this person have to help you understand who you are?

How do you see your final product? What will it look like?

Project will be a...?	Equipment Needed?
Class/Individual Booklet?	
Video?	
Multimedia Presentation?	
Timeline?	
Other?	

# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Interview (2 days)

### Lesson Plan

#### Objective:

Student will learn the techniques of good interviewing.

#### Procedure: Day 1

Review the concept of primary sources

Students will decide and write the primary source for their interview

Break the students into small groups. Have them brainstorm oral history questions they can ask the person who they are interviewing.

Watch video clip of a good interview. (This can be from a program like the Today Show.) Have the whole class brainstorm techniques of good interviewing.

Continue oral history vocabulary development.

Continue work on Springer family narrative. Edit with your partner. Begin final draft.

#### Procedure: Day 2

Pass out Interviewing Techniques Sheet.

Have students focus on open and closed ended questions

Practice interviewing techniques as well as taping techniques with their peers.

Complete Springer family narrative to present tomorrow.

#### Material:

Computer, Vocabulary Handout (pages 4 & 5), Technique Handout (pages 8 & 9) and tape of an interview.

#### Assessment:

This is a rubric for evaluating interviews in general.



# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Interview (2 days)

### Lesson Plan

#### Evaluation:

Sample Writing Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Preparation</b>	Before the interview, the student prepared several in-depth AND factual questions to ask.	Before the interview, the student prepared a couple of in-depth questions and several factual questions to ask.	Before the interview, the student prepared several factual questions to ask.	The student did not prepare any questions before the interview.
<b>Notetaking</b>	The interviewer took occasional notes during the interview, but usually maintained focus on the person rather than the notes. Notes were added to immediately after the interview so facts were not lost.	The interviewer took occasional notes during the interview, but usually maintained focus on the person rather than the notes. No additional notes were taken.	The interviewer took notes during the interview, but did so in a way that interrupted the "flow" of the interview. Additional notes may, or may not, have been taken.	The interviewer took no notes during or after the interview.
<b>Follow-up Questions</b>	The student listened carefully to the person being interviewed and asked several relevant follow-up questions based on what the person said.	The student listened carefully to the person being interviewed and asked a couple of relevant follow-up questions based on what the person said.	The student asked a couple of follow-up questions based on what s/he thought the person said.	The student did not ask any follow-up questions based on what the person said.
<b>Politeness</b>	Student never interrupted or hurried the person being interviewed and thanked them for being willing to be interviewed.	Student rarely interrupted or hurried the person being interviewed and thanked them for being willing to be interviewed.	Student rarely interrupted or hurried the person being interviewed, but forgot to thank the person.	Several times, the student interrupted or hurried the person being interviewed AND forgot to thank the person.

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# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Final Project

### Student Handout

Create a **multimedia** presentation based on your interview with your family member. This presentation will enable you to become **“a producer of historical knowledge, rather than a passive absorber of historical information.”** (Glen Whitman, <http://www.doingoralhistory.org/whatisit.html> )

Through this project you will record feelings and impressions and will give a vivid picture of our past, a “living history” of family and community.

### Your presentation should include:

- The story highlights of the person you interview (in text)
- Illustrations of that person’s life and the changing world in which he/she lives. Include primary source items—digital and/or scanned photographs  
birth/death certificates  
other related artifacts
- Audio and/or video clips of your actual interview
- A timeline of important events in your interviewee’s life and the changing world in which he/she lives.
- Other items you deem important/necessary.

### In addition to your multimedia presentation you will also be required to turn in the following:

- Copy of letter/script written to set up interview
- Release form signed by interviewee
- Interview notes, including questions asked
- Video and audio tapes of your interview
- Transcriptions of the highlights of your tapes
- Copy of Thank You letter sent after the interview
- Hard copy of all multimedia slides

### Important dates: (This is listed to give you an idea of the timeline Mr. Hughes used in his classroom.)

- Interview completed by Tuesday, October 16, 2001
- Interview videotaped at Ameritech should be scheduled for Monday, October 15th or Tuesday, October 16th between 8:10 AM and 9:50 AM. Make arrangements with Mr. Hughes before leaving the Ameritech classroom on Thursday.
- Create multimedia presentation between Monday, October 15th and Wednesday, October 24th.
- Final Presentation to the class on Thursday, October 25th and Friday, October 26th.

# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Final Project Checklist

This checklist goes on the outside of an envelope.  
Any item with a \* must be placed in the envelope.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Task	Completed
*Letter to Set up Interview	_____
Interview Held	_____
Date _____	
Time _____	
Place _____	
Collect Primary Source Items	_____
*Release Form Signed	_____
*Audio and/or videotape	_____
*Transcription	_____
Word Processor	
5 questions asked with “word for word” answers.	
*Interview Notes	_____
Thank you notes to interviewee	
Give to teacher to mail	
*Timeline	_____
include graphics and 10 important events in your interviewee’s life and at least 5 world events.	
*Hard copy of all PowerPoint slides (black and white)	_____
<b>PowerPoint Presentation (Final Project)</b>	
Story Highlights	_____
Primary source items (digital/scanned)	_____
Audio and/or video clips	_____

# Got Roots?...Doing an Oral History Project

Mr. Hughes, Brown Middle School, Ravenna

## Oral History Final Assessment

### Student Handout

Create a narrative with a main character who travels with his/her class to an electronic classroom on a college campus for a period of six weeks and learns not only about oral history but about the wonders and frustrations of technology.

- Must be written in 3rd person
- Cannot use words “then,” “so,” “after” at the beginning of sentences
- Must include dialogue
- First word must be a verb ending in “ing” and must explain the major action within the story
- Must have strong support, details and a logical sequence of events.
- Must have a satisfying ending





# Curriculum

## Curriculum: Language Arts

# What Is It?

## Using Primary Sources in the Classroom

### Objective:

**Language Arts:** Students will...

- Develop a clear, focused main idea (Grade 10 Writing Competency #1)
- Demonstrate completeness (Grade 10 Writing Competency #2)
- Make connections among ideas, paragraphs and sentences (Grade 10 Writing Competency #5)
- Exhibit standard conventions (mechanics, usage, grammar, and spelling) (Grade 10 Writing Competency #8)

### Procedure:

1. Bring in an historical object for which students will not know the purpose. Your local historical society may have objects that they will lend
2. Set up the scenario.

“I have an object here that was used in \_\_\_\_ Your job is to write a paragraph explaining what you believe this object was used for and who used it. You may want to tell a little bit about the history of the object. When you are finished, you can tell me what you think the object is. Then I’ll tell you what it really is, who used it and we’ll see if any of you are correct.”

(This could also be done using a historical piece of fashion that the students are unfamiliar with.)

3. The students will then write two or three paragraphs about the object. The length and sophistication of the paper is dependent upon the grade level of the students.
4. Students will then share their “guesses” by reading their papers to the class.
5. The writing process can be further carried out by having the students change papers, proofread, return to the students and rewrite.

### Material:

A unique object or fashion that the students will not know about.

### Evaluation:

Sample Writing Rubric



## Curriculum: Language Arts

# What Is It?

## Using Primary Sources in the Classroom

### Evaluation:

Sample Writing Rubric

CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	Points
<b>Organization</b>	Sequence of information is difficult to follow.	Reader has difficulty following work because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which reader can follow.	Information in logical, interesting sequence which reader can follow.	_____
<b>Content Knowledge</b>	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with content and is able to demonstrate basic concepts.	Student is at ease with content, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required).	_____
<b>Grammar and Spelling</b>	Work has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	_____
<b>Neatness</b>	Work is Illegible.	Work has three or four areas that are sloppy.	Work has one or two areas that are sloppy.	Work is neatly done.	_____
<b>References</b>	Work displays no references.	Work does not have the appropriate number of required references.	Reference section was completed incorrectly	Work displays the correct number of references, written correctly	_____

**Total Points** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Comments:**

# Curriculum: Language Arts

## Objective Observation

### Objectives:

Language Arts Students will...

- Develop a clear, focused main idea (Grade 10 Writing Competency #1)
- Demonstrate completeness (Grade 10 Writing Competency #2)
- Make connections among ideas, paragraphs and sentences (Grade 10 Writing Competency #5)
- Exhibit standard conventions (mechanics, usage, grammar, and spelling) (Grade 10 Writing Competency #8)

### Procedures:

1. Explain to the students the difference between objective observations and subjective observations. Objective observations give the facts of the picture. They tell exactly what is in the picture. Subjective observation describes your personal feelings about the subject matter in the picture.
2. Show the students one of the pictures below or any picture that you would like to use. Try to select a picture that will have one objective observation (statements of facts about the picture) but could have several subjective observations—depending upon the view of the observer.



3. Have students write two paragraphs. The first paragraph will give an objective observation of the photo. It should tell about the form and structure of the picture. It should allow someone who has not seen the picture to see it in their minds through the description they have written.

The second paragraph should give a subjective observation of the picture. In this paragraph they should tell what type of visceral reaction they have to the picture. They should make statements like “This picture makes me think that...” or “I feel.....when I look at this picture.”

4. After the paragraphs are written, have some students read their descriptions of the pictures and compare the two observations.
5. Have a class discussion about the sameness of the objective observation and the variety of responses to the subjective observation.

### Material:

Picture that can have multiple subjective reactions.

# Curriculum: Language Arts

## Objective Observation

**Evaluation:**  
Sample Writing Rubric

CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	Points
<b>Organization</b>	Sequence of information is difficult to follow.	Reader has difficulty following work because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which reader can follow.	Information in logical, interesting sequence which reader can follow.	_____
<b>Content Knowledge</b>	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with content and is able to demonstrate basic concepts.	Student is at ease with content, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required).	_____
<b>Grammar and Spelling</b>	Work has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	_____
<b>Neatness</b>	Work is Illegible.	Work has three or four areas that are sloppy.	Work has one or two areas that are sloppy.	Work is neatly done.	_____
<b>References</b>	Work displays no references.	Work does not have the appropriate number of required references.	Reference section was completed incorrectly	Work displays the correct number of references, written correctly	_____
<b>Total Points</b>					_____
<b>Teacher Comments:</b>					

# Curriculum: Language Arts

## Objective Observation

### Student Handout #1

Below you see a picture. You are to write two paragraphs about that picture. The first paragraph should give an **objective observation** of that picture. An **objective observation** gives the facts of the picture. Another person should be able to see the picture in their mind by reading your evaluation.

The second paragraph should be a **subjective observation**. A **subjective observation** describes your personal feels about the subject matter in the picture. You might make statements like "This picture makes me think that..." or "I feel .....when I look at this picture because..."



Objective Observation	Subjective Observation

# Curriculum: Language Arts

## Objective Observation

### Student Handout #2

Below you see a picture. You are to write two paragraphs about that picture. The first paragraph should give an **objective observation** of that picture. An **objective observation** gives the facts of the picture. Another person should be able to see the picture in their mind by reading your evaluation.

The second paragraph should be a **subjective observation**. A **subjective observation** describes your personal feels about the subject matter in the picture. You might make statements like "This picture makes me think that..." or "I feel .....when I look at this picture because..."



Objective Observation	Subjective Observation

# Curriculum: Social Studies

## Evaluating Primary Resources

### Objectives:

**Social Studies** Students will...

- Analyze information about major historical developments by
  - a. interpreting documents
  - b. Identifying and comparing experiences and perspectives,
  - c. Assessing credibility of sources (primary and secondary sources, biased and objective accounts. (Grade 10, Citizenship #1)
- Recognize that historical issues can raise more questions than they answer.

### Procedure:

1. Set up the scenario for the students.

“You are the editor of a book about the history of Chicago. One main event in that history was the Great Chicago fire of Oct. 11, 1871. You have read two historical accounts written by reporters from the Chicago Evening Post and by the Chicago Tribune. You must decide which article you are going to include in your book.”

2. Divide the class into groups of two or three.
3. Students will go to the Internet and read the two accounts of the fire.

<http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/media/bulwark.html>

<http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/conflag/tribune.html>

These are two newspaper accounts of the Great Chicago fire of 1871. They are very different in approach.

There is a Web site that tells about many aspects of the fire. It is <http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/intro/gcf-index.html>

4. Students will go to the site <http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/write.html> and print out two copies of this “Written Document Analysis Worksheet” and fill out the information asked for. A map might be helpful to the students. This can be obtained by going to <http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/conflag/pic0369.html>.

(Another approach is that the teacher can print these documents ahead of time and have it ready for the groups to use.)

5. In their groups, they will analyze these two newspaper reports. Then, as a class, students can group their information by using a computer or the board and labeling two columns—one for each article. They can compare as a class, the following items:

- What questions did they come up with that the authors of the article left out?
- Do the facts agree in the articles?
- Have they mentioned the same landmarks?
- Is the focus the same? (i.e. Do they look at the same human interest elements? Do they use the same type of vocabulary?)

## Curriculum: Social Studies

# Evaluating Primary Resources

- What would account for the differences? (Could it be that the audiences are different or that the author is trying for a certain effect?)
- Is the message the same in both articles?
- What can be deduced about the perspective of the writer of oral history?
- How might this knowledge be used when you do your own oral history interviews?

6. Students must then determine...

- If there would be value in using both articles or at least excerpts from both articles.
- If they should be combined or kept as separate accounts.
- If these stories should be considered objective accounts of the event or accounts of personal experiences.
- What place personal accounts have in history.

### Material:

- Computer with Internet access OR articles printed out from the Internet and available to the students.
- If a presentation is being done, supplies for poster or software for presentation.

### Enrichment:

- Rather than doing a report or a presentation on the Great Chicago Fire, students should find two articles of their own and compare and contrast the content as was done with the Great Chicago Fire. Some topics that could be used are...

Sporting events—The accounts in the newspaper of two competing schools

A public celebration

A local natural disaster

Some new technology

### Evaluation:

After class discussion, students can either write a report about which article they would choose and why or groups could make a PowerPoint or HyperStudio presentation about their selection and the reasons for it.



# Curriculum: Social Studies

## Evaluating Primary Resources

### Sample Presentation Rubric

Process	Below Avg.	Satisfactory	Excellent
1. Has clear vision of final product	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
2. Properly organized to complete project	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
3. Managed time wisely	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
4. Acquired needed knowledge base	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
5. Communicated efforts with teacher	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
Product (Project)	Below Avg.	Satisfactory	Excellent
1. Format	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
2. Mechanics of speaking/writing	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
3. Organization and structure	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
4. Creativity	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
5. Demonstrates knowledge	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9, 10
6. Other:	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9
Total Score: _____			

### Sample Writing Rubric

CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	Points
<b>Organization</b>	Sequence of information is difficult to follow.	Reader has difficulty following work because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which reader can follow.	Information in logical, interesting sequence which reader can follow.	_____
<b>Content Knowledge</b>	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with content and is able to demonstrate basic concepts.	Student is at ease with content, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required).	_____
<b>Grammar and Spelling</b>	Work has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	_____
<b>Neatness</b>	Work is Illegible.	Work has three or four areas that are sloppy.	Work has one or two areas that are sloppy.	Work is neatly done.	_____
<b>References</b>	Work displays no references.	Work does not have the appropriate number of required references.	Reference section was completed incorrectly	Work displays the correct number of references, written correctly	_____
<b>Total Points</b>					_____



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