**Listening Interviews**

1. **Select the person you are going to interview.**

A relative? A mentor? Emphasize that everybody’s story is important and that you would be honored if they would participate in the interview. Know why you want to interview them in case they ask. Do they have an interesting background? Job? History? Or do they have an interesting story to tell?

1. **Create a list of questions.**

What would you like to learn from the interview? Prepare a list of at least 5 questions. Being prepared will improve the quality of the interview. See the posted list for question ideas.

1. **Find or borrow recording equipment.**

Cell phones, flip cameras, tape recorders, and video cameras are all possible sources for recording your interviews. Ms. Pomeroy has flip cameras you can check out. Talk to a relative or a friend about borrowing equipment. If all else fails, then you will have to write their answers to the questions and then read both parts to the class.

1. **Schedule the interview and the location.**

Set aside a specific time and place that the interview will occur. Pick a quiet place with no distractions. Check the room for any distracting sounds like the television, the air conditioner coming on, etc. Setting a select time for the interview shows how important the interview is.

1. **Test your equipment.**

Start with some throwaway questions like “What did you have for breakfast?” so you can check the volume on the equipment. Rewind or delete this practice section before beginning the actual interview. Be sure that it is ready to go with proper battery power or electrical outlets.

1. **Begin the interview.**

Start the interview by stating your name, the date, the interviewee and the location. For example, “I am \_\_\_\_\_and today is \_\_\_\_\_. I am sitting with \_\_\_\_ and we are in \_\_\_\_\_ in Amarillo, Texas”. During the interview, if something interests you, ask about it. You are not limited to your prepared questions, nor do you have to use them all. Do not interrupt the speaker but give them nonverbal feedback. Encourage them to continue to talk.

1. **Keep the conversation flowing.**

Listen closely. Steer the conversation in the direction that you want it to go. Ask emotional questions like “How did that make you feel?” Respect your subject. Take notes during the interview so you can track topics or questions that you might want to go back to. Be curious and honest and keep an open heart and mind.

1. **Wrap it up.**

Time limit for the interview is 2-5 minutes but you may need more time than that for the actual interview. Before stopping the recording, ask if there is anything else they would like to share. Thank them for their time and for sharing their stories.

1. **Develop questions to ask the class.**

After the interview, develop 3 questions to ask the class about your interview. This is so you can test whether the class was listening or not.

1. **Due date.**

Interviews are due \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Be prepared to share them in class. Be ready to share with the class what the most interesting thing was that you learned as well.

**WHO WILL I INTERVIEW?**

**WHY?**

**WHEN & WHERE WILL THE INTERVIEW BE?**

**QUESTIONS I WILL ASK:**

**WHAT WAS THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT THIS INTERVIEW?**

**WRITE 3 QUESTIONS YOU WILL ASK THE CLASS AFTER THEY LISTEN TO YOUR INTERVIEW.**

**INTERVIEW GRADE SHEET for\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_\_ (25 points) questions prepared ahead of time

\_\_\_\_\_\_ (50 points) interview—we must be able to hear the interview clearly—whether it is recorded or written out and read by you to the class. You will not receive these points if the interview is less than 2 minutes in length. You will have 10 points deducted for going over 5 minutes. If you are not ready on the due date, 10 points will be deducted.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ (25 points) questions for class to answer

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\_\_\_\_\_\_ (25 points) questions for class to answer

**QUESTIONS**

**General**

What are the most important lessons you have learned in life?

What are you most proud of?

What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?

Is there something about yourself that you think no one knows?

How would you like to be remembered?

Is there anything that we didn’t talk about that you would like to add?

What is the funniest thing you have ever done?

**Childhood & Family**

When and where were you born?

Where did you grow up and what was it like?

Tell me about your parents.

Did you get into trouble? What was the worst thing you did?

Do you have any siblings? What were they like growing up?

What did you look like?

How would you describe yourself as a child? Were you happy?

What is your best memory of childhood? Worst?

Did you have a nickname? How did you get it?

Who were your best friends? What were they like?

How would you describe a perfect day when you were young?

What did you think your life would be like when you were older?

Can you tell me some classic stories from your childhood?

**School & Education**

What are your best memories of grade school/high school/college? Worst memories?

What kind of student were you?

What did you do for fun?

How would your classmates remember you?

Was there a teacher or teachers who had a particularly strong influence on your life? Tell me

about them.

Do you have any other favorite stories from school?

**Love & Romance**

Do you have a love of your life?

When did you first fall in love?

Can you tell me about your first kiss?

What was your first serious relationship?

What lessons have you learned from your relationships?

**Marriage & Commitment**

How did you meet your husband/wife?

How did you know that he/she was “the one?”

How did you propose?

What were the best times? The most difficult times?

Did you ever get divorced? Can you tell me about it?

What advice do you have for young couples?

Do you have any favorite stories from your marriage or about your spouse?

**Parenthood**

When did you first find out that you’d be a parent? How did you feel?

Can you describe the moment when you saw your child for the first time?

How has being a parent changed you?

What are your dreams for your children?

Do you remember when your last child left home for good?

Do you have any favorite stories about your kids?

**Work**

What do you do for a living?

Tell me about how you got into your line of work?

Do you like your job?

What did you want to be when you grew up?

What lessons has your work life taught you?

Do you plan on retiring? If so, when? How do you feel about that?

Do you have any favorite stories from your work life?

**Religion & Spirituality**

Can you tell me about your religious or spiritual beliefs?

What is your religion?

Have you experienced any miracles?

What was the most profound spiritual moment of your life?

Do you believe in the afterlife? What do you think it will be like?

When you meet God, what would you like to say to Him?

**Ethnicity & Family Heritage**

What is your ethnic background?

Where is your mom’s family from? Where is your dad’s family from?

What traditions have been passed down in your family?

Who were your favorite relatives? Can you tell me any stories about them?

Do you remember any of the stories they used to tell you?

What were the classic family stories? Jokes? Songs?

**War & Service**

Were you in the military?

Did you go to war? What was it like?

How did war change you?

During your service, can you recall times when you were afraid?

What are your strongest memories from your time in the military?

What lessons did you learn from this time in your life?

**Illness**

Can you tell me about your illness?

Do you think about dying?

Are you scared?

How do you imagine your death?

Do you believe in an afterlife?

Do you regret anything?

Do you look at your life differently now than from before you were diagnosed?

Do you have any last wishes?

If you were to give advice to me or other people, what would it be?

What are the most important things you’ve learned from life?

Has this illness changed you? What have you learned?

How do you want to be remembered?

**RESOURCES**

[www.storycorps.org](http://www.storycorps.org)

Use the videos on the website to demonstrate the type of interview that might take place. I usually show the videos “Q & A”, “John and Joe” and “Miss Devine”. They are short and are each different in the type of interview that is conducted. There are also audio interviews to listen to but my students enjoyed the videos.

[www.nationaldayoflistening.org](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org)

Download the Do It Yourself Guide for the question generator. I had my students use this as a guide for their questions but they may not use only questions from this generator.