

## **Interview an Elder**

Interviewing is often viewed as a very scary process for some students. Classroom preparation makes this activity easier for the student to undertake. Some students will not be able to locate an older Ozark resident. In that case, you may need to have a list of people you know who would not mind being contacted by the student for a short interview. All alternatives should be attempted so that the student can have this experience and feel successful.

Provide students with the Interview Outline and have a class discussion on how to find someone to interview and the purpose of the interview. Provide or have students come up with a list of questions that would fit this project.

There is also a note to parents/guardians that you can send before the activity, so parents can support students with this project.

Once students have completed the interview they can choose how to share what they have learned. If they gathered pictures they could create a poster or booklet about the person they interviewed. If they were able to record the interview they could create a short video. There are lots of possibilities for sharing but you may want to limit their choices and provide a rubric with your expectations prior to the interview.

## Note to Parents/Guardians

In conjunction with our study of early settlements of Springfield the students are being asked to interview a person of the community. It is hoped that through this interview the student will understand how the Ozarks has changed during just one person's lifetime.

The person to be interviewed should:

1. Be a native of the Ozarks
2. Be older, hopefully 60 or older
3. Have lived in the Ozarks all or most of their lifetime

Hopefully, most families will have a relative that fits the above description and will be willing to cooperate for the interview. However, the student need not be related to the interviewee. Friends, neighbors, church members, friend's grandparents, etc are all possible people to interview.

Class time will be spent discussing the process of interviewing. In addition, the provided handout gives some suggestions for a successful interview.

Most students feel somewhat hesitant to attempt this assignment. With encouragement and support they have a learning experience in which they feel successful. Thank you for helping them find time for this activity in your busy family schedule.

Thank you,

# Interview

- I. Arranging an Interview
  - A. Decide who to interview
  - B. Schedule the interview
- II. Prepare for the interview
  - A. Research you topic
  - B. Prepare a list of questions
    1. More than just yes-no questions
    2. Logical order to question
- III. An Interviewer;s Materials
  - A. Notepad or paper
    1. For responses
    2. For new questions
    3. Record observations
  - B. Writing instrument (always have extra)
  - C. Audio and/or video recorder
    1. Gets every word
    2. Allows eye contact
    3. Make sure devices are fully charged
    4. Always ask permission before recording
    5. Begin recording with a statement of the date, name of person interviewed and location
- IV. The Interview
  - A. Casual conversation as an ice-breaker
  - B. Location of interview should be away from interruptions and interference
  - C. Let the interview flow
    1. Don't interrupt the speaker
    2. Restate the question if the speaker wanders from the subject
    3. If the answer is too short or lacks details ask follow-up questions
  - D. Always that the interviewee
- V. After the Interview
  - A. Transcribe audio/video
  - B. Rewrite notes while the facts are fresh in your mind
  - C. Prepare presentation
  - D. Send a copy of your presentation to the interviewee with a thank you note.

## Sample Interview Questions

1. When and where were you born?
2. Where is the first house you remember living in?
3. Was there a special place in that house that you remember?
4. Who else lived with you?
5. What was your favorite meal when you were my age?
6. What is the first toy you remember?
7. What chores did you have to do and which did you like least and best?
8. Where did you go to school?
9. How did you get to school?
10. What was a typical school day like?
11. What did you play during recess?
12. What did you wear to school?
13. What did you eat for lunch at school?
14. What were some special activities or celebrations at school?
15. What's the scariest thing that happened to you when you were a kid?
16. What's the best birthday you remember when you were a kid?
17. What special celebrations or holidays did your family celebrate?
18. What games did you play at home?
19. Did anyone in your family have nicknames and are there any stories about how they got those names?
20. What do you remember about any of your pets?
21. Do you remember any stories of adventure about anyone in your family?
22. Are there any stories that you remember about your parents or grandparents when they were children?
23. Who was the first person in your family to come to the Ozarks, and where did they come from?
24. Describe what Springfield was like when you were a child?
25. What one thing do you think has had the most impact on the changing of lifestyles from when you were a child to now?
26. Would you rather have been a child when you were or now?
27. What advice would you like to give students my age?
28. What person have you most admired in your lifetime and why?

## Summary of Interview

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_

Share some interesting things that you learned about the Ozarks during this person's lifetimes.

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What did you learn about the lifestyle of people in past years?

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What conclusions can you make about human nature in any period of time?

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Write a few sentences about your feelings before, during, and after the interview? What did you learn about yourself?

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