

The Family History Interview Kit

100 questions and answer sheets for recording your family's stories before they are lost.

Your parents and grandparents carry a lifetime of memory that no one has written down. This kit helps you capture it: read the questions, record the conversation (on video if you can), and keep the answers somewhere that will still open in fifty years.

Print the **Questions** pages to read from during the interview. Print the **Answer Sheets** if you would rather write by hand.

Free to use, adapt, and share (CC BY 4.0).

Created by Bryan Dennstedt · bry.net

Companion essay: <https://bry.net/blog/your-parents-are-a-knowledge-base>

Full kit: <https://github.com/phingers/family-history-interview-kit>

Part 1 • The Questions

One reference copy of all 100 questions. You do not have to ask them all, or in order. When a question opens a door, walk through it. The best follow-up is almost always "tell me more about that."

1. Identity & Origins

1. What is your full name?
2. Why did your parents choose your name?
3. Did you have any nicknames?
4. Are there any naming traditions in your family?
5. When and where were you born?
6. How did your family come to live there?
7. What does your family name mean, and where did it come from?

2. Childhood & Home

1. What was your house like growing up?
2. How many rooms did it have?
3. What modern conveniences did you have (electricity, plumbing, telephone)?
4. Were there any special possessions or keepsakes in the house?
5. What is your earliest childhood memory?
6. Were you the oldest, youngest, or somewhere in the middle?
7. Describe the personalities of your parents and siblings.
8. Who was the oldest relative you remember?
9. What do you remember most about them?

3. Play & Growing Up

1. What games did you play as a child?
2. What was your favorite toy?
3. What did you do for fun?
4. Did you have pets?
5. What were their names?

4. Chores & Money

1. What chores did you have?
2. Which chore did you enjoy the least?
3. Did you receive an allowance?
4. Did you save your money or spend it?
5. What did you usually buy with your money?

5. School

1. What was school like for you?
2. Where did you attend grade school?
3. What was the name of your school?
4. Did you attend high school?
5. Did you attend college?
6. What degree(s) did you earn?
7. What were your best subjects?
8. What were your most difficult subjects?
9. What school activities, clubs, or sports did you participate in?

6. Growing Up & Culture

1. What were the popular fashions or fads during your youth?
2. What hairstyles or clothing do you remember?
3. What were bathing suits like?
4. Who were your childhood heroes?
5. What music or songs did you love?
6. Who were your closest friends?

7. Faith

1. What religion were you raised in?
2. Did your faith change over time?
3. What church did your family attend?
4. How important was religion in your childhood?

8. Food & Family Life

1. What was a typical family dinner like?
2. Did your family eat together regularly?
3. Who usually did the cooking?
4. What were your favorite meals?
5. Are there any special family recipes?
6. What were holidays like in your family?
7. What do you remember about Christmas?
8. What do you remember about Thanksgiving?
9. What do you remember about Easter?
10. How were birthdays celebrated?

9. History

1. What major world events had the biggest impact on your life?
2. How did those events affect your family?

10. Military (if applicable)

1. Did you serve in the military?
2. How did you end up serving?
3. What rank did you achieve?
4. Where were you stationed?
5. What did you enjoy most about military life?
6. What was the hardest part?

11. Career

1. What was your first job?
2. How did you get it?
3. What career did you eventually choose?
4. Why did you choose that profession?
5. What did your work involve day to day?
6. How did you get into that field?
7. How many years did you work there?
8. Did you have other jobs afterward?
9. What career accomplishment makes you most proud?

12. Health

1. Have you experienced any major health challenges?
2. How did they affect your life?

13. Family History

1. What stories did your parents tell about earlier generations?
2. Are there any famous or infamous relatives?
3. What physical traits seem to run in the family?
4. What traditions have been passed down?

14. Love & Marriage

1. What is your spouse's full name?
2. How did you meet?
3. What were your first dates like?
4. How did the proposal happen?
5. How did you feel?
6. When and where were you married?
7. What is your favorite memory from your wedding?
8. How would you describe your spouse?
9. What qualities do you admire most?
10. What do you believe makes a successful marriage?

15. Parenthood

1. How did you find out you were going to become a parent?
2. How did you choose your children's names?
3. What was your proudest parenting moment?
4. What activities did your family enjoy together?
5. What was the biggest lesson you learned from being a parent?

16. Values & Reflection

1. What is the most important lesson your parents taught you?
2. What accomplishment are you most proud of?
3. What do you think is the meaning of life?
4. If you could give one piece of advice to future generations, what would it be?
5. Is there anything you want your great-grandchildren and future descendants to remember about you?
6. What song would you like played at your funeral?
7. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you'd like future generations to know?

Part 2 • Answer Sheets

Space to capture answers by hand, one section at a time. Keep going on the back of the page if you need room. Recording the conversation is still better; treat these as notes, not a substitute.

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