

Questions for Interviewing a Grandparent

Childhood

Life Events – Childhood

- What year were you born? On what date? What day of the week was it? Did your parents tell you anything about the day you were born?
- Where were you born?
- Why were you given the first (and middle) name(s) that you have?
- What's your first, most vivid memory?
- What was the apartment or house like that you grew up in? How many bedrooms did it have? Bathrooms? What was your bedroom like?
- Can you describe the neighborhood you grew up in?
- Tell me about your parents. Where were they born? When were they born? What memories do you have of them?
- Who was more strict: your mother or your father? Do you have a vivid memory of something you did that you were disciplined for?
- Did your parents have a good marriage?
- How did your family earn money? How did your family compare to others in the neighborhood – richer, poorer, the same?
- What kinds of things did your family spend money on?
- How many brothers and sisters do you have? When were they born? What memories do you have of each of them from when you were growing up?
- Did you have grandparents? Where were they born? When were they born? What do you remember about them? When did they die?
- Did you have any pets?
- What were you like as a child? What did you like to eat? What did you do for fun? What were your favorite toys or games? Did you ever have a secret place or a favorite hiding spot?
- What did you wear?
- Did you get an allowance? How much? Did you spend it right away, or save it? What did you buy?
- What responsibilities did you have at home when you were young?
- What kind of school did you go to? Were you a good student? What was your favorite subject? Least favorite? Who were your friends? Who was your favorite teacher and why?
- Did you have any heroes when you were a child?
- How did you spend your summer holidays? What were your favorite summer activities?
- Where did your family go on vacations?
- How did your family celebrate holidays (e.g. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year, Easter, Memorial Day)? Did lots of relatives get together? What traditions did you have year after year? What food was served?
- What was the best gift you remember receiving as a child?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What big world events do you remember from the time you were growing up?
- What inventions do you most remember?
- What's different about growing up today from when you were growing up?
- When you were a teenager, what did you do for fun? Did you have a favorite spot to "hang out"? What time did you have to be home at night? Did you ever get into any trouble?
- Were there any phrases that were popular when you were a teenager? What did you like to wear? How did your parents feel about the way you talked and what you wore?
- When did you learn how to drive? Who taught you? What was your first car like?
- What was your graduation from high school like?