



Family History Interview Questions

Preserve the stories that records cannot tell.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- ♥ Choose a quiet, comfortable place and allow plenty of time.
- ♥ Ask permission before recording audio or video.
- ♥ Let the conversation wander - unexpected stories are often the best ones.
- ♥ Treat memories as clues and verify names and dates with records later.

INTERVIEW DETAILS

Person interviewed: _____

Interviewer: _____

Date: _____ Location: _____

Relationship: _____

A GENTLE REMINDER

Some memories may be private or emotional. Let your relative skip any question, and listen without correcting. The goal is to preserve their voice and perspective.

30 Questions to Begin the Conversation

You do not need to ask every question. Follow the stories that feel meaningful.

NAMES AND FAMILY

1. What is your full name, including any middle, maiden, or former names?
2. Did you have a nickname? How did you get it?
3. When and where were you born?
4. What were your parents' full names, including your mother's maiden name?
5. What do you remember about your grandparents?
6. Who were your siblings, and where did you fit in the birth order?

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

13. Where did you attend school, and what do you remember about it?
14. Who were your closest friends or favorite teachers?
15. Was religion or a faith community part of your childhood?
16. What was your neighborhood or hometown like?
17. What historical events do you remember experiencing?
18. What languages or expressions were spoken in your family?

CHILDHOOD AND HOME

7. What is your earliest childhood memory?
8. Where did you grow up, and what was your home like?
9. What chores or responsibilities did you have?
10. What games, toys, or activities did you enjoy?
11. What foods or recipes remind you of your childhood?
12. Which holidays or family traditions were especially important?

WORK, LOVE, AND ADULT LIFE

19. What was your first job, and what other work did you do?
20. Did you or a close relative serve in the military?
21. How did you meet your spouse or partner?
22. What do you remember about your wedding or early married life?
23. What places have you lived, and why did you move?
24. What accomplishment are you especially proud of?

Stories, Clues, and Notes

Use follow-up questions to uncover details without interrupting the storyteller.

STORIES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

25. Did anyone in the family immigrate or move a long distance? Why?

26. Which relative do you remember most clearly, and what were they like?

27. Are there family stories, mysteries, rumors, or sayings you heard growing up?

28. Are there photographs, letters, documents, recipes, or heirlooms we should preserve?

29. What values, lessons, or advice would you like to pass down?

30. What do you want future generations to remember about you?

HELPFUL FOLLOW-UP PROMPTS

● What happened next?

● How did that make you feel?

● Who else was there?

● What did that place look or sound like?

● Do you remember approximately what year that was?

● Is there a photograph or document connected to that story?

NOTES AND RESEARCH CLUES