



A Soldier's Story Interview Preparation

Remember, we are seeking people's *stories*, their individual experiences and perspectives. What is this individual's *story*?

Background Research and Reading

In doing some background research and reading, we're finding out what books, articles, and websites can tell us. This is the *history*.

You will want to speak intelligently and respectfully about the history. Know the basic who, what, where, when, and why of the situation.

Questions

Your interview questions move beyond the history into your interview subject's own story. What can we learn from these people that we can't google?

Begin with Context Questions:

Help establish the context and set the scene for your subject's story. Consider asking,

- Tell us about yourself during this time period of your life?
- Where were you at this point in your life?

You can follow up by asking specific questions about the subject's age, family, location, education, job, and so on.

Move on to Explanation Questions:

Ask questions that allow the subject to dig deeper into why things happened and how they relate to other events. Think about questions like,

- What caused this event...?
- Why did this happen...?
- What happened next...?
- Can you describe the scene in one word...?
- Can you compare two events...?
- Explain the reason for...?
- What conclusion can you draw...?
- What is your point of view about...?

8th grade Advising and Service Learning

- Can you describe the scene...?
- Can you explain a photograph...?

Last, ask Judgment Questions:

Ask questions that offer your subject a chance to talk about their perspective and the “big picture” by telling about what they thought was good or bad, important or less important. Think about questions like,

- What was your perspective on _____?
- Has your perspective changed? If yes, how?
- What was your personal experience with _____?
- What was the happiest (funniest or saddest) memory?
- What was your biggest accomplishment?
- What actions would you change if you had a chance to re-live those years again?
- What mistakes did people make during this period or event in history?
- What should people today remember about this time/event?

Be prepared to ask Follow-Up Questions:

- Why was this important?
- How did the story begin or end?
- What else do you want to tell me about this?
- What important question did I forget to ask you?

Finally, ask if your subject has any photographs, documents, or other artifacts he or she could share with you. If possible, you may want to scan, take photos, or take video of these things to include in your project.

Tips

- Remember, the most important part of this project is to record the stories of people who lived the history.
- You may want to speak with your interview subject before of the interview to ask him or her what he/she would like to talk about so you can tailor your questions accordingly. You may also want to send him or her a list of possible interview questions before you meet with him/her to help spark his/her memory.
- Let your interview subject know that this is an important project and that you are very interested in his or her personal experiences.
- Show your interview subject the utmost respect and treat the interview as serious work.
- The final product of this project must be digital. A video interview is best and audio second best. The last option is a written account of the interview. Include in your project images, songs, speeches, other multimedia, links, and so on.