

Oral History Project: Immigration

Topic: Create an oral history with a family member, neighbor, friend, or acquaintance about their immigration experience to the U.S.

Goal: To interview someone 40 years or older and to learn how their life was in their country of origin, what it was like to immigrate here, and what it was like to get adjusted to a new country.

Requirements for Interview Subject:

- must be 40 years or older
- must be willing to talk to you about their experience
- speaks English well and is in no need of translator
- must be willing to be interviewed for at least 30 mins. in length (though you will only type between 1500-1750 words of the full interview)



Step One

Begin by thinking of questions you can ask. Here are some examples. You don't need to ask all of these, but some of these questions – or variations of these questions – are obviously crucial questions. You must also ask follow-up questions during the course of the interview. Follow-up questions are those which you create on the spot during the interview, as you want to know more about a certain topic. Before you even begin asking these questions, remember to first state your name, the date of the interview, the interview location, and then state who you are interviewing. Remember to check out the Minnesota podcasts for more guidance here: <http://education.mnhs.org/immigration/>

1. What country are you originally from?
2. Why did you leave this country?
3. When did you leave? How old were at that time?
4. What were the conditions in the country when you left? What was your life like there? Were you happy? What challenges did you face?
5. How did you prepare for your trip here?
6. Who came with you when you emigrated? Who did you leave behind? What did you leave behind?
7. How did you feel at the time when you left your country of origin?
8. How did you get here? What was that journey like? Did you stay somewhere else before arriving here?
9. Why did you choose the United States? Why not some other country?
10. Who decided you would come here? Did you want to leave?
11. How did others in your home country treat you when they knew you were leaving?
12. What changes in lifestyle did you make when you came here?
13. What was your first impression of the United States? Has this initial impression changed over time?
14. What are some of the differences/similarities you've noticed in the cultures here and in your home country?
15. What were your hopes for yourself (and/or your family) when you came here? Have you realized these hopes?
16. How were you treated when you first arrived in the United States? How are you treated now?
17. Were your expectations of America met? Was your *idea* of America the same as the reality?

Step Two (due April 11)

Do the actual interview, which must be about 30 minutes long. Record this interview using audio or video w/audio. You will embed this audio or video file in the Wiki page. Make sure you test out your recording technology to see that it will work and properly embed in the Wiki page, and that the sound can be heard well. Have someone take a picture of you with your interview subject either before or after the interview. If you are doing this via Skype, etc., then include a picture of you sitting at the computer with Skype on and the person visible in Skype on the computer screen. You may also borrow from us an audio recorder. *(In addition, you must take some video of you conversing with this person. This should be spontaneous conversation about any topic you like; a minute or two of conversation is fine. Save this video so that if we need to ask you for verification, you can show us this video. You will not need to show us this video unless we ask you for it.)*

Step Three

Decide which portions of the interview are most interesting to type. **Type up a question/answer transcript** that is verbatim (word for word of the conversation) of this portion of your interview. We should see follow-up questions throughout the interview. Make sure you spell all words correctly and that all of the punctuation is done correctly. Type all that is said by both you and your interview subject. This needs to be between 1500-1750 words. To help give context for portions of the interview that you excerpt, you may need to summarize what they were talking about before or just after the portions you type.

Step Four (due April 20)

Create your wiki page for the oral history, put your Q/A there, embed the audio file (either by uploading the file as an mp3 or by *embedding* it in a service such as SoundCloud or YouTube), and add a *minimum* of six relevant images with captions. One image must be of you with the person during the interview (either in person or on the computer), and the other photos must be of your interview subject – preferably photos from that time period they are describing, people they talk about, pictures of them in their former country of residence . . . any photos they have that help to tell their story. No pictures obtained from the Internet; all must be original of the person you interviewed. **Turnitin.com deadline for the Q/A (don't upload the intro!) is April 21.**

Step Five (due April 28)

Assuming your interviewee enjoyed their experience with you, they would most likely enjoy having a copy of the finished work. The Wiki page is on the Internet, and it is not easily accessible to them. However, giving them a printed copy of the oral history would be more meaningful for them.

Requirements: Format your text (your introduction along with the Q and A) along with at least six images into a printed form that resembles a small booklet. You could use InDesign (or another page design program such as Microsoft Publisher or Apple's Pages program). The main thing is to make this look like a somewhat professionally-created booklet and not just a printed copy of your Wiki page that is printed in color and stapled. (You can use staples, but if you do so, it should be done like your Clark Humanities writing booklet. You can even use our special stapler.) There should be some kind of title for this and your name as the creator/interviewer. This booklet will be evaluated on the following: (1) design quality; (2) use of visuals; (3) care in presentation. **Booklet is due Friday, April 28.**

Directions for Second Semester Wiki (Oral History)

You are creating one additional Wikispace page for this semester (containing your audio/video file from your interview, the typed transcript (1750 words maximum, including your summaries of portions you don't type) and at least six images relevant to your interviewee and the topic (must be original images). This page will be linked to the Student List page on the Class Wiki.

Create a New Oral History Page

Log in to the Wiki. Choose the Wiki you made, *not* the Wiki that says clarkhumanities16-17. In your Wiki, create a new page and name it *davis_oral_history* (where you substitute your last name for *davis*).

Oral History Page Contents

- 1500-1750 words of the verbatim text written of your oral history interview
- the embedded, text-wrapped audio/video file at the top of the file
- at least six, text-wrapped original images with captions spread throughout the interview
- a 450-500 word introduction to the oral history [near the top of the page]

The text should look like this (don't write "Q" and "A," or something like that):

So that was when you were eleven?

I think that was when I was eleven.

So you were born in '36, so after World War II?

Right.

That was after World War II had ended?

Right.

And you didn't have a radio?

We had a radio. We would listen to the radio.

I mean, would you gather around and listen to any shows, do you think? You don't recall?

Yeah, yeah. Actually we would do that. And I don't remember any of the shows we would listen to. But we did do that. That was one thing we did. Yeah. And then we, uh . . .

Audio or video file must be *embedded* (as opposed to being saved as a link in the page where we must click on the link to go to the audio or video file). We will demonstrate how to embed in class. If you have questions, please see us.

Images must be original – no clip art or images off the Internet. Image possibilities: scans of old photos from your interviewee when they were younger, pictures of them with their family in their country of origin, images of them today. If you are using old photos it is best to scan the images (we have scanners in the classroom). If your interviewee does not wish to let you do that, then take good pictures of those pictures with your phone or a digital camera. All images must be text-wrapped and include a caption that describes the image contents.

Introduction to the oral history interview

Write 450-500 words at the top of your oral history page where you set up the interview. In this writing you should identify the person, their relationship to you, where they grew up, when they came to this country. You can use some partial quotes from the actual interview in what you write here. You should also include some historical facts about the country they left, what was going on in that country at that time. End with a sentence that is segues into your interview. Sometimes a full-sentence quote from them can work well, or you can write your own sentence . . . something like, *“And while my aunt says that she is happy to have escaped the war in Iraq, part of her wishes she had stayed with her aging mother another few years.”*

Student List page

You will need to modify the Student List page on the clarkhumanities Wiki by adding [oral history] after your name and then hyperlinking this text in brackets to your new page.

Due Dates

Mon., April 11 – bring to class your saved audio/video file of your interview (saved to a flash drive, your e-mail, or saved in Google Drive – don’t just have the file on your phone, as you will not have full credit for this deadline); we will listen to some of your file, so make it easy for us to do so

Thurs., April 20 – completed project due (additions to your main wiki page and your new oral history page) by 10 p.m.; if you wish to use a Procrastinator Pass you may do so and you will have until Fri., March 18 at 10 p.m.

Fri., April 21 – turnitin deadline (11:59 p.m.) for only your oral history Q/A (so that we can check your word count)

Fri., April 28 – oral history pamphlet/booklet/book (you will turn this in today, and then we will return it to you for you to give to the person whom you interviewed)

Grading Rubrics

Point Range

19 – 20	Fulfills and perhaps exceeds all of criteria listed above and in the rubrics below.
17 – 18	Fulfills all of criteria listed, but not with consistent success.
14 – 16	Fulfills most of the criteria listed, or all, to some degree of success.
12 – 13	Fulfills some of the criteria well, but fails to meet most standards listed.
11 – below	Fulfills few of the criteria or does so with poor attempt.

Oral History Writing Rubric (writing grade for English and History)

(Must meet word count – 1500-1750 words – for C or higher)

- Questions are asked in logical progression; follow-up questions seen throughout interview.
- Questions are relevant to topic and ask for reflection and comment.
- Typing of transcript shows care in transcribing. Few to no errors in punctuation, spelling, or sentence construction.
- Q/A is occasionally broken up by interviewer's summary of what was left out of the typed text (in order to make the Q/A portion make sense)
- Text sounds like real conversation and not something that was written out as a play and then read aloud.

Wiki Rubric (project grade for history and English)

- Oral history Wikispace page 450- 500-word intro effectively describes the person you interviewed, their relationship to you, where they grew up, when they came to this country, etc. This writing should show some historical knowledge about the countries involved and the time period.
- Intro writing is nearly flawless, no significant errors.
- Wikispace Student List page includes a functioning link to your own oral history Wikispace page that contains your oral history.
- New Wikispace page is intuitive, easy to use, graphically interesting and easily readable.
- Audio/video file properly embedded near top of page (as mp3 or SoundCloud embedded link), and images match quantitative and qualitative requirements described above.

Booklet (project grade for history and English)

- design quality shows care – thoughtful, purposeful layout; quality binding; good use of space
- use of visuals complements the design; images are spread throughout text and include meaningful, useful captions; cover design includes some kind of original art
- care in presentation is shown throughout end product – no typos, nicely bound, easy to read

Checklist

- _____ Student List page is updated with active, functioning [Oral History] link. If you created a new Wiki because you forgot your password (and Mr. Davis had to create for you a new account), make sure that you shared your new Wiki by inviting new members (ckdavis1 and jenforddavis).
- _____ Oral history page has a fitting title at the top.
- _____ Functioning audio file is embedded (not requiring the opening of a new page or link) near the top of the page and is easily accessible. If more than one file, the files are in order. If the file is a private YouTube (or other file format) video or audio file, it is made accessible for us to listen to.
- _____ Introductory writing is between 450-500 words.
- _____ Introductory text is written as multiple paragraphs and not just one long paragraph.
- _____ Introductory writing creates an interesting introduction to your Q/A and follows the project directions. This writing should show some historical knowledge about the countries involved and the time period. May be in first-person or in third-person point of view.
- _____ At least one image is shown near the top of the page (most appropriate would be a picture of you and your interviewee)
- _____ All images are text-wrapped, not stretched, a decent size, and have captions that don't extend past the image. Images are spread throughout the oral history Wiki page in logical locations.
- _____ Excess space between lines is removed.
- _____ Oral history writing is 1500-1750 words (or just *a bit* over).
- _____ Portions of the Q/A that are not typed are concisely and accurately summarized [in brackets] so that the text flows as a well-told story of one's immigration experience.
- _____ Interview text is formatted as a dialogue with clear distinction between interviewer and interviewee (**bold** and non-bold, for example)
- _____ Text is in a font choice / size / color that is easy to read.
- _____ At least six images relevant to your interviewee and topic (one of these six images must be of you talking to your interviewee; the others must be original images, not from the Internet, that your interviewee provided to you or that you took of your interviewee or of some object related to their story).