

# How to Capture Your Loved One's Life Story

## *Audio to Print in 12 Easy Steps*

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### **Disclaimer**

While the author has made every reasonable effort to provide an adequate tutorial on facilitating a life story, she is neither a software expert nor a consultant, and she is unavailable for hire for additional guidance on your life-story project. If you experience challenges in using Audacity, Microsoft Word, or the online transcription service Temi.com, the author respectfully requests that you seek assistance through their respective help menus or from an appropriate paid professional. (Upon request, the author can refer you to a qualified paid professional who is skilled in Microsoft Word formatting.)

## **Introduction**

Want to interview a friend or a loved one for their life story? Want to tell your own? Either way, you can do it with just a few supplies and some basic computer savvy. This tutorial will give you the details for the 12 steps you'll follow:

- 1. Tell what to expect**
- 2. Assign the homework**
- 3. Review the homework and set up for the interview**
- 4. Record the interview**
- 5. Edit the audio files**
- 6. Transcribe the recording**
- 7. Format the transcript**
- 8. Edit the transcript**
- 9. Review the transcript together**
- 10. Make corrections and insert images**
- 11. Get approval**
- 12. Print and distribute**

## What You'll Need

First, though, you'll need some equipment, software, an online transcription resource, and supplies.

### Equipment

- *Computer*
- *Hand-held digital recorder or smart phone* (that will record several hours of audio)
- *Printer* (any type for rough drafts, but a color laser printer if you want to print your own final transcripts and plan to include photos). Don't want to invest in a color laser printer? Then bring a flash drive containing a PDF of your final draft to your local copy center, and have them make color laser copies on nice-quality paper instead.
- *Optional scanner* (if including family photos in the transcript)

### Software

- *Audio-editing* (Audacity is easy to use and is available free from [AudacityTeam.org](http://AudacityTeam.org)) to refine the recorded interview before having it transcribed
- *Word-processing* (ideally Microsoft Word)
- *Optional file-conversion* (ideally Adobe Acrobat Standard) to eventually convert your word processing file into a PDF for later duplication at a copy center (or have a friend do these conversions on their computer)
- *Optional photo-editing* (such as PaintShop Pro or Adobe Photoshop Elements), so you can crop, sharpen, brighten, or modify contrast in any digital (JPG) images you plan to include in the written transcript.

### Online Resource

- *Automated transcription*, by setting up an account at [Temi.com](http://Temi.com), to transcribe your edited MP3 audio file. Use a credit card to fund your account with enough money to easily cover the length of your entire audio file. Example: Temi's fee to transcribe a three-hour audio recording, billed at \$0.25 per audio minute, would be \$45.00.

### Supplies

- *Résumé-quality, bright-white paper* (best when including color photos) for printing the finished transcript. If you're going to print multiple originals on your color laser printer, so that you might use up to 500 sheets (one ream) of résumé-quality white

paper, shop around. Check [AstroPaper.com](http://AstroPaper.com)) for their price (paper cost + tax + small-order charge + estimated shipping cost); and compare that to the purchase price for one ream (paper cost + tax) at a local paper-supply warehouse you visit. I like to use Neenah 24 lb. Classic Linen in Solar White.

- **Flash drive** (8 Gigabytes of storage is plenty), to store archive copies of (a) the edited MP3 file, (b) the editable word-processing file (e.g., Microsoft Word), (c) the non-editable PDF file (which can be taken to a local copy center to print multiple color copies on résumé-quality paper), and backups of all three files.

## The Twelve Steps to Follow

### Step 1: Tell What to Expect

Let your prospective interviewee know what to expect from this process, and address any concerns with them. (Customize the example in Appendix A and give them a handout, or else review all that material verbally with them.)

### Step 2: Assign the Homework

Once your interviewee has agreed to the interview, have them complete three homework assignments ahead of time, so you can review them together just before you start the interview. The following summarize what your interviewee is being asked to do:

**Homework Part 1** (as seen in Appendix B)—answer a few questions describing your written-transcript preferences, for example: Do you prefer a Q&A or a narrative style of presenting the life story? Do you want to eliminate stutters, repeated words, and repetitive phrases/passages from the recording and transcript? Do you want *ums* and *uhs* removed from the transcript? And please provide, at our first meeting, either a digital portrait image of yourself, or else a photo I can borrow to digitally scan and crop, for later use on your written life-story transcript cover sheet.

**Homework Part 2** (as seen in Appendix C)—review the following Proposed Interview Questions. Draw a line through any questions you don't want asked. Revise any questions you want asked differently. Insert, wherever appropriate in the sequence, any additional questions you want me to ask during your interview.

**Homework Part 3** (as seen in Appendix D)—referring to your modified list of questions in Homework Part 2, complete this fill-in-the-blanks form, so that, as I transcribe, I will have the correct spellings and dates for people and places you're likely to mention in the interview.

### **Step 3: Review the Homework and Set Up for the Interview**

Schedule the initial meeting for the interview on a quiet day of the week (not a trash-pickup day or a popular mow-and-blow day). Bring your hand-held recorder or smartphone (or both, so you have a backup recording device), and a paper tablet and pen to take notes if needed. Upon arrival, review together all the completed homework assignments and address any points that need clarification. Then make sure your environment is quiet (phone silenced or turned off; no background music, TV, conversation, noisy pets, construction, lawnmowers/leaf blowers, trash trucks, etc.) and comfortable for both parties.

Seat yourself near your interviewee and place your digital recorder on a small table or other flat surface between or equally near the two of you. Consider placing a small cloth beneath the recorder to help absorb unwanted sound. Keep glasses of water within easy reach. Briefly test-record both your voices and play it back, to make sure the volume is adequate and clear for both of you. Adjust your environment if needed, to improve the recording. Work out a hand signal between you that means “time out” or “pause the recording” so you can pause or stop the recording at convenient times during the interview, or if a sidebar consultation is needed.

Finally, if your interviewee wants a narrative-style story and not a Q&A (like in a magazine interview), then each of their answers must be complete—able to stand alone in the recording and transcript, without needing to include the question that was asked. *Example:* If the question is “What is your name, and when and where were you born?”—then a narrative answer would have to be “My name is John Jones, and I was born on May 1, 1951, in Minneapolis, Minnesota”—not “John Jones, May 1, 1951, Minneapolis, Minnesota.” (Leave your questions in the recording for now, though, as it’s much easier than starting and stopping the recording for every question.)

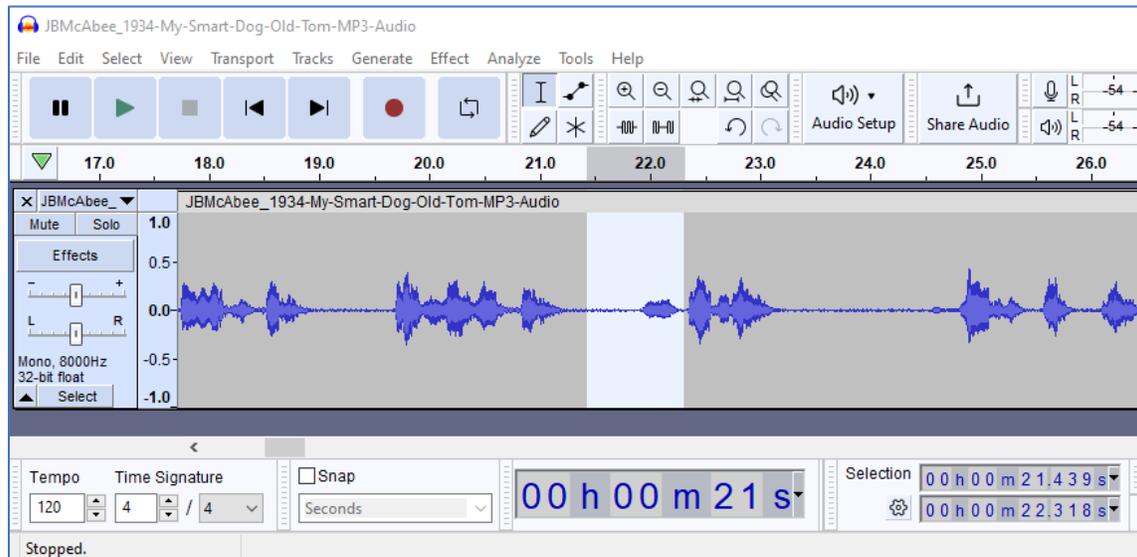
### **Step 4: Record the Interview**

I recommend breaking these recording files into a handful of shorter files that you can append together later, while editing the audio files. For example, your first MP3 recording could be answers to the seven questions in *Part A, Birth, Parents, Grandparents, Siblings*; the next MP3 recording could be answers to the seven questions in *Part B, Early and Middle Childhood*.

### **Step 5: Edit the Audio Files**

If you don’t already have audio-editing software, I recommend downloading the free open-source software, Audacity, at [AudacityTeam.org/download/](http://AudacityTeam.org/download/). Once it’s installed, you may want to follow their directions for “How do I combine two files into one longer file?” ([AudacityTeam.org/man/faq\\_editing.html#join](http://AudacityTeam.org/man/faq_editing.html#join)) so you can combine all recorded files into

one large file. Then you can listen to one long recording, editing as you go. At first, your sound recording will look very condensed, which is impractical for audio editing; so press Control-1 as many times as desired, zooming out until your display looks more like this:



*This is the Audacity audio-editing screen. To delete a passage, pause the playback and then use the mouse to click-and-drag (select) the passage to be deleted (shown in very light blue in this example); then click the Delete key on your keyboard, which deletes the selected passage. Click the Play symbol to resume playback from the deletion point; or, if you wish to resume playback from a slightly earlier point, click somewhere to the left of the deletion point and then click the Play symbol.*

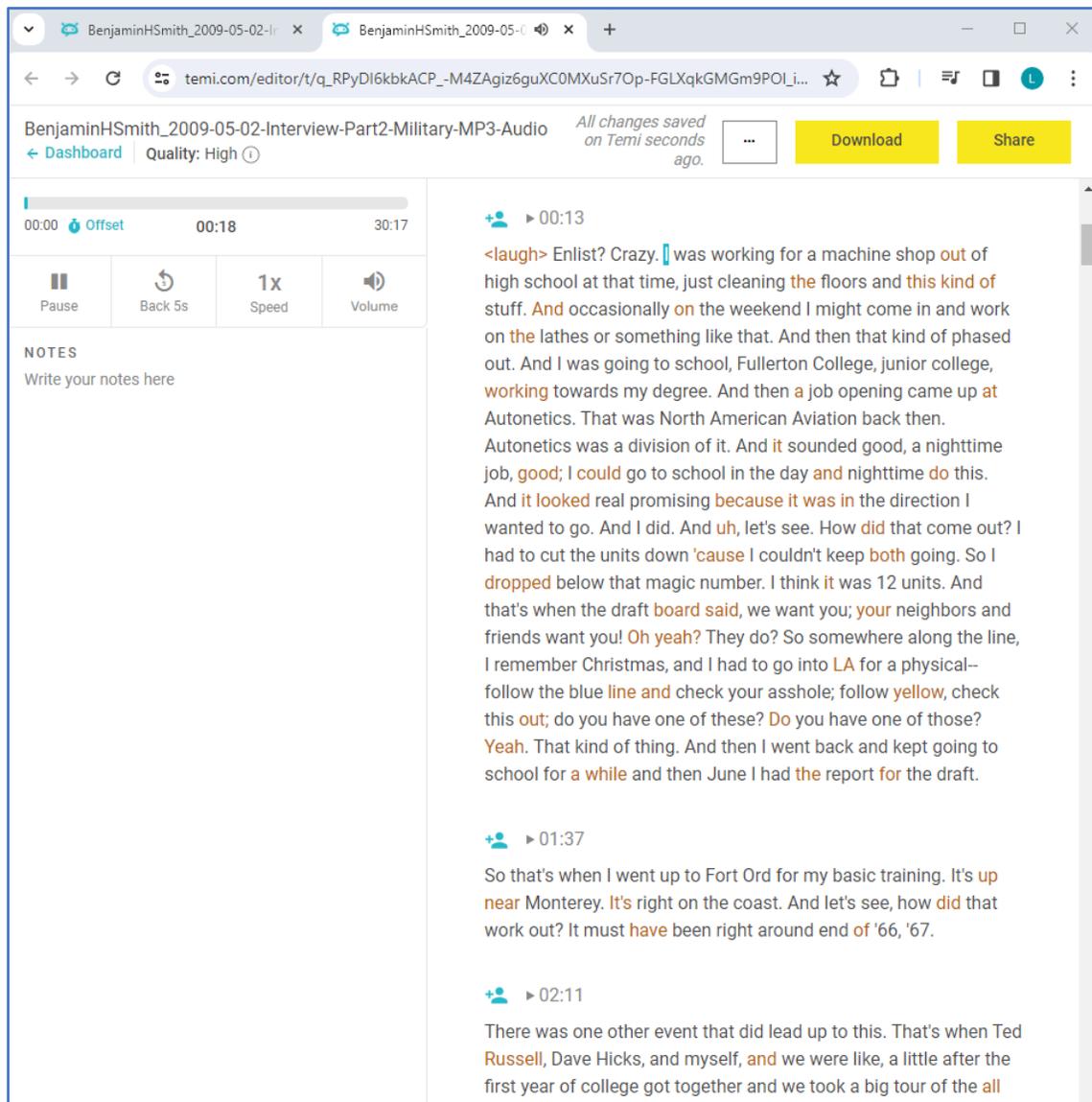
Refer to the above caption and illustration for instructions on how to delete a passage. Delete long pauses. If requested in Homework Part 1, delete stutters and repeated words and phrases. Delete any accidentally recorded sidebar conversations not meant to be part of the story. (Note: Retain the *ums* and *uhs* in the recording, as they are too awkward to try to remove.) Finally, if you are creating a narrative-style life story (rather than a Q&A style interview), delete your own voice from the interview recording. Listen to the edited recording one more time, to be sure it makes sense and is ready to be transcribed.

## **Step 6: Transcribe the Recording**

Unless you are a professional transcriptionist with the proper transcription equipment and can do this whole process yourself, your most cost-effective solution will be to create your Temi.com account at <https://www.temi.com/> and fund it using a credit card. Budget based on the length of the edited recording, at 25¢ per audio minute, and then add a small margin.

Next, upload the edited MP3 recording to the Temi website. Once you do this, Temi will email you when the transcript is ready (generally, after only 5–10 minutes). The email

notification will include a link to your transcript that you can click when you are ready to read and listen to the transcript, pausing to make corrections as needed.



*The Temi.com user-friendly transcript-reviewing/editing screen. As each word is spoken, it is highlighted in turquoise. (Ignore the brown-coloring that appears on some of the words.)*

Your main goal in this transcript review is to make sure Temi transcribed all the words correctly. You may also either revise/correct the punctuation at this stage or wait and do this in Microsoft Word later on. (Don't remove the *ums* and *uhs* until after you've downloaded the file.) To make a correction, click Pause; click on the error and make the correction; then click on a word in the previous sentence; and then click Play to resume the review from that point. Use the same process for revising or adding punctuation.

If you find you can't review the entire transcript in one sitting, click Pause, insert into the transcript a set of place-marker words, such as “[LEFT OFF HERE],” make a separate note of the time stamp seen in the body of the transcript, and then exit the website. (Don't worry: Temi automatically saves the edited file every few seconds.) When you're ready to resume your review, either log in to [Temi.com](http://Temi.com) or use the link in Temi's original email message to re-access the transcript, scroll down to the time stamp where you left off, remove your place-marker words, and then resume your review.

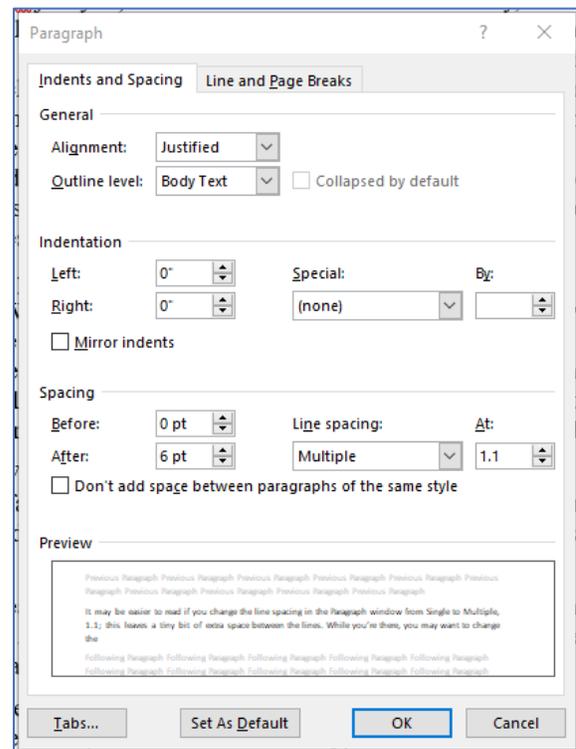
When you've finished your review, click the yellow Download button near the upper right-hand corner of the page and select Microsoft Word from the options presented in the pop-up window. (Decline the offer to have Temi remove the *ums* and *uhs* for you, because you can do a better job yourself, later on, in your own word processing software—after all, you may want to leave certain *ums* and *uhs* in, for effect.) Immediately open the downloaded file and then use the Save As feature to save the file on your computer in a place where you know you can find it later, assigning it a filename of your choosing.

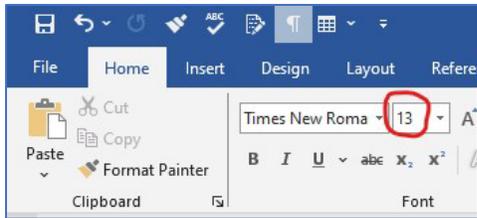
## Step 7: Format the Transcript

Although you can certainly keep Microsoft Word's default settings for line spacing (single), font choice (Times New Roman), font size (12 points), left-aligned (ragged-right-margin) text, and 1-inch margins on all sides, you may want to make some improvements.

For example, it will be easier to read if, in the Paragraph window, you change the line spacing from Single to Multiple, at 1.1; this leaves a tiny bit of extra space between the lines within a paragraph and elsewhere. While you're in that same window, you may want to change the setting to Justified (so your paragraphs are all even at the right margin) and also change the blank space after each paragraph to 6 or 8 or even 10 points—just be consistent (*Note: the pull-down/up arrows change the number in increments of 6 points, but you are free to manually type in a different number such as “8 pt” or “10 pt”, etc.*)

For nicer aesthetics, you may also want to change the body-text font to something less common than Times New Roman, but still very readable, such as Palatino Linotype.





But if you keep the Times New Roman font, older readers will appreciate your increasing the font size to 13 or 14 points. (*If you don't see your desired font size listed in the pull-down selection of font sizes, you can still manually type it in the font-size box.*)

If you are printing on only one side and you plan to bind the left edge of the final transcript/story, you might want to increase the left margin to 1.25 inches to allow more space for the binding.

There are a few of types of punctuation marks that look typewriter-ish, rather than typeset, in Temi's downloaded transcript, and you should correct them now, throughout the document, so they don't distract you later on while you're reading:

**Use long dashes.** Temi uses "--" instead of a true long dash ("—"). Replace them all automatically using the Find and Replace window: type "--" in the *Find what:* box, type "^+" in the *Replace with:* box; then click the *Replace All* button.

**Use curly apostrophes.** Temi uses straight-style apostrophes (') instead of true curly apostrophes (’) in the document. If your word processing program is already set up to type curly-style apostrophes, you can replace the straight style with the curly style, all automatically, using the Find and Replace window: Type an apostrophe in the *Find what:* box and also type an apostrophe in the *Replace with:* box; then click the *Replace All* button, and they will all be fixed automatically.

However, if a curly apostrophe appears at the beginning of a word, such as ‘em, for them, Word will have wrongly typed in a single quotation mark (which looks like a miniature, filled-in “6”), rather than using a true apostrophe (which looks like a miniature, filled-in “9” instead). Find each wrong mark by clicking Find on the Home ribbon, and then, in the Navigation box at the left, type a space followed by an apostrophe. All such occurrences will be displayed below the box, and you can click on them one at a time and make the correction as follows: Move your cursor to the right of the beginning single quotation mark and strike the apostrophe key again, and an ending single quotation mark (the same as an apostrophe) appears, (“em). Retain the apostrophe and delete the wrong mark to its left (’em).

## Step 8: Edit the Transcript

First use the Find feature to locate all occurrences of uh (in the Navigation box, type a space followed by “uh”); and then, for each occurrence, remove the word if you wish. (Sometimes you may want to keep it in, for effect, or if it's part of a larger term, such as uh-huh.) Once you've finished with that, do the same type of thing to find and possibly delete instances of um. Next, go ahead and start reading, referring to Homework Part 3 as

needed, to make sure spellings and dates are correct, and also making punctuation corrections or clarifications as you go. Here are some punctuation suggestions:

- Use ellipses (three periods with spaces between and surrounding them), to indicate a trailing off of speech. *Example:*

I wonder . . .

- If your interviewee interrupted him/herself midway through a sentence to change a thought, indicate that interruption with a long dash (—). *Example:*

I wanted to say—oh, never mind.

- Temi never seems to include double quotation marks anywhere in the transcription, but sometimes you’ll want them, to surround a word or a phrase, if appropriate. *Example:*

And then he actually replied, asking, “Are you kidding me?”

(Remember, too, that in American English, periods and commas are properly tucked inside [placed before] the ending double quotation mark.)

- Italicize all thoughts. *Example:*

And then I thought, *She really ought to hold off.*

**NEVER CORRECT THE INTERVIEWEE’S GRAMMAR!**

This would intrude on their speaking style in the written transcript. And do not change *'em* to *them*, etc., for the same reason. Maintain the interviewee’s authentic voice—it’s part of who they are!

When finished with the transcript, create a cover sheet with the interviewee’s photo and a title, and perhaps number the rest of the pages at the bottom center.

### Step 9: Review the Transcript Together

On plain paper, print out two sets of the transcript—one for you and one for your interviewee—and go over them together (you may be asked to read it aloud to the interviewee), marking any corrections on your own copy to make later on. (*Note: If the interviewee detects certain specific grammar errors and wants them corrected, only then is it acceptable to correct the grammar. However, the audio file will not be corrected.*)

At this time, discuss whether relevant photo images (besides the portrait that appears on the cover page) are desired within the transcript; if so, then use your photo-editing software to scan the images, crop them if appropriate, and brighten or increase contrast as needed, before inserting them in the body of the transcript at appropriate locations. (*Tip: Use Post-it or other sticky notes on the interim draft to indicate where certain photos should be inserted.*)

## Step 10: Make Corrections and Insert Images

In your word-processing program, make all required or requested revisions and corrections, and then insert the digital images that were discussed.

## Step 11: Get Approval

Print out two sets of the next transcript draft—one for each of you—and review them together (a) to make sure all written contents are correct and (b) to make sure all photos are good quality and properly placed. Ask for authorization to print the final draft and ask how many sets should be printed.

## Step 12: Print and Distribute

If you have a color laser printer, you can print multiple copies directly onto résumé-quality white paper you have purchased at a paper supply center. Alternatively, you or a friend can use Adobe Acrobat Standard to convert your word processing file into a PDF file that can be copied onto a flash drive and carried to your local copy center, where they can print multiple color copies onto résumé-quality white paper. (*Inkjet printouts or duplicates are not recommended, as the print quality may deteriorate in high-humidity conditions.*)

On that same flash drive, as a courtesy to your interviewee, also include the editable word-processing file (e.g., a Microsoft Word DOCX file), as well as the edited MP3 audio-interview file. (*Be smart: also copy onto that flash drive backups of each file.*) Here's an example of how you might name the files on that flash drive:

JohnJones-AudioInterview.MP3

JohnJones-AudioInterview-backup.MP3

JohnJones-EditableInterviewTranscript.DOCX

JohnJones-EditableInterviewTranscript-backup.DOCX

JohnJones-PrintReadyInterviewTranscript.PDF

JohnJones-PrintReadyInterviewTranscript-backup.PDF

I suggest running a large paper clip through the loop/handle of the flash drive, and then using tape to affix, to the paper clip, a label that identifies its contents. Urge your interviewee to not only copy these files onto their computer or another device, but also store this flash drive in a safe, secure place.

Here comes the best part—presenting your interviewee with the multiple quality transcript printouts and flash drive and feeling good about the vital role you've played in this legacy project. Congratulations on a job well done!



## **Appendices**

**A.**

**What to Expect During Your Life-Story Experience**

**B.**

**Homework Part 1:**

**How Would You Like Your Life Story Edited and Formatted?**

**C.**

**Homework Part 2:**

**Proposed Interview Questions**

**D.**

**Homework Part 3:**

**Guide to Dates and Spellings of People and Places**

# *Reflections*

## **What to Expect During Your Life-Story Experience (2 pages)**

**During our first visit**, we will review the homework you completed (Parts 1, 2, and 3), and you will also lend me a printed photograph (or email me a high-resolution JPG digital image of you) that is either a portrait (head shot) or a photo I can crop on my computer to create a head shot.

I will then use a smart phone or hand-held digital recorder to interview you, in whichever of the following two styles you have chosen:

*A Q&A type of life story*, such as what you might read in a magazine interview, will involve my recording and transcribing both our voices—my questions and your responses.

*A narrative type of life story* that simply flows, without my voice being included in the transcript (although subheadings will be added to the written transcript). For a narrative life story, you will need to make sure your recorded response to each question includes the necessary context, so your recorded interview (without my voice asking the questions) will make sense. (For example, if the question is “What is your name, and when and where were you born?” your response should be something like this: “My name is John Jones, and I was born on July 15, 1953, in Dover, Maryland.”

Our interview will take at least two hours, so you should be well rested for our appointment, be comfortable, and have a glass of water nearby. Also, please provide a small chair where I can sit near you, and a nearby surface on which I can place the hand-held recorder.

**When I return to my home office after the interview**, I will edit your recorded interview, following the preferences you expressed in your homework regarding the removal of *ums* and *uhs*, stutters, and accidentally repeated words or passages. Then I will have your edited audio interview transcribed automatically through the affordable online service [Temi.com](https://www.temi.com). Afterwards, I will make online corrections of any transcription errors Temi.com has made. Once satisfied with the accuracy of the transcript, I will download the corrected transcript as a Microsoft Word file. Afterwards, I will punctuate and format the written transcript at

my computer, to the best of my ability. (*Note: Consistent with oral history tradition, no grammar corrections will be made.*) I will then print two sets of the first draft—one for each of us—and call you to schedule our second visit.

**During our second visit**, I will return your printed photograph (if any) to you. Then we will carefully review together our copies of the first draft. (If you would prefer that I read it aloud to you, I will be happy to do so.) I will mark my copy with any changes or corrections you request.

At this point, you can take either of the following two actions, depending on your comfort level with the process:

- Give me final authorization to make the corrections we have discussed and then print the appropriate number of sets of the finished version on high-quality paper for our third visit.
- Have me email you an interim corrected draft, which you or a family member will print out. You would then review this interim draft and offer any final feedback to me by phone. At the end of that conversation, you would authorize me to make those corrections and print the appropriate number of sets of the finished version on high-quality paper for our third visit.

**When I return to my home office**, I will take the action you have authorized above, and then call to schedule our third visit.

**During our third and final visit**, I will present you with the appropriate number of printed life stories on high-quality linen-textured paper, so that you, your spouse (if any), and each of your children will have a copy. You will also receive a flash drive containing (a) the edited MP3 recording of your interview, (b) an editable Microsoft Word document of your life story (for creating excerpts and other adaptations); and (c) an Adobe PDF document of your life story (which can be shared with others or taken to a copy center to make more copies on quality paper). The flash drive will also contain one backup copy of each of these three files. *Important: I will not retain, over the long term, a copy of any of these files, so you should make at least one additional backup set of these files and store them off site.*

*If you have any questions or concerns about anything discussed in this overview, please let me know. Here is my contact information:*

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# Reflections

## Homework Part 1 (1 page): How Would You Like Your Life Story Edited and Formatted?

Please answer the following five (5) questions to give to me at our first visit.

1. **Would you like to have your portrait (head shot) on the cover page?** If so, please provide me with either a high-resolution digital image (JPG) or else lend me an appropriate photograph to scan and return to you. If you don't have a head shot, you may instead lend me a full-figure photo with a relatively plain background (indoor or outdoor), which I can scan and then crop to include only the desired portion.

2. **Which way would you like your written life story to be formatted?** (*Circle one*)

*A Q&A type of life story*, such as what you might read in a magazine interview, so that each question is shown in bold type and each answer appears below the question in regular type. This method involves my recording and transcribing both of our voices—my questions and your responses.

*A narrative type of life story* that simply flows, without my voice being included in the transcript (although I may add bolded subheadings such as “Early and Middle Childhood” to the written transcript). For this method, you will need to make sure your recorded response to each question includes the necessary context from the question, so your recorded interview will be complete and make sense. (For example, if the question is “What is your name, and when and where were you born?” your response should be something like this: “My name is John Jones, and I was born on July 15, 1953, in Dover, Maryland” (*not* “John Jones, July 15, 1953, Dover, Maryland”).

3. **How do you want *ums* and *uhs* treated in your written transcript?** Unless we are professional speakers, our verbal responses often include *ums* and *uhs*. (*Circle one*)

Keep them in      Delete them      Keep them only when it seems intentional

4. **How do you want stutters, repeated words, and accidentally repeated phrases treated in your written transcript?** (*Circle one*)

Keep them in      Delete them      Keep them only when it seems intentional

5. **Aside from the above treatments, and any appropriate edits to punctuation for clarification, no grammar corrections will be made**, as it is important, in oral histories, to retain your speaking style. *Please initial to signify your understanding and agreement:* \_\_\_\_\_

# *Reflections*

## **Homework Part 2 (5 pages): Potential Interview Questions**

**Directions:** Please review this list of 58 interview questions that I propose to ask you in our recording session. As you review, line-through any questions you wish to eliminate, change the wording of any existing questions if you wish, and insert any additional questions wherever you feel is most appropriate, either between existing questions or at the end. (*Need more space? Draw an arrow and continue on the back of that page.*)

### **Part A. Birth, Parents, Grandparents, and Siblings**

1. What is your name, and when and where were you born?
2. Who are your parents, and what states or countries were they born in?
3. What were your parents like? What did you learn from them?
4. Who do you think you take after the most—your father or your mother? In what way?
5. When and where were your grandparents born, and what were their names?
6. Do you have any brothers and/or sisters? When were they born, and what are their names?
7. If any aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, or others lived with your family when you were growing up, who were they?

### **Part B. Early and Middle Childhood**

8. Do you have any special early childhood memories?
9. What indoor or outdoor games did you play as a child?
10. Were you raised out in the country, in the suburbs, or in the city? What was it like, growing up where you did?
11. What were your jobs, if any, during your childhood; how did you earn money?

12. As a child, what did you like to do in your spare time—sports, games, toys, or other activities or hobbies?
13. As a child, did you have a special pet you'd like to tell about?
14. Are there any special memories you'd like to share from middle childhood?

### **Part C. Teen Years and Young Adulthood**

15. At what age did you learn to drive? What was your first car?
16. Are there any special memories you would like to share from your teen years or young adulthood?
17. What do you remember about the fashions of the time?

### **Part D. School Memories**

18. Where did you go to elementary and middle school? Can you describe it?
19. What did you like best about elementary or middle school?
20. Did you receive any special awards or recognition in elementary or middle school?
21. Where did you go to high school?
22. Were there dances, proms, football games, parties?
23. Did you participate in any after-school activities or sports?
24. What did you like best about high school?
25. Did you receive any special awards or recognition in high school?
26. Did you go to college? Where and when? What did you major in? What degree or degrees did you earn, if any?
27. Who were your friends in school? Are you still in contact with any of them?

## **Part E. Marriage and Family**

28. Were you ever married or in another committed relationship? If so, please tell the following details about your spouse or partner. (*If married more than once, please tell about each spouse or partner in turn.*)
- a. What was the name of your spouse?
  - b. When and how did you meet? Describe your first date.
  - c. When did you marry, and how old were you? Describe your wedding.
  - d. Where did you live after you married, and what was that like?
  - e. What do or did you like best or love most about your spouse?
  - f. Did you have children together? If so, when were they born (in order), and what are/were their names?
  - g. Did you adopt any children together? If so, when were they born, and what are/were their names?
  - h. Did you raise any other children together? If so, describe them here.
29. What activities did your children enjoy when they were younger?
30. What do you find special or admire about each of your children?
31. What activities did you enjoy together as a family?
32. Do you have grandchildren? If so, when were they born (in order), and what are their names?

## **Part F. Hobbies, Volunteer Activities, Talents or Skills, and Career**

33. What spare-time hobbies have you pursued in the past?
34. What volunteer activities have you participated in, if any?
35. What do you believe are your special talents or skills?

36. What was your first part-time job? What was your salary?
37. What careers have you had during your lifetime? Tell a little about each one—when, where, what, job title(s), and any special career-related memories or achievements.
38. What was your favorite job or place that you've ever worked?

### **Part G. Military Service**

39. Were you ever in the military? If so:
  - a. When, where, for how long, and in what branch?
  - b. What positions did you hold?
  - c. What was your involvement, if any, in any wartime activities?
  - d. Is there a highlight or a memorable incident you would like to relate?

### **Part H. Trips or Vacations**

40. What was your favorite trip or vacation, and why?

### **Part I. Senior Years**

41. If you worked until retirement, what activities were you typically engaged in after retiring?
42. What is your favorite type of music? Favorite movies?
43. What changes occurred during your life as a senior?
44. Is your spouse or partner still alive? Do they still work, or are they retired?

### **Part J. Special People and Friends**

45. Who is the person (famous or not) you admire most, and why?
46. What qualities do you value in your friends?

## **Part K. Faith, Reflection, Achievements, Advice, and More**

47. Would you like to tell about your faith or religious affiliation, or any activities associated with your faith?
48. When were you happiest, and why?
49. What do you think about life today? What do you like? What do you dislike?
50. Do you think it is easier living today? Why, or why not?
51. What important world events made an impact on you during your childhood or adulthood?
52. Did you ever have a life-changing event or experience that you'd like to relate?
53. What achievement in your life are you proudest of?
54. If you could change or improve one thing that occurred during your life, what would it be?
55. Do you have any philosophies or advice to offer your immediate family?
56. What advice would you offer your grandchildren or great-grandchildren?
57. Do you have any favorite quotations you'd like to share with your loved ones?

## **Part L. Miscellaneous**

58. Is there anything else we didn't already talk about that you'd like to mention at this point in your life story?

## Homework Part 3 (2 pages): Guide to Dates and Spellings of People and Places

**Directions:** Please fill in the blanks, printing legibly. This will become not only a handy reference for you in answering interview questions, but also a handy reference for me when editing the written transcript.

### You

<i>Birth Date:</i>	<i>Birthplace (City, State/Province, Country):</i>
<i>Your Full Name at Birth:</i>	
<i>Your Full Married Name, if Different:</i>	

### Your Brothers and Sisters (If Any)

<i>Birth Year</i>	<i>Gender (M/F)</i>	<i>Birth Name (and Married Name, if Different)</i>

### Your Parents

<i>Birth Year</i>	<i>Name (Include Mother's Maiden Name)</i>	<i>Birthplace, if Known (City, State/Province, Country)</i>

### Your Grandparents

<i>Birth Year</i>	<i>Name (Include Maiden Name, if Known)</i>	<i>Birthplace, if Known (City, State/Province, Country)</i>

### Any Aunts, Uncles, Grandparents, Cousins, or Others Who Lived with You When You Were a Child

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Name</i>

### Schools You Attended

<i>Type (Elementary, Middle, High School, College, University)</i>	<i>School Name</i>	<i>City, State/Province, Country</i>

**Your Spouse(s)/Partner(s)**

<i>When Married (Which Years)</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Birthplace, if Known (City, State/Province, Country)</i>

**Your Natural or Adopted Children (If Any)**

<i>Birth Year</i>	<i>Gender (M/F)</i>	<i>Birth Name (and Married Name, if Different)</i>

**Your Grandchildren (If Any)**

<i>Birth Year</i>	<i>Gender (M/F)</i>	<i>Birth Name (and Married Name, if Different)</i>

**Your Employer Names or Business Names Mentioned in Interview**


**Your Military Service (Branch, Stations, Ranks, Equipment, Countries, Related Spellings)**


**Religious or Faith-Based Spellings Mentioned in Interview**


**Other Important Spellings or Dates (If Any)**
