



Telling My Story Oral History Appropriate for Lower Elementary School (grade K-3)

Objective: To introduce oral history as a way of gathering information about a specific person, time, place, or event. To understand the interviewing process, conduct an interview, and produce a work based on the interview.

Lesson #1: 1 class period

Objective: To introduce the process of oral history interviewing through discussion of oral history and developing a list of questions to ask during an interview.

Materials:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Copies of the interview handout

Procedure:

- Discuss with your class the idea of oral history and oral history interview. Tell them how historians, when researching events that happened not too far in the past, will often talk to people to see what they remember about a specific event.
- Talk about interviews and the different types of interviews, such as interviewing for information on a topic versus interviewing for information about a person.
- Discuss what type of interview your students will be conducting.
 - For children in grades K-2 it is probably easiest to have students interview each other. For example, you may want them to talk about their memories of the first day of school. For children in grade 3 it is possible to have them interview a family member about a specific time or event.
- Discuss what kinds of information they should be looking for in the interview—what do they want to learn?
- Discuss possible interview questions.
 - Talk about the difference between open-ended questions and dichotomous questions. Which would be more beneficial in light of the assignment?
- Hand out the copies of interview questions.
- Ask your students to come up with 2 other possible interview questions (only necessary if you want your students to do this exercise, for 3rd grade it is possible to have your students generate all the questions and not use the handout).
- Write the questions on the chart paper.

- Let your students know that the next time they will interview another student in the classroom. For 3rd grade, ask them to interview a family member for homework.

Lesson #2: 1-2 class periods

Objective: To conduct an interview and obtain information through that interview to form a narrative story.

Materials:

- Interview handouts
- Pencils
- Art supplies (blank paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils—whatever you think is appropriate)
- Tape recorders

Procedure (for K-2):

- Students interview each other about a specific time (i.e. first day of school, which is what the interview handout is set up for).
- Students tape interviews so that they can hear themselves later and refer to the interview if they need.
 - You'll need to go over the procedure of working a tape recorder with them.
- After they interview each other ask them to either write a story based on what they learned or draw a picture (whichever is appropriate for their level).
- Once they are finished representing the story tell them they have just created a personal narrative. Many historians use personal narratives as one form of research. They just did the work of a historian.
- Have each student share his or her story/illustration.
- Ask your students if they learned anything new about each other.

Procedure (for 3rd):

- Students bring in their completed interviews with a family member.
- Have your students write a story and illustrate it based on the interviews.
- Talk about making it an accurate account. They should not add information that did not come up during the interview.
- Once they are finished representing the story tell them they have just created a personal narrative. Many historians use personal narratives as one form of research. They just did the work of a historian.
- There are several ideas for production once the students have completed their narratives.
 1. Make a class book of narratives.
 2. Invite interviewees to class for a day when the narratives are shared aloud.
- It is nice if you have students write thank you notes to the family member who was interviewed.

Assessment: Students can be evaluated on their participation in the discussion about interviews, their understanding of personal narrative, and construction of a personal narrative. For young students, it may be as simple as seeing if they really listen to their classmates' stories.