

## Sample Questions (legacyproject.org)

### **The beginning:**

1. What year were you born?
2. On what date?
3. Where were you born?
4. Were you told anything about the day you were born
5. How did your parents decide on your name?
6. Were you named after someone else?
7. Did you have a nickname? What? Why?
8. What do your family members call you now?

### **Early years:**

1. What is your first most vivid memory?
2. How many siblings do you have?
3. What do you remember about growing up with your siblings?
4. What was the neighborhood like?
5. What did you do for entertainment?
6. What do you remember about your parents?
7. When and where were they born?
8. What did they do for employment?
9. Do you remember anything about your Grandparents?
10. When and where were they born?
11. Who was more strict, your mother or father?

### **Growing up**

12. How did your family earn money?
13. What kinds of things did your family spend money on?
14. Did you have any pets growing up?
15. What was your favorite games or hobbies?
16. Did you play any sports?
17. What is the craziest thing you did as a child?
18. What was your favorite toy?
19. What was the neighborhood like where you grew up?
20. What did you want to be when you grew up?
21. What did you do for fun? What was your least favorite food?
22. What was your favorite gift?
23. What is a biggest world event you remember?
24. Did you get an allowance and what did you do to earn it?
25. What chores did you do that you did not get any money for?
26. Did you enjoy school?
27. What was your favorite subject?
28. What was your least favorite subject?

29. What was your favorite holiday Christmas, New Year, Easter, Memorial Day, Labor Day.
30. What were your favorite summer activities?
31. What are family traditions, foods?
32. What was your favorite spot to hang out in?
33. Did you have a curfew?
34. As a teenager what was the wildest thing you did as a teenager?
35. What did you do when you were in the most trouble with your parents?
36. When did you learn to drive? Who taught you? What was your first car like?
37. What was your favorite vacation, where, and why?
38. Did you have any heroes or role models?
39. What was the newest invention?

### **Becoming an adult**

40. What were your dreams when you graduated High School?
41. Did you go to College, if so where?
42. Were you in a fraternity?
43. What was your first paying job?
44. What was your favorite job?
43. Did you serve in the military, if so what was your speciality?
44. Did you receive any medals or awards?
45. What was the scariest thing that happened while serving?
46. What was your fondest memory during the war?
47. What did you do when you had leave?
48. Did you serve in any wars? What branch of the Military?
49. If you served in a war what battles did you participate in?
50. If you lived through a war and didn't serve what did you do and what was it like?
51. Where were you when the war ended?
52. What was that experience like?

### **Falling in Love**

53. What did you do on your first date?
54. How did you meet your spouse and when did you fall in love?
55. Do you remember how you proposed?
55. How old were you when you married?
56. Where were you married?
57. Did you go on and where did you go on a Honeymoon?
58. What was it that kept your love alive? Or What did the relationship lack?
59. Did you have children and how many children did you have?
60. How did you decide on their names?
61. What did you do to support your family? Did you enjoy it?
62. What was the was the first big purchase you made with your spouse?
63. What was the best family vacation?
64. What did you you like to do when you were not working?

65. What is the funniest thing you remember that one of your children said or did?
66. What makes you proud of your children?
67. What is the best thing about being a parent/grandparent?

### **Growing older**

68. If you could go back to any age, what would it be and why?
69. What was your least favorite age and why?
70. How did the Depression affect you?
71. What is the hardest part of growing older?
72. If you could go back to any age, which age would it be and why?
73. Is there anything you wish you had done differently? What? Why?
74. Are there any stories about the history of the family name or origins?
75. What is the most rewarding thing you did in your life?
76. What is your favorite place you ever visited, why, and what was it like?
77. What advice would you pass on to your grandchildren
78. What do you want your children and grandchildren to remember about you?

### **Life lessons and legacies**

79. Do you know any stories about the history of the family name, or other origins of the family?
80. What is your most cherished family tradition? Why is it important?
81. What do you feel have been the important successes in your life? The frustrations?
82. What is your happiest and proudest moment? Most memorable moment?
83. What has been the important successes in your life? The frustrations?
84. What is the most difficult thing that ever happened to you? How did you deal with it?
85. Is there a person or situation from your childhood that had a profound effect on the way you look at life?
86. What do you know now that you wish you'd known when you were young?
87. What advice did your parents or grandparents give you that you remember best?
88. What is your best piece of advice for living?
89. How do you describe a successful life?
90. What are the major principles or values that you live by?
91. What, if anything would you have done differently in your life?
92. What advice did your grandparents or parents give you that you remember?
93. If you had the power to solve one and only one problem in the world, what would it be and Why?
94. What would you like your children and grandchildren to remember about you?
95. If you could write a message to each of your children and grandchildren and put it in a time capsule for them to read in 20 years from now, what would you write on it?
96. How are your children like you? Unlike you?
97. Which do you think you have the most of: talent, intelligence, education, or persistence? How has it helped you in your life?
98. What is your favorite book and Why? What is your favorite movie and Why?

99. Do you think a person needs to first overcome serious setbacks or challenges to be truly successful?

100. Describe a person or situation from your childhood that had a profound effect on the way you look at life. If you were writing the story of your life, how would you divide it into chapters?

#### Bonus Questions

1. What qualities do you look for in the people you hang out with?
2. How do you describe your personal style?
3. How do you show others that you believe in them?
4. Who has influenced you the most?
5. What do you do to challenge your underlying beliefs, paradigms, and assumptions?
6. What would you do differently if given the opportunity?
7. When is breaking the rules okay?
8. What does working on your business mean to you?
9. What does empowerment mean to you?
10. How and where do you find inspiration?
11. How do you approach the unknown?
12. How do you keep feelings from clouding you?
13. What values are you committed to?
14. What do you do to live a balanced life?
15. What are 5 key books you feel I should read, and why?
16. What dreams and goals inspired you to succeed?

#### Things to keep in mind when interviewing the elderly:

1. An interview is just talking with someone, but with prepared questions.
2. Recording the interview ensures that you don't miss anything and allows you to review the interview at any time.
3. Triggers are important when you're doing a life interview. It isn't enough to say "Tell me about your life." Triggers can be many things - questions, photographs, keepsakes, home movies, music.
4. During the interview, ask questions slowly, giving the person time to answer.
5. Ask open questions like "Tell be about...? Describe.....? What was it like....? In what ways....? Why.....? How.....?"
6. Start with easy, friendly questions and work your way up to more difficult or sensitive questions.
7. Listen carefully to what the person says; don't interrupt or correct. Maintain eye contact and show interest by leaning forward and nodding.
8. If someone is talking about an unhappy or painful experience, show that you understand how they feel. If a person doesn't want to talk about something, that's okay just go to the next question.
9. It's okay for there to be moments of silence or emotion. A person's life is important, and emotion is natural. Accept emotions as part of the process.

10. With hearing impairment maintain a normal volume when asking questions but slow down the rate of speaking words. Carefully enunciate each word and maintain eye contact.
11. An interview shouldn't last more than about an hour. People do best when they're not tired. You can always do another interview. Breaking up the interview into smaller segments actually gives the opportunity to think about the answers and come up with other questions based on the answers.
12. Do not forget to thank the person you have interviewed. They have been generous with their time and perhaps shared some personal information. Let them know you value their time and what they have shared. Send a thank you note and possibly a copy of the interview.