

Story
Corps[®]



THE *Great*
THANKSGIVING LISTEN

TEACHER TOOLKIT

2017

WITH SUPPORT FROM



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LETTER FROM DAVE ISAY



Dear Teachers,

Thank you so much for downloading the 2017 Great Thanksgiving Listen Teacher Toolkit.

When I started StoryCorps 14 years ago, I wanted to give us all a chance to feel heard, and to leave a record of our lives for future generations. It's always been a very simple idea: Find someone you want to honor with an interview—a grandparent, a sibling, a mentor, or a friend—sit across from them for 40 minutes, ask important questions, and listen carefully to their answers. Many people think of it as: “If this was to be our last conversation, what would I ask of or say to this person who means so much to me?” The interview is uploaded to the Library of Congress so that someday, through your voice and words, your great-great-great-grandchildren can meet you and the person you chose to honor in this recording.

Back in 2015, we asked young people and their teachers to work together for the first time to record an oral history of our times by interviewing an elder or someone else in their lives over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. In the two years since then, thousands of students from all 50 states have embraced the challenge by recording and uploading over 75,000 individual interviews. Together, we preserved thousands of important personal histories as well as helped create a valuable resource for future generations.

The Great Thanksgiving Listen is no longer an experiment—it's a growing national movement to collect the voices of this nation and to recognize the importance of intergenerational listening.

At StoryCorps, we know the significant impact you can have on the lives of your students and those they choose to honor with a StoryCorps interview. By taking part, together, you can help them create a precious gift for their families and the nation whose impact will be felt for centuries to come.

Thank you again for taking part in The Great Thanksgiving Listen.

Warm regards,

Dave Isay

President and Founder, StoryCorps



LESSON PLAN

PARTICIPATING IN THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN

For this project, students will learn about the importance of storytelling, and use the StoryCorps App to record an interview with an elder in their family or community. They can add their interview to the StoryCorps Archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

Storytelling and the gift of listening are critical skills for young people. This project offers the opportunity to realize a simple idea: young people can honor someone in their lives with an interview—a grandparent, a sibling, a mentor, or a friend—sit across from them for 40 minutes, ask important questions, and listen carefully to their answers.

Working together with students and educators, StoryCorps has preserved thousands of important personal histories and helped create a valuable resource for future generations.

This lesson plan provides materials to introduce students to StoryCorps and oral histories, prepares them to ask great questions and conduct their own interviews, and provides ideas for follow-up after the holiday weekend.

We invite you to adapt these resources in whatever way best suits your needs. We recommend introducing the project at least two weeks prior to Thanksgiving to provide time for students to plan their interviews and practice using the StoryCorps App.

FOR TEACHERS



Join our *StoryCorps in the Classroom* Facebook group to share examples of how you will use The Great Listen in your classroom and to hear from other educators who are doing the same: [Facebook.com/groups/storycorps](https://www.facebook.com/groups/storycorps)



OBJECTIVES & MATERIALS

OBJECTIVES

- **Learn** about StoryCorps and the interview concept
- **Ask questions** to develop a story and express a shared experience
- **Create** a primary source using technology (and have the option to enter it into the historical record)
- **Write** archive-quality titles, summaries, and keywords

TARGET GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

TIME NEEDED:

- **2-5 hours** in class. Most parts of the lesson can be structured for in-class or at-home assignments.
- **1-3 hours** out of classroom. Students will conduct their interviews (5-40 minutes) at home or in a location convenient for the student and their partner.

MATERIALS

- ✓ Wi-Fi access (at home or in classroom)
- ✓ Free StoryCorps App, downloaded to an iPhone, Android device, or Kindle Tablet
- ✓ Student worksheets
- ✓ Permission slips (optional)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Meaningful conversations stem from asking great questions. Use our *Food for Thought* suggestions throughout this lesson plan or think of your own.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-12.2-4](#)

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-12.1-10](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-12.6-9](#)

Use technology, including the internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.



PART I: ABOUT STORYCORPS / WHY DO STORIES MATTER?



Food for Thought

Share a story you've heard that feels important to you. What makes that story valuable?



Food for Thought

What can you learn by listening to someone else's story?

Introduce students to StoryCorps and The Great Thanksgiving Listen using a selection of the following videos, animations, podcasts, and the StoryCorps mission statement. All videos and content can be found at THEGREATLISTEN.ORG.

ANIMATIONS

- ▶ "An Intro to StoryCorps from our Founder Dave Isay" (3 min.)
- ▶ "Eyes on the Stars" (3 min.)
- ▶ "John and Joe" (4 min.)
- ▶ "Clean Streets" (3 min.)
- ▶ "No More Questions" (4 min.)
- ▶ "The Icing on the Cake" (3 min.)

ABOUT THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN

- ▶ Dave Isay's 2016 TED Talk (8 min.)
- ▶ Dave Isay's 2015 TED Talk (22 min.)
- ▶ The Great Thanksgiving Listen Podcast 2015 (21 min.)

STORYCORPS MISSION STATEMENT

Share the StoryCorps mission statement and ask students to identify words or phrases that stand out to them, or which they think are most important:

StoryCorps' mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.

We do this to remind one another of our shared humanity, to strengthen and build the connections between people, to teach the value of listening, and to weave into the fabric of our culture the understanding that everyone's story matters. At the same time, we are creating an invaluable archive for future generations.



PART II: GREAT INTERVIEWS / GREAT QUESTIONS



Food for Thought

Imagine you're the one being interviewed. What questions would you like to be asked? Why?



Food for Thought

How can you show that you're truly listening to the person you're interviewing?

Prepare students to conduct great interviews by selecting and asking “Great Questions,” identifying an interview partner, downloading the StoryCorps App, and creating thoughtful keywords and titles for future historians and researchers.

- Distribute the *Make History with StoryCorps* handout as an overview of the project for students and as a reference for their recording partners.
- Prepare students for their interviews by choosing a recording partner, making a plan for interview day, and identifying great questions to ask. We have three different tools to support this:
 - *Interview Planning Worksheet*
 - Great Questions Generator in the StoryCorps App.
 - *Great Questions* handout
- Students will need to reach out to their recording partner in advance to plan a date, location, and time for their interview. When contacting their recording partners, students should describe The Great Listen and provide a few sample questions to let their partners prepare for the upcoming interview.
- Learn how to download and use the StoryCorps App by practicing in class, and use the resources on our App page.
- Emphasize the importance of creating a thoughtful interview title, summary, and set of keywords (after recording) by reviewing the *Using the App / Keywording 101* handout.

**INTERVIEW PRACTICE ACTIVITY (IN CLASS):****Food for Thought**

How do you feel when you think about conducting your own interview?
Nervous?
Confident?
Excited? Why?

→ Watch the animated videos below.



“Interview Tips with Steve Inskeep” (3 min.)



“Four Tips for an Effective Interview” (2 min.)



“Tips for Active Listening” (4 min.)

→ Pair students up randomly and designate one as partner A and the other as partner B.

**Food for Thought**

What’s a great example of a follow up question?

→ Using the *Great Questions* handout or *Great Questions Generator* in the StoryCorps App, instruct each student to select 3-4 questions to ask their interview partner.

→ Remind students to use the skills they learned in the videos and to ask follow-up questions (e.g. *Can you tell me more about that? Why do you think that happened? What do you mean by that?*)

→ Practice interviewing! Partner A should start by asking questions to partner B. Switch after 3-5 minutes: partner B asks questions to partner A.

DEBRIEF: Facilitate a short discussion using the following prompts:



What is one thing your partner did during the interview that was effective?



What challenges or surprises did you encounter during your interview, and how did you work to address them?



What is the significance of what you talked about during your interview?



What is one thing from this practice interview that you want to remember for when you conduct your interview over Thanksgiving?



PART III: CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

Now that students know how to be great interviewers and listeners, use the app, and write thoughtful titles and keywords, they are ready to record!



Food for Thought

What's one interviewing skill you'll make sure to remember when you're conducting your own interview? Why is that one important?



Food for Thought

While conducting your interview, do you think any difficult topics might come up? If so, what makes them difficult? Make a plan for working through it.

- Use the *Recipes for Success on Interview Day* handout as a take-home resource for students.
- Assign students to conduct their interview over Thanksgiving weekend. Remind them to make a plan with their recording partner in advance.
- A complete interview requires a title, summary, and keywords.
- Following the interview, students should add keywords, an updated title, and an extended summary to their interview on the app or by logging into their StoryCorps Archive account from a desktop computer.
- Students should discuss privacy preferences for their interview with their recording partner before uploading it to the StoryCorps Archive.
 - Students should familiarize themselves with the three settings available them and their partner, which can be found on the *Recipes for Success on Interview Day* handout.
 - Students who publish their interviews should email you the link to the interview.
 - Students who do not publish their interview should still turn in a proposed title, summary, and keywords for their interview, as well as the length of time of their interview.

There are lots of ways to participate in this project. If a student does not have access to a smartphone or does not have permission to use the app, they can still complete the project using any digital recorder, or they can conduct an unrecorded interview.



PART IV: CLOSING/DEBRIEF

Facilitate a discussion among participating students using the following questions:

- ❓ How did your partner react to the interview experience?
- ❓ How did you feel as an interviewer? What challenges or surprises did you encounter and how did you work to address them?
- ❓ Did you have the chance to go “off script” and ask a follow-up question? If so, what question did you ask and how did that change your interview?
- ❓ What question evoked a particularly memorable response?
- ❓ What did you learn that changed the way you previously thought about an event, person, or your recording partner?
- ❓ What makes an interview different from a text as a historical reference?
- ❓ What components contribute to differing perspectives of history?
- ❓ What could future historians learn about 2017 from listening to your interview?
- ❓ What would you do differently if you were to conduct another interview?
- ❓ Who else in your life would you like to interview?
- ❓ What questions would you like to be asked in an interview?



FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Listen to your interview again.

Share your interviews with us @StoryCorps with the tag #TheGreatListen.

Write a reflection paper, a follow-up essay, or a poem inspired by your interview.

Transcribe a part of your interview, and/or use quotes from your interview to support another project or research paper.

Create a video inspired by a TED talk with Adobe Spark Video based on the process of preparing for and conducting an interview and present it to the class.

Edit your interview using free editing software (such as **Audacity**) to create a two-minute excerpt.

Produce a podcast using excerpts from different interviews

Create a visual storyboard of the process of preparing for and conducting the interview, plus what was learned, and present it to the class.

Draw or paint a portrait of your partner inspired by your interview with them.

Host a classroom listening party.

Hold an assembly to highlight favorite stories from your class.

Coordinate with your school or local library to start an oral history project.

Use the app to investigate a social issue in your community (make a list of “sources” you’d like to interview).



EXTRA CREDIT WITH ADOBE SPARK!

Now that you have successfully recorded an interview and added your story to the Library of Congress, it's time to share it with the world!

StoryCorps is partnering with Adobe to help bring your students' stories to life with impactful images and other visual storytelling elements. New this year, students can highlight special moments in their Great Thanksgiving Listen interviews with free Adobe Spark tools. Students can use pull quotes, historic photos, selfies, icons and illustrations to enrich their stories and share them online with family and friends.

Adobe Spark makes it easy to create shareable graphics, magazine-style web pages and videos. Templates, tutorials and more at THEGREATLISTEN.ORG.

Sp
Adobe Spark

**SHARE YOUR
FAVORITE
QUOTE FROM
YOUR
INTERVIEW!**

MADE WITH #ADOBESPARK

THE *Great* THANKSGIVING LISTEN

Remix this design



FAST FACTS & BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN

The Great Thanksgiving Listen is a national movement that empowers young people—and people of all ages—to create an oral history of the contemporary United States by recording an interview with an elder using the free StoryCorps App.

Interviews become part of the StoryCorps Archive at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress where they will serve as an invaluable resource for future historians.

Now in its third year, the Great Thanksgiving Listen has grown from an experimental challenge issued by our Founder Dave Isay into a vital intergenerational movement. To date, thousands of high schools from all 50 states have participated and preserved more than 75,000 interviews, providing families with a priceless piece of personal history.

The project is a free, technology-based assignment originally developed for students age 13 and over studying American history, social studies, english, language arts, journalism, drama, ESL, media and technology. It has also been applied successfully as an extracurricular and community-building opportunity in classrooms, universities, OST (Out-of-School Time) environments, community centers, living rooms, and kitchens across the country.

This toolkit, and our website at THEGREATLISTEN.ORG, contain everything you need to get started. **We look forward to making history with you!**



ABOUT STORYCORPS

Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, the nonprofit organization StoryCorps has given more than 400,000 people the chance to record interviews about their lives, pass wisdom from one generation to the next, and leave a legacy for the future. StoryCorps preserves the recordings in its archive at the Library of Congress, the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered, and shares select stories with the public through StoryCorps' weekly podcast, NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. These powerful human stories reflect the vast range of American experiences, wisdom and values; engender empathy and connection; and remind us how much more we have in common than divides us.

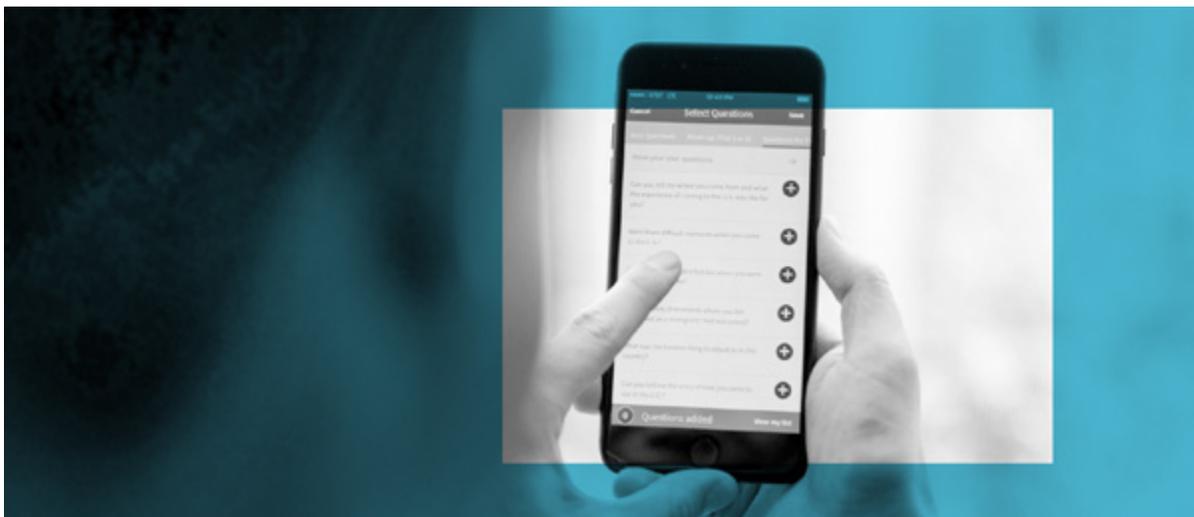
ABOUT THE STORYCORPS APP

Launched with support from the 2015 TED Prize and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the StoryCorps App is a global platform for listening, connecting, and sharing stories of the human experience. The app takes the StoryCorps experience out of the booth and puts it entirely in the hands of users, enabling anyone, anywhere to record conversations with another person and then easily archive them at the U.S. Library of Congress and on our website. Since its debut, nearly a quarter million people have taken part in an interview using the StoryCorps App.

ABOUT THE STORYCORPS ARCHIVE

The StoryCorps Archive comprises one of the largest born-digital collections of human voices, featuring more than 200,000 conversations recorded in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and around the world. The full collection of interviews is housed at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

NEW IN 2017: Part of the archive is accessible online. Listen to the digital collection of interviews at [ARCHIVE.STORYCORPS.ORG](https://archive.storycorps.org).



FAST FACTS & PRIVACY SETTINGS

The best place to get in touch with questions and to share resources for this project is the StoryCorps in the Classroom Facebook group. If you are having technical issues, please visit our Help Center at [STORYCORPS.ORG](https://www.storycorps.org/help-center).

You and your students can follow @StoryCorps on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and share interviews and posts about the project using #TheGreatListen.

We invite you to review the information below and to adapt the Great Listen lesson plan and multimedia resources in whatever way best suits your needs.

We recommend introducing the project at least two weeks prior to Thanksgiving to provide time for participants to plan their interviews and practice using the StoryCorps App.

THE ASSIGNMENT (IN A NUTSHELL)

The StoryCorps App is a free mobile application that seamlessly walks young people through a StoryCorps interview by providing all the necessary tools, including help in preparing questions, finding the right environment for a conversation, and recording a high-quality interview.

When complete, young people can publish their interview to the StoryCorps website and add it to the StoryCorps Archive at the Library of Congress, where it will be available for future generations to access. Via the StoryCorps website, the complete interview is also shareable with teachers, friends, and family.



SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Participants will need access to a smartphone (Apple iPhone or Android device) or tablet with both the latest device software and the most recent version of the free StoryCorps App. The StoryCorps App can be downloaded through the **App Store**, **Google Play** or **Amazon Store**.

Participants will need desktop or smartphone access to the StoryCorps website either at home or in the classroom, as well as a strong Wi-Fi signal to upload interviews.

iPads are not recommended for use with the StoryCorps App.

StoryCorps does not recommend students use a shared classroom device.

For students without access to a device or without parental consent (see below), teachers can easily modify The Great Listen to allow for basic participation. Modifications are noted in the lesson plan.

Currently the StoryCorps App prompts users in English; participants may record in any language.

PARENTAL CONSENT & PRIVACY SETTINGS

Under the app's terms of use: Children under the age of 13 may not participate in The Great Listen, and parental consent is required for people under the age of 18 to register for a StoryCorps App account. You can review the app's full terms of use at [ARCHIVE.STORYCORPS.ORG/TERMS-OF-USE](https://archive.storycorps.org/terms-of-use).

If you choose to require a parental permission slip, we have included a sample one here that you can easily customize to your needs. (Please note: The permission slip is for school/community use only and should not be submitted to StoryCorps.)

After recording, students will have the option to publish their interviews. If published, the interviews will be entered into the StoryCorps Archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and appear publicly online at [STORYCORPS.ORG](https://storycorps.org). If the students do not want to publish their interviews, they can save the interviews to their devices. (*Please note: Only interviews published to the StoryCorps website are archived at the Library of Congress.*) Students and other participants should not be required to publish their interviews publicly in order to receive credit. This is to preserve participant privacy. Please see our privacy setting recommendations for those who prefer to keep their recordings private.



USER-GENERATED CONTENT

The StoryCorps App and website contain user-generated content that is not reviewed before it is posted online. While we adhere to a strict set of Community Guidelines and work to maintain a culture of tolerance and acceptance, not all published content will be appropriate for all individuals. We also have a flagging mechanism in place to help further identify content that violates our Community Guidelines. We ask teachers, educators and caregivers to familiarize themselves with the StoryCorps Archive, to review the Community Guidelines listed at [ARCHIVE.STORYCORPS.ORG](https://archive.storycorps.org), and to use discretion in adopting the project.



Connect directly with other educators and StoryCorps staff in our *StoryCorps in the Classroom* Facebook group and find answers to your technical support questions in our Help Center at [STORYCORPS.ORG](https://storycorps.org).



SPONSORS & PARTNERS

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SUPPORTING SPONSOR



GROUNDBREAKING SUPPORT FOR THE STORYCORPS APP PROVIDED BY



MEDIA PARTNERS



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HANDOUTS FOR STUDENTS

SAMPLE PERMISSION SLIP

MAKE HISTORY WITH STORYCORPS

USING THE APP & KEYWORDING 101

GREAT QUESTIONS LIST

INTERVIEW PLANNING WORKSHEET

RECIPES FOR SUCCESS ON INTERVIEW DAY



SAMPLE PERMISSION SLIP

Dear Parents,

Over the coming weeks our class will be participating in a national program created by StoryCorps called The Great Thanksgiving Listen.

Using near-universally accessible smartphone technology, students will record an interview with a grandparent or other elder using the free StoryCorps App to foster meaningful connections within families, communities, and the classroom, and create a firsthand archive of American history and wisdom.

In order for your child to participate in The Great Thanksgiving Listen, you must acknowledge that they are not under the age of 13. If your child is under the age of 18, after downloading the free StoryCorps App, they will need your consent to register for an account in accordance with the terms of use.

I understand that this project will include my child recording an interview with an elder and taking a picture with that individual. I understand that with the consent of all interview participants, my child will have the option to publish the interview and photograph online to a public website at [ARCHIVE.STORYCORPS.ORG](https://archive.storycorps.org). I understand that the publication of the interview and photograph will result in them both being archived in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

I also understand that publishing an interview online is not a requirement for credit in this project and that my child will have the option to keep the interview and/or photograph private if they or their interview partner desire.

I hereby give permission for (student's name) to participate in The Great Thanksgiving Listen.

(parent/guardian signature)

(date)

For more information, please see [THEGREATLISTEN.ORG](https://thegreatlisten.org).

ABOUT STORYCORPS

Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps has given more than 400,000 people—Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs, in towns and cities in all 50 states—the chance to record interviews about their lives. The organization preserves the recordings in its archive at the Library of Congress, the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered, and shares select stories with the public through StoryCorps' weekly podcast, NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. These powerful human stories reflect the vast range of American experiences, wisdom and values; engender empathy and connection; and remind us how much more we have in common than divides us.



MAKE HISTORY WITH STORYCORPS

LET'S MAKE HISTORY TOGETHER

Welcome to The Great Thanksgiving Listen! By participating in this project, you will join thousands of students across the United States in interviewing an elder over Thanksgiving weekend using the StoryCorps App. If you choose, you and your recording partner will have the option to enter your recording into the StoryCorps Archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, where your interview will become a primary source for current and future historians. You will also have a chance to keep your conversation private if you prefer.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The StoryCorps Archive is housed in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. The Library is the nation's first established cultural institution and the largest library in the world, with millions of items including books, recordings, photographs, maps, and manuscripts in its collections.

This project offers you and someone you know the unique opportunity to create a new record and preserve it as part of the Library's collections for generations to come.

Getting Started

- You will need access to a smartphone (iPhone or Android) or tablet and to download the free StoryCorps App to participate. You must be 13 or over to use the app; if you are under 18, you need parental consent to create an account on the StoryCorps App.
- Your StoryCorps App account and password will be the same for logging into the StoryCorps Archive at [ARCHIVE.STORYCORPS.ORG](https://archive.storycorps.org), a public website where published interviews can be found online. If you decide to publish your interview, this is where it will go.
- Get comfortable with the app before recording the conversation of a lifetime! Download the app, register for an account with parental permission, record and publish a 10-second test, and log into your StoryCorps Archive account from a desktop computer to view your test online. You will receive an email from StoryCorps when your file has uploaded.
- Experiment with editing the title, summary, and keywords of a test interview from a desktop computer or your app.
- Prepare for your interview by reading this sheet all the way through and using the *Interview Planning Worksheet* and *Great Questions List*.



USING THE APP + KEYWORDING 101

TITLE, SUMMARY, AND KEYWORDS

After you conduct your official interview, you will want to give it a great title, summarize it, and add keywords (like tags) to make it easier for your friends and family to find it online. Just like using a # hashtag on social media, tagging your StoryCorps interview connects your story with the stories of others across cities, countries and cultures. These details will add to the historical archive and serve as guideposts for future scholars who will use keywords to search for and discover your interview in the Library of Congress's digital collections. This section provides some tips on writing great titles, summaries, and keywords.

Title: Interview titles are one sentence and refer to the main idea of the interview.

Example: *John Grey and his friend Virginia Brown talk about growing up in Montgomery, Alabama.*

Summary: Summaries are 4–5 sentence descriptions of the interview. Include the location and date of the interview, the names and basic autobiographical details of the participants, and a general overview of the topics discussed.

Example: *In this interview, conducted in November 2016 in Montgomery, Alabama, John Grey (17) interviews his friend and neighbor Virginia Brown (82) about her childhood in the city they both call home. Ms. Brown shares stories about her involvement in the civil rights movement and the effects of the Vietnam War on her family. She also talks about her favorite hobbies as a child (swimming) and as an adult*

(cooking), and at minute 38 she discloses the secret to her legendary peach pie. At the end of the discussion, Ms. Brown and Mr. Grey share their wishes for the future.

Keywords: Keywords should include basic places, people, occupations, names of events (especially historical events), and any other important themes or concepts mentioned in the interview.

Example: *Montgomery, AL, civil rights, Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War, hobbies, swimming, cooking, peach pie, wishes for the future, neighbors, friendship, Booker T. Washington Magnet High School, TheGreatListen2017*

- Try to provide 5–15 keywords
- If you record in a language other than English, enter that language as a keyword (e.g., Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic).
- Enter your keywords, along with TheGreatListen2017, in the “general” keywords field. Add your state abbreviation (e.g. AK, CA, TX) in the “places” field.

Tip: To edit your title, summary, image and keywords from a desktop computer, log into your account at [ARCHIVE.STORYCORPS.ORG](https://archive.storycorps.org), and click on the edit icon in the upper right hand corner of the interview. To edit from a smartphone, log into the app, click on (⋮) in the lower righthand corner of your interview and choose “Edit Info.”



GREAT QUESTIONS LIST

GREAT QUESTIONS FOR ANYONE

- Tell me about one of the most important people in your life.
- Tell me about the person who has had the greatest influence on your life. What lessons did they teach you?
- Who has been the kindest to you and why?
- Share some important lessons you've learned in life.
- Share some of your earliest childhood memories.
- Are there any funny stories people tell about you from when you were growing up?
- What have you accomplished so far—personally and professionally—that makes you proudest? Why?
- Tell me how you would like people to remember you.
- Would you be willing to share a happy or sad memory with me?
- Thinking about future generations, and knowing that they may hear this recording, is there wisdom or advice you would like to share with them?

FAMILY HERITAGE

- Tell me about some traditions that have been passed down through our family. When and how did they get started?
- Are there any classic family jokes, stories, or songs you can share with me?
- What do you see as our family's legacy?
- Where were our ancestors born? If they moved to the United States, when did they arrive?
- What are some of the jobs/careers held by past generations in our family?
- Of all the family members you have either known or heard stories about, who do you think lived the most interesting life? Why?
- What are your favorite family holidays, and why?

GRANDPARENTS

- Tell me about your parents.
- Tell me about your grandparents.
- Where did you grow up, and what was your childhood like?
- Share with me the story of how you and grandma/grandpa met.
- Tell me about when you found out you were going to be a mother/father.
- What was my mother/father like when she/he was growing up? Do you have any favorite stories about her/him?
- Do you remember any songs you sang to her/him when she/he was a baby? Can you sing any for me now?

GROWING UP & SCHOOL

- Tell me about where you grew up and what your childhood was like.
- Did you like going to school? Why/why not?
- What are your most vivid memories of school?
- Tell me about a teacher or other adult that impacted your life while you were growing up.
- What did you do during the summer when you were off from school?
- What jobs did you have when you were a teenager? What did you do with the money you earned?
- If you could go back and relive your teenage years, would you? Why/why not?
- Did you have a nickname? What was it and how did you get it? Does anyone still call you by that nickname?
- Has your life been different from what you imagined as a teenager?



LOVE & RELATIONSHIPS.....

- Tell me about the love of your life.
- How did you meet your wife/husband/partner?
- Describe your first date with your husband/wife/partner.
- Describe your marriage proposal.
- Tell me about your wedding day. Did it go as you imagined?
- Where did you spend your honeymoon?
- What have you learned from your wife/husband/partner?
- Tell me about your happiest moments together.

WORKING.....

- What job do you currently hold, and what jobs have you held in the past?
- How did you find your way to your current job/career?
- Thinking of the jobs you've held, is there one that stands out as your favorite?
- When you were younger, what did you imagine your job would be?
- What lessons has working taught you?
- If you could choose any career, what would you pick? Why?

ELECTIONS & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.....

- How do you feel affected by this election?
- What elections stand out in your mind, and why?
- If you have voted before, what was it like to vote for the first time?
- Has there ever been a time in your life when you wanted to vote, but were not able to? What was that like?
- What issues do you consider when choosing a candidate?
- What advice would you give to a first time voter?
- What does civic participation mean to you?
- Has a changing role in your community, job, or home ever affected your civic participation?

- Over the years, have you changed your opinion about any major political issues? If so, which issues and why?

MILITARY SERVICE.....

- When were you in the military? Which branch did you serve in?
- What motivated you to join the military?
- Tell me about basic training. Were you prepared for military life? What were you unprepared for?
- Describe your daily life while in the service.
- What is the most difficult part of being in the military?
- Did you serve in a war zone? When and where?
- What lessons did your service teach you that you still carry with you?
- Describe your transition from military to civilian life. Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- If given the opportunity, would you serve in the military again? Why?

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY.....

- When you were growing up, what role did religion/spirituality play in your life?
- What does religion/spirituality mean to you, and what role does it play in your life today?
- Have you ever had a profound religious/spiritual experience? Will you tell me about it?
- What important lessons have your religious/spiritual beliefs taught you? Will you share them with me?
- Do you have any favorite religious holidays? What do they mean to you?



INTERVIEW PLANNING WORKSHEET

GETTING STARTED

? Who will you interview? What is that person's name?

(5) _____

? How old is your interview partner?

(6) _____

? Why did you choose this person?

(7) _____

? Where will you conduct your interview?

(8) _____

QUESTION PREPARATION

In this section you will prepare 10-15 questions that you will ask your partner. Using the app, the Great Question Generator, or the *Great Questions List*, write out the questions you will ask your partner. If you are using the app, you can select and store your questions in the app, but also write them down below:

(9) _____

(10) _____

** During your interview, remember to ask follow-up questions that may not be written here!

(11) _____

(1) _____

(12) _____

(2) _____

(13) _____

(3) _____

(14) _____

(4) _____

(15) _____



RECIPES FOR SUCCESS ON INTERVIEW DAY

INTERVIEW DAY

Now that you know how to use the app and write great titles, summaries, and keywords, you're almost ready to record! Prepare your questions and read through the checklist below before the big day so that you know what to expect.

The app has a built-in timer and question selection mechanism. You can follow the prompts in the app or use your worksheets as a guide during your conversation.

- Prepare your questions in advance, but be ready to ask follow-up questions and go "off script" if you hear something interesting.
- Try to find a quiet place to conduct your interview.
- Ask your partner for permission to record them before you start.
- Begin your recording by introducing yourself and ask your partner to introduce themselves. State the location, date, and year where and when you are conducting the interview (e.g. *Today is November 24, 2016 and we are in Grandpa's living room in Lexington, KY*).
- The app will prompt you to take a picture with your partner. If you'd prefer, you can take a picture of an old photograph of your partner or a piece of paper with the interview date on it.
- After your interview, discuss these privacy setting options with your partner:

(1) Choose to publish the interview and photo. Both will appear on the StoryCorps website and be transmitted to the Library of Congress. There are three privacy options when publishing your interview:

Everyone: Your interview and related information are available to anyone on the web.

Archive Users: Your interview and related information are available to anyone with an account on the StoryCorps Archive.

Only You: Your interview and related information are private.

(2) Choose NOT to publish the interview. The audio file and photo will remain saved locally on the device. It will not be uploaded to the Library of Congress.



Tip: If you have trouble publishing over Wi-Fi (don't worry, it happens sometimes!), check out our Help Center at [STORYCORPS.ORG](https://www.storycorps.org) for step-by-step guidance on extracting the audio file from your device and manually uploading it from a desktop or laptop computer.

- For students who publish: After uploading, visit [ARCHIVE.STORYCORPS.ORG](https://archive.storycorps.org) and login to your account from a desktop or your mobile device. You can edit your title, summary, and keywords and email your teacher a link to the interview.
- For students who choose not to publish: If you decide to keep your interview private (or participated using a digital recorder) email your teacher with the interview duration and provide a sample title, summary, and keywords.
- Remember to thank your recording partner and send them a link to your published interview.

Tip: You are welcome to conduct as many interviews as you like.

Tip: If you change your mind after recording, you can remove your interview from public view by logging into your account at [ARCHIVE.STORYCORPS.ORG](https://archive.storycorps.org) and changing your setting to private.

WE AT STORYCORPS THANK YOU FOR MAKING HISTORY WITH US!



QUESTIONS

- If you have questions, please visit our Help Center at [THEGREATLISTEN.ORG](https://thegreatlisten.org). You will find the answers to most of your questions there.
- If you have any trouble, we invite you to reach out to us via email at contactus@storycorps.org. You will receive a receipt for your email that you can provide to your teacher while you wait for us to respond promptly.
- We do not provide phone support for The Great Thanksgiving Listen, but we will do our best to respond promptly to every email inquiry.