

# Become your Family Story Collector



## How to Record your Grandparents while in Isolation!

The lives of your grandparents, older neighbours or older family friends were very different to yours. Their stories are precious. By listening to and recording their memories, you will embark on a journey that will help you understand more about their life, background, where they grew up, as well as your own family history and heritage. When the Coronavirus crisis ends, you will be enriched, more knowledgeable and more connected to your grandparents.



**Oral history** is ‘the recording of people’s memories and experiences in order to help us better understand the past. Storytelling was always a part of our culture in Ireland. In 2020, you can help bring that back!

### Ask your grandparents

After speaking with your parents about the idea, ring your grandparents and ask them would they like to be recorded. Tell them that you will ring them every day or every second day and record them for a short while. Tell them you want to use the time in isolation to do something meaningful and important. Tell them you want to know more about their lives!

### For recording your interviews over the phone:



The easiest way is to put the phone on loudspeaker and record with your IPAD Voice recorder or from another phone. If you have a recording device, use it.

1. For recording on the phone you are using, download and install Automatic Call Recorder.
2. Whenever you make or receive phone calls, the app will automatically start recording calls. You can turn this off by tapping the three dots icon on the top-right > Settings > Record calls > Off.

**Note:** If your grandparents don’t want their voice recorded, respect that and ask if you can write down some of their stories.



## Your Suggested Interview Questions

These are a list of suggested prompts for your interviews. Pick the ones you would like to ask your grandparent. Use your curiosity and come up with your own too! If you are recording the interview, begin by saying your name and the date. Then ask your grandparent to introduce themselves:

A yellow rectangular sticker with a red circular dot in the top left corner and the word "Remember!" written in black, slanted text.

*'Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Today is the \_\_\_\_\_ 2020 and I am going to record my grandfather's memories over the phone. Granddad, will you say your full name for the record?'*



**Listen** - Don't just follow questions on a list. Instead, ask a question and then listen and build on what they say with follow-up questions.

**Tell me about the day you met me when I was a baby?**

### Background

- Tell me about your parents
  - What were their names?
  - where were they from?
  - What were they like?
  - Describe your mother?
  - Describe your father?
  
- Do you remember any of your grandparents?
  - What were their names?
  - Where were they from?
  - Describe them?
  - What work did they do?
  
- Who was the oldest person you knew when you were a child?
  - Describe him/her?
  - Did he/she tell you any stories?

## **Childhood**

- How did your parents choose your name, and does it have a special meaning?
- When and where were you born?
- Describe yourself as a child?
- Were you named after a family member?
- Who was your best friend when you were a kid and what did you like to do together?
- Did you have a favourite toy when you were my age?
- What was your favourite age to be?
- What's the oldest memory you have?
- What is the most important lesson that your parents taught you?

## **Schooldays**

- What schools did you go to?
- What were you like in school?
- What were your favourite subjects?
- Who were your favourite teachers and why were they your favourite?

## **Place**

- Describe the house you grew up in?
- Tell me about the place you were raised?
- Do you know any stories, folklore or history about the place you grew up in?

## **Love**

- Tell me how you met my grandmother/grandfather?
- How did Grandfather propose?
- When and where were you married?
- Who was your matron of honour/best man/Where did you go on honeymoon?

## **Life Events**

- Can you describe any holidays you went on when you were a child?
- What are some of your favourite things (favourite colours, flowers, books, songs)?

## **Pastimes – Sports**

- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- Tell me about the day when my mom/dad was born?
- What makes you happy?
- Have you owned any pets? What was your first pet?
- What is different about growing up today than when you were a child?
- If you could meet anyone from your past, who would it be and why?

## **What's on your Wall?**

Ask you grandparent to walk around their house and describe all the objects and photographs that are on their wall, on mantelpieces etc. Ask them to explain why they are put up there and why they are important?



**Archive** - When you are finished, be sure to label each recording using your grandparent's name and the date of the recording – E.g. *Nora McMahon, 04 April 2020*



**Draw** pictures that you think reflect your grandparent's memories, their house, bedroom, schools etc.



**Write** a short story based on a memory that your grandparent recalled. Allow their memory to be the main storyline but use your imagination to develop the story. Make your grandparents the central characters.



**Compose** a poem based on your grandparent's memories



**Present** a 'This is your Life' to your grandparents when the Coronavirus Crisis is over and you can see them again!

### Note for Parents

Engagement with oral history address the Primary School Curriculum (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class) in the Republic of Ireland and particularly social, environmental and scientific education (SESE). It develops the key skills of investigation as well as addressing the curricular aim of exposing pupils to 'the work of a historian'. It also enables development of the following relevant key skills and concepts; Time and chronology, Change and continuity, Cause and effect, Using evidence, Synthesis and communication. It will also address key strand units including 'myself and my family', 'story', 'life, society, 'culture in the past' and 'continuity and change over time'.

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**Dr. Tomás Mac Conmara** is an award winning oral historian, lecturer and author, whose heritage consultancy has developed national oral history programmes for clients including the Irish Defence Forces, Waterways Ireland, Dublin Port as well as several local authorities around the country.