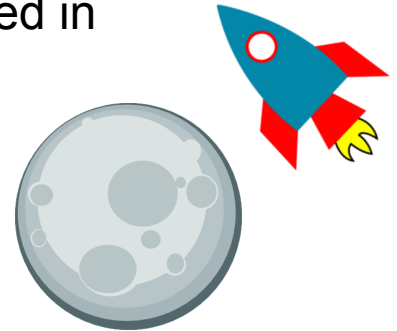


Oral Histories

What is an oral history?

An oral history is a recording of somebody talking about their **personal story**. They are a fantastic way for us to learn more about what happened in the past through the people around us!

We can learn about **what life was like** when they were growing up and their memories of **important events** in history. Such as the Cold War or the moon landings.



Why do we make oral histories?



Oral histories are a chance for us to **ask, learn and record** memories for future generations.

Mums, Dads, Grandparents, even the old lady down the street - all these people have amazing (and sometimes surprising) stories to share.

And best of all, oral histories are **easy to make at home!**
Take a look at our instructions to find out how!

Make your own

Oral history recording!

What you'll need

- ◇ **An interviewee** (the person you'll be interviewing)
- ◇ **Pen and Paper**
- ◇ **A computer or telephone** if you don't live with the person you are interviewing
- ◇ **A recording device** - we use a digital voice recorder at the museum, but you can always use a phone.
- ◇ **Permission** - always make sure you ask before recording someone's memories!



Be prepared!

You want to make the most of your time, so make sure you prepare some questions before you start your interview.

Scribble your questions down on some paper so you don't forget them!

Be safe!

Only do interviews with people you know.

Make sure you have permission from your parent/ guardian **before** you begin!

Top Tips

- ◇ **Do** listen carefully and ask questions based on what you hear.
- ◇ **Do** keep checking your device is recording!
- ◇ **Try not to** interrupt your interviewee when they are answering your question. They might be about to say something interesting!

What questions should I ask?

There are lots of questions you can ask in an oral history—it all depends on what you want to find out!

Here are some ideas to get you started...

Where were you born?

What year were you born in?

What hobbies did you have growing up?

What was your mother/ father's job? What was your school like?

What do you think has changed the most since you were young?

Fancy a challenge?

It can help to have a **topic to focus on** for your oral history. Here are some examples you could use...

We are living through a historic moment right now!

Why not record some of your and your family's experiences? They will be interesting to listen back to in the future—and who knows, maybe museums in the future will want to hear what you have to say!

At Elmbridge Museum we are recording oral histories to celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day (the day the Second World War ended in Europe).

There are lots of people around today with memories of the Second World War. Do you know anybody? Why not see if they would like to you about their memories?

How do museums use oral histories?

At Elmbridge Museum we use oral histories in our exhibitions to help people understand what life was like in the past. Why not take a listen to some of our stories about the Second World War on our [Elmbridge at War webpage!](#)

Here are some ideas for how *you* could use the oral histories you collect...

- ◇ You could use your oral history to **write a story** or **draw a picture** to help you imagine what life was like in the past!



- ◇ Did the person you interviewed talk about something really interesting? You could do a bit of **extra research** and use your oral history to **create a mini exhibition for your family!**

- ◇ Are you a bit of a computer whizz? Why not have a go at **editing your recording** to make it sound like a **real life interview!**



- ◇ **Keep them safe!** Oral histories are an amazing way to **keep people's memories alive**. Just imagine how precious they will be in 50, or even 100 year's time!