

## Some Tips

- ⇒ **Ask easy questions first**, such as brief biographical queries. Ask very personal or emotionally demanding questions after a rapport has developed. End as you began, not with bombshells, but gently with lighter questions.
- ⇒ **Ask for specific examples** if the interviewee makes a general statement and you need to know more.
- ⇒ **Phrase your questions** so that they can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."
- ⇒ **Be a good listener**, using body language such as looking at the interviewee, nodding, and smiling to encourage and give the message, "I am interested."
- ⇒ **Be flexible**. Watch for and pick up on promising topics introduced by the interviewee, even if the topics are not on your interview guide sheet.

## Getting Started

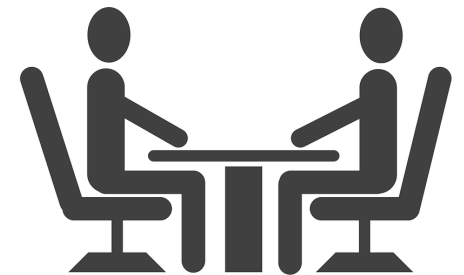
We offer **two types of classes** for getting started with the Memory Lab.

- ◆ Attend a **Demo Class** for information about the Memory Lab and demonstrations on each piece of equipment.
- ◆ Alternatively, check out one of our **Open Lab sessions** to get some hands-on experience converting your personal items!

For information on class dates and times, visit our website at <http://www.alsiplibrary.info/adults/memory-lab> or call 708.926.7024.



## Tips for Conducting Oral History Interviews



ALSIP-MERRIONETTE PARK  
public library district

11960 S. Pulaski Road  
Alsip, Illinois 60803  
(708) 926-7024

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# Icebreaker Questions

- ◆ When and where were you born?
- ◆ What nicknames have you gone by?
- ◆ When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- ◆ What would you describe as the best day of your life?



This brochure outlines some ideas to get you started with your oral history interview. Feel free to use as many or as few of these questions as you wish. They do not need to be asked in any particular order. Remember to be flexible throughout the interview and focus on topics that are interesting to you and your interviewee.

# General Questions

- ◆ Who has been the most important person in your life? Can you tell me about him or her?
- ◆ What one major event shook up your life or opened up new frontiers?
- ◆ Would you describe yourself as an optimist or a pessimist? How do you think your worldview has shaped your life choices?
- ◆ If you had all the time in the world and all the money you needed, what would you do?
- ◆ In what type of landscape do you feel the most at home, comfortable, inspired?
- ◆ What was your proudest moment?
- ◆ How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?
- ◆ How would you like to be remembered?

# Family Questions

- ◆ What is your earliest memory?
- ◆ Where did you grow up? What was your childhood like?
- ◆ Describe a perfect day when you were young.
- ◆ What are your best memories of school? Worst memories?
- ◆ Were you closer to your father or your mother? How did your feelings change over time?
- ◆ Where is your mom's/dad's family from? If you've been there, what was that experience like?
- ◆ What traditions have been passed down in your family?
- ◆ What were some of the best times for your family? The toughest?
- ◆ Who or what is the love of your life?
- ◆ What lessons have you learned from your relationships?