

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

SANKOFA: ORAL HISTORY EXERCISES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS



SANKOFA LEARNING COMPANION
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We are all oral historians by nature. Conversations between children and their family members, community elders, educators and others are excellent opportunities for oral history collection. The next two exercises are designed for youth ages 12 and under to engage with members of their family and community.

Exercise One: What is my family's history?

The definition of family has always had many meanings. A family can contain multiple people, multiple generations, people related through birth and others related through marriage or friendship. Learners can define family in whatever way they choose as they participate in this activity.

Step 1:

- Identify a senior member of your family and let them know that you would like to take some time to ask them questions that will help you get to know them better.
- Set a time for your interview and choose whether you will be performing a face-to-face interview, phone interview or online interview.
- Think of questions you would like to know about your family member. Write them down.

Step 2:

- During the interview, ask questions.
- Examples of topics for questions include: where they were born and raised, how many siblings they have/had, what level of education they completed, where they work/worked, how many children they have/had, what they wanted to be when they became an adult, if they had pets, what they did for fun, any special trips, their favorite childhood toy, their childhood nicknames and friends.

Step 3:

- A teacher, parent or guardian should help the learner save the interview on a computer, tablet, in the cloud or on a phone. If appropriate, consider uploading the interview online so that others can hear the family member's story.





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Activity Two for Young Learners: What is the history of my community?

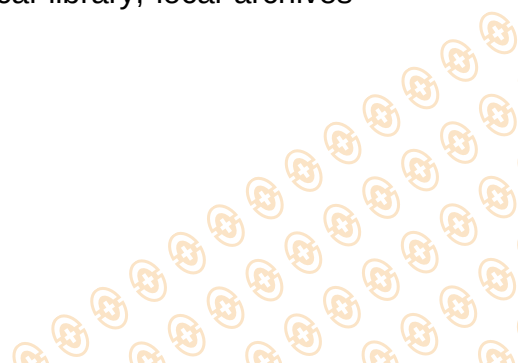
Wouldn't it be great to know how your community developed and what cultural heritage practices exist within it? People in communities often have things in common because of where they live.

The learner will find a community member over the age of 50 to interview that is not within their own family. Follow steps 1–3 in the previous exercise. The interviewer can then ask the following questions (and any additional questions they choose to ask):

- How long has the elder resided in the community?
- What was the neighborhood like when they first moved to the area? Were there more people, less people, more businesses or less?
- Did they attend school in the community? If so, how many schools existed when they were young? Were the schools segregated by gender and/or race?
- Can they remember any historical events that occurred in the community?
- Are there any memorable people that lived in the neighborhood?
- What were most people in the community concerned about when the elder was younger?
- What religious or neighborhood institutions were active in the community?

This can be an individual or group project. A community center or local organization can host the narrators in a space where the interviews can be safely and successfully completed. The youth and narrator can also use a virtual platform that would allow them to see each other and record the interview at the same time.

Consider hosting an online or in-person event to share the results from the project with the community. The interviews can also be donated to the area's local library, local archives office or a nearby museum as an oral history collection.





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Next Steps:

Consider hosting an online or in-person event to share the results from the project with the community.

The interviews can also be donated to the area's local library, local archives office or a nearby museum as an oral history collection.

Lesson By:



Andre L. Taylor

Oral historian at the College of William & Mary
@AndreSpeaking

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