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## Lesson Plan: Through Their Own Words (grades 9-12)

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## **Lesson Plan**

### **Course/Grade Level:**

10<sup>th</sup> Grade American History

### **Topic/Title:**

- Through Their Own Words

### **Historical Time Period(s):**

- 20<sup>th</sup> Century World Changing Events

### **Thematic Question:**

1. By comparing the perspectives from oral interviews with the historical accounts that you have gathered through research, formulate a new critique about the historical event that you have chosen.
2. How will this guide you in your analyses of history and future events?

### **Standards/Benchmarks/Indicators:**

- Social Studies: History
  - 1, F. Identify major historical patterns in the domestic affairs of the United States during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and explain their significance.
- Social Studies: People in Societies
  - 2, A. Analyze the influence of different cultural perspectives on the actions of groups.
  - 2, B. Analyze the consequences of oppression, discrimination and conflict between cultures.
- Social Studies: Citizenship Rights & Responsibilities
  - 6, A. Analyze ways people achieve governmental change, including political action, social protest and revolution.
- Social Studies: Geography
  - 3, B. Analyze geographic changes brought about by human activity using appropriate maps and other geographic data.
- Social Studies: Social Studies Skills & Methods
  - 7, A. Evaluate the reliability and credibility of sources.
  - 7, B. Use data and evidence to support or refute a thesis.

## Materials/Resources:

1. Various resource materials provided by the library and the internet (ABC/Clio)
2. video camera
3. video

## Motivation (Attention Grabber):

- Peer Interviews

## Activities:

1. Peer Interviews:
  - a. Half the students in the class will draw names of the other half to do an interview involving an event in school that had a significant impact on them.
  - b. They will be given a hand out on interview procedures.
  - c. Once interview is completed by one the other student has to then conduct an interview of their partner.
  - d. Based on the information gathered the students must create an introduction statement of their partner.
  - e. Student will introduce each other (will be videotaped).
  - f. This will give them practice for future interviews.
2. Hand out topics for student to explore:
  - a. Great Depression
  - b. World War II
  - c. McCarthy Era
  - d. Birth of television
  - e. Civil Rights Movement
  - f. Korean War
  - g. Vietnam Conflict/War
  - h. Cuban Missile Crisis
  - i. Anti-war protests
  - j. War on Poverty
  - k. Women's Rights Movement
  - l. First Iraq War
  - m. Miscellaneous Event of Significant importance such as: death of JFK, MLK, RBK, Malcolm X
3. Student will select a topic and complete research to the event. Student will be required to write and hand in a 500-700 word essay.
4. Student will make a list of social, economic, and political questions related to the historical event they are interested in.
5. Teacher will assist student as he/she composes open-ended questions for the future interview.
6. Student will need to present a list of people who they would like to interview based on the topic student selected.

7. If a student is unable to produce a list of potential people to interview, teacher will assist student in locating a potential interviewee.
8. Student will be given extra credit if they conduct their interview with their person at Garrett Morgan High School.
9. Once student has interviewed that person, he/she will need to write another 500-700 word fictional essay based on their topic and interviewee.

**Assessment:**

Students will need to:

1. Create interview questions and conduct interview
2. Research and write two essays

*Straight From the Source:*

*Looking at Modern History*

*Through the Eyes of Those Who Have Experienced It*

- ✓ Your task will be to find someone in your family, neighborhood, church, a friend of a friend (or talk to Mrs. Craig/Mr. Garapic for additional assistance) who has experienced or participated in one of the historical topics listed below AND to interview that person for your oral history project.

Great Depression Era

World War II

McCarthy

Birth of television

Civil Rights Movement

Korean War

Vietnam Conflict/War

Cuban Missile Crisis

Anti-war Protests

War on Poverty

Women's Rights Movement

First Iraq War

Miscellaneous Event of Significant Importance such as: deaths of JFK, MLK, RFK, or Malcolm X



- ✓ You have to design questions into three (3) main categories: political, social, and economic.
- ✓ Remember to start off your interview by introducing yourself, why you are asking these questions, and what you intend to do with your interview for your social studies class.
- ✓ Before you start with your questions, get your participant to talk about him/herself and share it with you. You will need to write a brief biography (2-3 paragraphs in length) about the person you are interviewing.
- ✓ After your interview, you will need to hand in to Mrs. Craig/Mr. Garapic a report from your interview. The documentation needs to be 1.5 pages to 3 pages in length, 14 font single-spaced and recap your interview.
- ✓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION: By comparing the perspectives from oral interviews with the historical accounts that you have gathered through research, formulate a new critique about the historical event that you have chosen. How will this guide you in your analyses of history and future events?
- ✓ Remember what we practiced in class!

**Suggestions on How to Conduct an Oral Interview:**

## **Before the Oral History Interview**

1. Ask for the interviewee's permission to record their oral history.
2. Explain the nature of your project and how the narrative will be used in the future.
3. Be sure to research the subject thoroughly BEFORE you conduct the interview. Decide what your goals for the interview are. If you want to know more about your grandmother's day-to-day life during World War II, it may help to brush up on events from the time period to better frame your questions and paint a clearer overall picture of the narrative.
4. Write a list of questions for the interview. You don't have to follow this list exactly. It's perfectly normal when recording oral histories for other questions to occur during the course of the interview. However, it helps to arrive with a prepared list so the interview has some structure.
5. If possible, bring a recording device, such as a voice recorder or video camera, to the interview and test it beforehand to make sure it works properly. Take extra batteries and cassettes, if necessary.

## **Conducting the Oral History Interview**

6. Secure a comfortable location for the oral history interview, away from noise and distractions. You and the interviewee should be the only people in this location.
7. Phrase your questions in an open-ended way, so that the interviewee cannot give simple "yes" or "no" answers. Instead of "Were you scared when Grandpa went overseas to fight in the Navy?" ask, "How did you feel when Grandpa went overseas to fight in the Navy?"
8. Allow the interviewee time to consider each question as it's asked. It may take a few moments for them to recollect certain people or places. If your interviewee is silent during your questions, he/she may be gathering thoughts to respond to your question.
9. Be aware of your interviewee's body language. If you're interviewing an elderly person, they may grow fatigued during the course of the interview, in which case you may want to end early and ask if the interview could be continued at a later time. If your line of questioning makes someone uncomfortable, they may not say anything, even though their body language may indicate how they really feel.

## **Tips for a Successful Oral History Interview**

10. Be aware of your personal appearance on the day of the interview. If you are dressed too casually, you may give the impression that the interview is not that important to you. However, if you are dressed too professionally, it may intimidate some interviewees and cause them to be less than candid in their responses.
11. Be sure to inform the interviewee if you plan to record the interview and in what format. Some people may be perfectly fine with a voice recorder, but uncomfortable in front of a video camera.
12. Improve the results of your oral history interview by sending the interviewee a list of questions and/or subject matter to be covered beforehand. This may help the interviewee prepare by allowing them time to remember events from the distant past that they may not have considered in a long time.

## *PEER INTERVIEW ACTIVITY*

Goal: To give students an opportunity to practice oral interview technique prior to embarking on their interview project.

Prerequisite: Overview of how to conduct an Oral Interview

Time: 80 mins.

Procedure:

- ✓ As the students enter class, they will be given a color card.
- ✓ The teacher will pose this scenario to the class (orally or written):  
“Imagine that you were a news reporter covering special event. Not only do you want to get the facts, but you also want to get the sensory (see, feel, emotion...) perception of the occurrence. In order to achieve this information what type questions do you think need to ask the spectators?”
- ✓ Students will be called on for ideas, while one student jots them down on the board, overhead, etc...
- ✓ As a class we will formulate the ideas into 4-6 open-ended questions.
- ✓ All students will copy the formulated questions.
- ✓ Now students will partner up according to their color cards.
- ✓ Next they will interview each other using the open-ended questions about an event in school that had an impact on their life.
- ✓ Finally they will take the information gathered from the questioning and create a narrative account of the event.