

Family Interview Questions

The following is a list of questions that you can use to write a biography and/or use in an oral history interview. Not all questions will apply to every person. The questions concern personal history and historical events which may have happened during someone's lifetime.

- What is your full name and why were you named it? (Maiden name for females)
- Were you named after someone else?
- Did you have a nickname as you were growing up?
- If you did, what was it and why did they call you that?
- Have you had any other nicknames as an adult?
- What do your family members call you now?
- When and where were you born?
- When were you baptized, and what was your religion?
- What was the religion of your parents and your grandparents?
- What church, if any do you attend?
- Describe your religious belief.
- Do you believe in an after-life?
- Have you ever had an experience that you would consider to be super-natural or psychic?
- Did you ever know something was going to happen before it actually did?
- What was it?
- What do you usually dream about?
- Where was your first home?
- What were your earliest memories of your home?
- your parents?
- your grandparents?
- Could you tell me a story or any memory of your brothers and sisters?
- What did your family do for fun when you were a child?
- Was there a chore you really hated doing as a child?
- What kind of books did you like to read?
- Do you remember having a favorite nursery rhyme or bedtime story?
- What was it?
- Do you remember not having enough food to eat because times were hard for your family?
- What were your favorite toys and what were they like?
- What were your favorite childhood games?
- Were there any fads during your youth that you remember vividly?
- Where did you attend grade school?
- high school?
- What were your schools like?
- How did you like school?
- What was your favorite subject in school and why?
- What subject in school was the easiest for you?
- What was your least favorite subject in school and why?

Who was your favorite teacher and why were they special?
How do your fellow classmates from school remember you best?
Did you get good grades?
Did you like school?
What did you wear to school?
Describe it.
What school activities and sports did you participate in?
Did you and your friends have a special hang-out where you liked to spend time?
Where was it and what did you do there?
Were you ever given any special awards for your studies or school activities?
How many years of education have you completed?
Did you attend any school or training after high school?
Do you have a college degree?
If so what was your field of study?
As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
What was your first job?
How did you decide on a career?
Did you make enough money to live comfortably?
How long did you have to work each day at your job?
How old were you when you retired?
Describe yourself as a young adult.
If you served in the military, when and where did you serve and what were your duties?
Were you ever injured in the line of duty?
What were the circumstances?
How old were you when you started dating?
Do you remember your first date?
Who was your first date?
Could you tell me something about it?
When, where and how did you first meet your present spouse?
Describe them.
Do you remember where you went on the first date with your spouse?
Describe it.
How long did you know them before you got married?
Describe your wedding proposal
Where and when did you get married? (Include date, place, church, etc.)
Describe your wedding ceremony.
Who was there?
Did you have a honeymoon?
Where did you go?
How would you describe your spouse?
What do (did) you admire most about them?
How long have (were) you married?
When and where did your spouse die?
What advice would you give to a grandchild on their wedding day?
How did you find out you were going to be a parent for the first time?

How many children did you have all together?
What were their names, birth dates and birthplaces?
Why did you give them the names that you did?
Do you remember anything that your children did when they were small that really amazed you?
What is one of the most unusual things that one of your children did regularly when they were small?
What was the funniest thing you can remember that one of your children said or did?
If you had to do it all over again, would you change the way you raised your family?
How?
What did you find most difficult about raising children?
What did you find most rewarding about being a parent?
Did you spoil any of your children?
How?
Were you a strict or lenient parent?
Did you find that you had to treat each of your children differently?
If so Why?
How did you feel when the first of your children went to school for the first time?
How did you first hear that you were a grandparent and how did you feel about it?
What advice do you have for our children and grandchildren about being a parent?
Where did your spouse's parents live?
When and where did your parents die? What do you remember about it?
What do you remember about the death of your spouse's parents?
Do you remember hearing your grandparents describe their lives?
What did they say?
Do you remember your great-grandparents?
What do you know about them?
Who was the oldest person you remember as a child?
Did you have any of the childhood diseases?
Do you have any health problems that are considered hereditary?
What are they?
What to you do regularly for exercise?
Do you have any bad habits now or in the past?
What were they?
Have you ever been the victim of a crime?
What happened?
Have you ever been in a serious accident?
Has anyone ever saved your life?
Describe.
Have you ever been hospitalized, If so, What for?
Have you ever had surgery?
What for?

What would you consider the most important inventions made during your lifetime?

Do you remember the first time you saw a television; a car; a refrigerator?

How is the world now different from what it was like when you were a child?

Do you remember your family discussing world events and politics?

How would you describe yourself politically?

Are you Conservative or Liberal and why?

Do you remember what you or your parents thought about income tax when it began in 1913?

Do you remember anything of the days of prohibition?

How did it affect you and yours?

How did the depression affect you?

What US. President have you admired the most and why?

What wars have been fought during your lifetime?

How did you feel about them?

Name a good friend that you have known for the longest period of time?

How many years have you been friends?

Has there ever been anyone in your life that you would consider to be your kindred spirit or soul mate?

Who were they and why did you feel a special bond with them?

What were the hardest choices you ever had to make?

Do you feel like you made the right choices?

Who was the person that really changed the course of your life by something they did?

Who were they and what did they do?

Do you remember someone saying something to you that had a big impact on how you lived your life?

What was it?

If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?

Was the most stressful experience that you ever lived through?

What helped you get through it?

What is the scariest thing that has ever happened to you personally?

What kinds of musical instrument have you learned to play?

Would you consider yourself to be creative?

What things have you made that others have enjoyed?

How would you describe your sense of humor?

What is the funniest practical joke you ever played on someone?

What activities have you especially enjoyed as an adult?

What are your hobbies?

What did you like to do when you were not working?

What is the most amazing thing that has ever happened to you?

Have you ever met any famous people?

Describe what happened.

What organizations or groups have you belonged to?

Have you ever won any special awards or prizes as an adult?

what were they for?

Describe a time and a place you remember feeling truly at peace and happy to be alive?

What is the most beautiful place you have ever visited and what was it like?

What is the longest trip that you have ever gone on?

Where did you go?

What has been your favorite vacation?

Where did you do and why was it special?

What was the favorite place you ever visited and what was it like?

What pets have you had?

Do you have a favorite story about a pet?

Is there anything you have always wanted to do but haven't?

Have you ever been to the world's fair?

What is the single most memorable moment of your life?

What or who is your favorite:

Animal?

Artist?

Athlete?

Author?

Board game?

Book?

Candy?

Card game?

Color?

Cookie?

Drink?

Flavor of ice cream?

Flower?

Fruit?

Holiday?

Meal?

Movie star?

Movie?

Musical group?

Musical instrument?

Painting?

Poem?

Poet?

Restaurant?

Season?

Singer?

Song?

Sport?

Style of music?

Tree?

Tv program?

Vegetable?

If you had to pick a label for your family members (spouse, children, mother, father, brothers, sister...) Who befits the following descriptions?

Animal lover;

Best cook;

Best gardener;

Best housekeeper;

Best looking;

Best memory;

Best story teller;

Biggest tease;

Calmeast;

Funniest;

Hardest worker;

Most athletic;

Most colorful;

Most creative;

Most frugal;

Most generous;

Most mischievous;

Most politically active;

Most reclusive;

Most relaxed;

Most sociable;

Quietest;

Shortest;

Tallest;

Wildest lifestyle;

What has been your greatest new years resolution?

What was your favorite vacation?

Who was your favorite president?

What do you like best about yourself, what are your favorite attributes?

How did you meet your spouse?

How did your spouse propose (ask you to marry him)?

What is your favorite dessert (include the recipe)?

When was your first kiss?

What is your favorite play?

What is your favorite fantasy?

What is the best part of being a parent?

What is your morning ritual?

Who is your role model and why?

What is your biggest accomplishment?

What is your favorite memory of your mother?

What was your favorite college experience?

What is your favorite memory of your father?

What do you look for in a friend?

What do you do to relax?

What was your wedding like?
How do you stay focused?
What is your favorite holiday and why?
What has been your favorite foreign experience?
What was your favorite subject in school?
Do you prefer diamonds or pearls?
What has been the best present you have ever gotten?
If you could pick a career, what would it be?
What are your favorite countries you have been to?
What is your favorite fairy tale?
Are you a night owl or an early bird?
What TV family represents our family?
What are your hobbies?
If you could be anyone . . .who would it be?
What is your favorite season?
Why do you enjoy cooking?
What is your favorite birthday memory?
How do you express yourself best?
What makes our family so special?
What is your favorite animal?
What qualities do you think are important in a woman (or man)?
What is your ultimate dream?
What do you want people to think of you?
Where were you when Kennedy was shot?
What would be your ultimate vacation?
What is your favorite Thanksgiving memory?
What is the best part of being a Grandmother/Grandfather?
What is your favorite book?
What has been your favorite year of your life?
What words of wisdom do you have for me?