Family Interviews

Who makes you matter?

What do you know about your family?

What don’t you know?

Why?

**Due Date: December 1st, 2013**

Process:

1. Go to the project template website (<http://englishclassprojecttemplate.weebly.com>). Go to the family interview page and listen to two or three of the podcasts from NPR’s Story Corps. Listen to the stories that these people tell. On your Family Interview Brainstorming Page, take down notes for potential interview questions from each story. Consider what questions would have to be asked to get these answers. In a way, almost create as many questions as you can that were answered in this interview.
2. Brainstorm a list of four potential people you could interview. They should be connected to your family in some way or actual family members. Consider each person’s willingness to answering questions openly and whether or not they would be open to having the interview recorded. Write down a pros and cons list on who would be the best interviewees. Select your top two. Conduct this on your “Family Interview Brainstorming Page.”
3. Make contact with your top two interviewees and ask them if they would be willing to conduct the interview. If they are willing, establish when and where the interview would take place (consider that Thanksgiving is just around the corner). If they are not willing to interview, move to the next person on your list.
4. Once you have established who you want to interview, start drafting your interview questions. Tailor each set of interview questions to fit each person you are planning to interview. You should have at least ten questions for each interviewee.
5. Conduct the interview and record it somehow. Do not be afraid to go off script. Be flexible to the situations that arise during the interview. Type up your interview is transcript format. For example:

Interviewee #1: My Mother, Mary Rutherford

Mr. Rutherford: Why did you decide to move from North Dakota to San Diego?

Mom: Your father said he was moving to San Diego to go to law school. He asked me to marry him, and I told him I would think about it. He sadly told me that he would be going whether or not I said yes. I couldn’t stand the thought of being without him, so two days later I said yes, and we moved to San Diego so your father could pursue his law career.

1. Write a reflection of the interview and what you learned during the interview. What questions worked really well and why? What questions needed improvement and why? What did you learn about your family that you did not know before? How has your life been similar or different to that of the people you interviewed? What are some insights or answers did you find to the S-DQ and the questions above? This should be typed at the after the transcript of your second interview.

**Once you have created your interview questions, use the three point test for interview questions stated on the backside of this page**

**Three-Point-Test for Interview Questions**

**1.) Check for any “yes or no” questions. Some Y/N questions can easily be transformed into more open ended questions by changing a few words (often the first words in the sentence).**

**2.) Check your ratio of short-answer to long-answer questions. There should be a good balance (5 to 5 is acceptable, 3 to 7 is better). Strive for questions that elicit storytelling with specific details of past events and lives. If your ratio is too heavy on the short-answer side you will need to change it. You can likely transform some short-answer questions into longer-answer questions by adding something to the questions or by changing a few key words.**

**3.) Check for overly-broad questions. Do you have any questions that look like these? How was your childhood? How was your life? These questions are so wide open that they are difficult to answer. You could write an entire book trying to answer one; or you could just say, “My childhood was pretty good,” leaving your interviewer with little information. Make the question more specific to help your interviewee arrive at an answer, and to elicit a detailed answer.**

**\*\*\*\*\*A GOOD WAY TO TEST THIS IS BY ASKING SOME OF YOUR GROUPMATES YOUR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND LISTENING TO THE RESPONSES YOU RECEIVE. If they are confused by the question or their answers are too short, you probably need to change the question.\*\*\*\*\***