

CONVERSATIONS THROUGH HISTORY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will contribute to the collection and preservation of WWII veteran stories while learning the history of the war through veterans' first hand accounts. Students will learn to plan and conduct an oral history interview, develop interviewing skills, and understand how to use various technologies including camcorders, recorders, transcribing machines, scanners, editing software, and CD/DVD burners.

LESSON OVERVIEW

STUDENTS WILL

- ✓ Watch a video to learn about the Veterans Oral History Project
- ✓ View living history interviews and complete a living history interview analysis
- ✓ Work in groups to conduct their own Veteran History Interviews to be submitted to the Library of Congress Veterans History Project

VIDEO SYNOPSIS

High School history teacher Bridget Federspiel talks about why it's more important than ever to record WWII veterans' stories and explains the steps to get started with living history interviews. Also, high school students and a WWII veteran share their experiences with the interview process. Students will then view six 1-4 minute video interviews with local WWII veterans.

TEACHER OVERVIEW

World War II was the most widespread and destructive war in human history, and for those who lived through the 1930s and 1940s, few remained untouched. Countless books, publications, documentaries, and films have been made about the war. Yet, there are stories that have yet to be uncovered. One way to get at these stories is to talk to survivors, people who were there and remember what happened. We can do this through oral history interviews. Oral History or Living History Interviews use interview methods for historical inquiry. Living survivors of a specific time or event are asked about their experiences and memories in a systematic way; their interviews are recorded, and later transcribed.

The interviews are primary sources that can help bring history to life for students, as well as preserve these stories for future generations. Interviews can be conducted with anyone who has memories of the particular time or event. As there are fewer members of the WWII generation with every day that passes, it is more important than ever to collect their stories while we still have the opportunity.

One way students can get involved in helping to collect and preserve the stories of World War II veterans is by contributing to the Library of Congress Veterans Oral History Project. In 2000, the United States Congress created the Veterans History Project. The mission of the Veterans History Project is to collect and archive the personal recollections of U.S. wartime veterans to honor their service and share their stories with current and future generations. The Project also collects stories from home front civilians whose work supported the armed forces. Through this lesson your students will learn valuable historical skills and make an important contribution to the body of first-hand accounts of WWII.

CONVERSATIONS THROUGH HISTORY

MATERIALS

LCD Projector	Printer
Internet Access	Scanner (optional)
Camcorder	Video Editing Software
Tape Recorder	Blank CDs and DVDs
Computer	Transcriber (optional)

OHIO ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

Grade 9-10

History

- e. Analyze connections between World War II, the Cold War and contemporary conflicts.
- f. Identify major historical patterns in the domestic affairs of the US during the 20th century and explain their significance

Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities

- b. Explain how individual rights are relative, not absolute, and describe the balance between individual rights, the rights of others, and the common good.

Social Studies Skills and Methods

- a. Evaluate the reliability and credibility of sources.

Grades 11-12

History

Use historical interpretations to explain current issues

Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities

- a. Evaluate the various means for citizens to take action on a particular issue.
- b. Explain how the exercise of a citizen's rights and responsibilities helps to strengthen a democracy.

Social Studies Skills and Methods

- d. Work in groups to analyze an issue and make decisions.

Note: The lesson ties into particular aspects of World War II and other conflicts in the 20th century.

In addition, several technological standards are present. Consult the Technological Standards provided by the Ohio Department of Education.

CONVERSATIONS THROUGH HISTORY

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE AND CORE ACTIVITIES

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT GUIDED VIEWING

1. Explain to students that in math class students learn to be mathematicians and in science class students conduct experiments just as scientists do. In history class, students can “conduct” history just like historians do. Historians collect, record, and interpret past events by analyzing a variety of primary and secondary sources.
2. Now, describe Living History interviews and the Veterans History Project from the Library of Congress. Then let students know that they will be conducting a veteran interview as part of a class assignment and will view a brief video to introduce them to the project.
3. Play the short video *Veterans History Project* from **Disk 2** for the class. Have students read the questions found on the **Veterans History Project Guided Viewing** worksheet and take notes while they watch the video (if necessary students should complete the short answer questions for homework.) For homework, assign students to research Iwo Jima and write a half page summary of the battle.

LEARNING FROM INTERVIEWS

1. Begin by discussing what the students learned about Iwo Jima during their research. Ask students if this information changes their perception of the Charles Baker interview they viewed the preceding day. Collect the summaries students completed for homework.
2. Next distribute copies of the **Living History Interview Analysis Worksheet**.
3. Now, show the students an example of a Veterans History Interview and play the interview clip *Charles Baker: Iwo Jima* from **Disk 2** and have students complete the accompanying **Living History Interview Analysis Worksheet**.
4. Continue to analyze the remaining interviews as a class. You may wish to view all of the videos in one to two class periods or use the interviews to introduce a WWII topic. For example, if you are teaching about Pearl Harbor, you may wish to introduce the subject by playing the interview with Frank Ruby, a Navy sailor and survivor of the Pearl Harbor attack.

VETERAN HISTORY PROJECT (TEACHER PREPARATION)

1. For the culminating project, students will work in groups of 3-4 to conduct oral history interviews with people who served in WWII. Begin by viewing the video *The War: Exploring Your Local History – Veterans History Project* for an introduction to collecting and conducting veteran history interviews. You will hear from a teacher, a WWII veteran, and students about the interview process and what they gained from conducting the interviews.
2. Next, visit the **Veterans History Project Web site** (www.loc.gov/vets/) and become familiar with information concerning the background of the project. The site is a great source for examples to share with the students. As an additional resource, you may also wish to contact the LOC Veterans History Project to obtain an *Introduction to Interviewing Veterans* DVD that the Library will send along with a project kit.

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3. Download *The War* Veterans History Project **Field Guide** at <http://www.loc.gov/vets/thewar.html>. This guide, created by the Library of Congress *Veterans Oral History Project* for Ken Burns *The War* series contains a step by step procedure for collecting and conducting oral histories with veterans.
4. Next, gather equipment for the project including camcorder, tape cassette recorder, digital camera, CD/DVD burner, and scanner. Though a transcribing machine is helpful, it is not necessary. Students can transcribe from a tape cassette recorder or by watching the DVD on a computer. You may wish to look for used equipment and there are often technology grants available for which you can apply to support the purchase of several pieces of equipment. Some students may have their own camcorders and equipment to use.
5. Create a 3 ring binder for the students to sign up for the equipment. Explain that the students must return the equipment promptly, usually within 24 hours so that other groups may use it. Explain to the students that they are responsible for the equipment in case of theft and damage.
6. Before the lesson, it is necessary to have a collection of veterans to assign to students who are unable to find a veteran to interview. Contact your local American Legions and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFWs). Place an announcement at local library bulletin boards or in local church bulletins. **Page 6** of the LOC's Veterans History Project **Field Guide** lists a number of organizations that represent veterans. Organizations such as museums often have connections with seniors either through their collection areas or as volunteers. You may also contact these organizations to help locate people who would like to share their memories.

CONDUCTING AND PRESERVING VETERAN HISTORY INTERVIEWS (INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE)

1. Using an LCD projector, show the Library of Congress Veterans History Project Web site. Read the background information to the students about the purpose of the project. Inform students that they will be conducting their own veterans history interviews to be submitted to the site.
2. Ask the students if they know of any veterans whose service fits into the time periods outlined on the Web site. (Explanation of the various time periods may need to be given) For this project, students should attempt to locate a World War II veteran.
3. Have students form groups of 3-4. Distribute copies of the **Veterans History Project Checklist** as well as copies of the **Field Guide** downloaded from the LOC Web site to the groups. Share the rubric with the students so they know the expectations for a particular grade.
4. Once students have located a veteran and arranged an interview, they should use the questions on page 8 of the field guide to help prepare their interviews. Students should obtain biographical data from the interviewee to help write their questions.
5. Students should take time to practice setting up and using the equipment prior to the interview. They may sign out classroom equipment, or use their own. Interview equipment and guidelines are detailed on pages 12-14 of the **Field Guide**. Students should also keep in mind that many of the people who lived through WWII may have difficulty traveling and may need to make arrangements with their teacher or parents to meet the interviewee. Students' first priority should be the convenience and comfort of the interviewee.
6. Students should obtain the release form included in the **Field Guide** as they will be submitting the interview to the Veterans History Project for preservation. Using the **Living History Interview Analysis Worksheet** as a guide, each group will present and summarize their interview for the rest of the class and share what they think makes the story important.

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ANSWER KEY

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT GUIDED VIEWING

1. The teacher thinks that it is important to collect and record veterans stories now while we have the chance because they are dying at about 1500 a day. Once a veteran has passed away their story is lost.
2. Charles Baker is a local WWII veteran.
3. Charles served in the Marines.
4. Charles served at Iwo Jima.
5. Charles thinks it is important to collect veteran interviews because he does not want people to forget what service people did and the sacrifices they made.
6. Locate veterans; practice using the equipment; practice interviewing in class; set up interview; transcribe interview; send the interview to the Library of Congress.
7. The students thought that the interview experience helped bring history to life. It made history seem more real and easy to understand.
8. The interviews become a permanent online record at the Library of Congress and are accessible to the public.

LEARNING FROM INTERVIEWS

Review and discuss answers as a class; answers will vary based on interview.

CONDUCTING AND PRESERVING VETERAN HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Refer to the Veteran History Project Checklist to guide grading.



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VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT EVALUATION RUBRIC

Student Names: _____

Name of Veteran interviewed _____

** required document for LOC*

A – (100-90 points)

- ___ Recorded video interview of veteran*
- ___ Completed biographic data sheet for veteran*
- ___ Release form signed by veteran*
- ___ Release form signed by student*
- ___ Typed transcript of interview (free of spelling errors), saved electronically
- ___ Video Recording Log*
- ___ Photograph of veteran (current)
- ___ Photograph Log completed for all photographs
- ___ Return “additional information” sheet from veteran (how many copies does the veteran want of his interview?)

B – (89-80)

- ___ Recorded video interview of veteran*
- ___ Completed biographic data sheet for veteran*
- ___ Release form signed by veteran*
- ___ Release form signed by student*
- ___ Typed transcript of interview (few errors) saved electronically
- ___ Video Recording Log*
- ___ Return “additional information” sheet from veteran (how many copies does the veteran want of his interview?)

C – (79-70)

- ___ Recorded video interview of veteran*
- ___ Completed biographic data sheet for veteran*
- ___ Release form signed by veteran*
- ___ Release form signed by student*
- ___ Typed transcript of interview (many errors) saved electronically
- ___ Video Recording Log*

D – (69-60)

- ___ Recorded video interview of veteran*
- ___ Completed biographic data sheet for veteran*
- ___ Release form signed by veteran*
- ___ Release form signed by student*
- ___ Video Recording Log*

Comments:

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Student Name:

Date:

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT GUIDED VIEWING

Instructions: Use complete sentences to answer the questions below.

1. According to the teacher interviewed in the video, why is it important to collect WWII veteran stories?

2. Who is Charles Baker?

3. In what branch of service did Charles Baker serve?

4. *Where* did Charles Baker serve during the War?

5. Why does Charles think it is important to collect veteran stories?

6. List five things you should do to prepare for conducting a veteran interview..

7. What did the students think about the experience of conducting veteran interviews?

8. How do the veteran interviews become part of history when they are submitted to the Library of Congress?

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Student Name:

Date:

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT GUIDED VIEWING

Instructions: Take notes as you watch Living History Interviews, then answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. What is the name of the person being interviewed?

2. Where is this person from or from where was the story collected?

3. What was this person's role during the war?

4. Where did this person live during the war or where were they stationed?

5. If known, how old was this person during the war? Were they an adult or child?

6. What stood out about their experience to you

7. What did you learn about the War from listening to this story that you did not know before?

8. Is there something that makes the experience of this person unique or does their experience in some way represent the general experience of a wider group of people?
(e.g. mothers of soldiers, children, minorities, etc.)

9. What is different about hearing and seeing a person tell about their experience versus reading about it in a book or online?

10. Why must you take into consideration point of view, bias, and accuracy when analyzing Living History Interviews

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Student Name:

Veteran Name:

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT CHECKLIST

Final Project Checklist

- ___ All paperwork, including release form, is submitted and completed correctly, and on time.
- ___ Videotape of interview (either VHS, digital, Mini DV or DVD)
- ___ Audio tape of interview (audio cassette or CD – Do Not Use Micro cassettes)
- ___ Transcript of interview (on disc/CD/flash drive) – free of errors
- ___ Collection of photographs, maps, certificates, etc (high quality copies)

Step by Step Checklist

Check off each item on the checklist as your group completes them.

- Step 1** ___ Students will form groups and locate a veteran to interview
- Step 2** ___ Set up a time to meet with the veteran and give him/her the paperwork that needs to be completed. Also, give the veteran a copy of possible questions to help him/her remember his experiences.
- Step 3** ___ Practice using the equipment and setting up for the interview.
- Step 4** ___ Sign up for use of the equipment.
- Step 5** ___ Interview the veteran. Make sure to take a current photograph of the veteran. Make copies of any photographs, certificates, etc. Make sure to write down (Photograph log) a caption of the photograph. Scan pictures into class computer
- Step 6** ___ Return all equipment to the teacher. Remember someone else has signed out the equipment for the next day.
- Step 7** ___ Transcribe the audio cassette interview. Give the teacher the video DV and burn to DVD. Burn DVDs for veteran.
- Step 8** ___ Return original photographs to the veteran along with DVDs. Remember to contact the veteran and let him/her know how the project is going.
- Step 9** ___ After the project is completed, give copies of the interview (either DVD or VHS tape) to the veteran along with a thank you note. The originals will be sent, via UPS, to the Library of Congress by your teacher.