

Historical Enquiry Literacy Lesson Plan

- 1) Explain to the group that they are going to be using their developing literacy skills to find out about the past in the local area.
- 2) Begin by asking the group how we know about things that happened in the past. Ask for suggestions, and write these down on a flip chart. For example:

memories, stories, photographs, what other people say.

- 3) Here are some other ideas of ways to find out about the past, to suggest to the group:

- Talking to relatives
- Census returns
- Birth Certificates
- Books
- Newspaper Reports
- Maps
- Letters/writing
- Objects in a museum
- Photos
- Paintings

Discuss this list with the group, and talk about the meanings of any words they are unsure of. Add some of these suggestions to your flip chart.

- 4) Explain to the group that they are going to begin to find out about the past through oral history. Explain what oral history is:

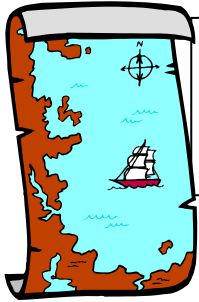
Oral history involves interviewing people about their memories of the past, and usually recording their answers onto a cassette or minidisk. When you do an oral history interview, the purpose is to find out as much as possible from the memories of the person you are interviewing.

- 5) Explain to the group that it is important to ask open questions when doing an oral history interview. Open questions are questions that you cannot just answer 'yes' or 'no' to.
- 6) Hand out the '**What kind of questions should I ask?**' activity sheet. Ask your group to work in pairs to complete this sheet. Give them a few minutes, then discuss the answers as a group.
- 7) Explain to the group that we are going to practice oral history questions on each other, before doing an oral history interview for real.
- 8) Hand out the '**Sample question sheet**' handouts - one sheet between 2. Ask the group to interview each other in pairs - one person to ask questions and one to answer them. Time them for about 3 minutes.
- 9) Ask the group how they found that. Was it more difficult than expected? Was it enjoyable? Give out the '**Quick quiz - how did you do?**' handout. Explain that this is just a fun quiz to see how well they were communicating with each other. Ask the group to complete this quiz in their pairs, and work out their marks.
- 10) Discuss the answers to the quick quiz - what could interviewers improve for next time?

What kind of questions should I ask?

Some questions only need a "Yes" or "No" answer. This isn't very helpful for oral history. You need questions which help people to talk freely.

Each pair of questions underneath is similar but which question do you think will help you to get as much information as possible?



- 1a) Did you grow up in Rotherham?
- 1b) Can you tell me about where you grew up?

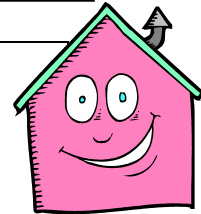


- 2a) Did your father have a job?
- 2b) Where did your father work?



- 3a) Did your mother work?
- 3b) Tell me about your mother - what did she do?

- 4a) Did you live in a house?
- 4b) What kind of house were you brought up in?



- 5a) Did you have lots of friends?
- 5b) What can you tell me about your friends when you were young?

The most helpful questions are: a or b

- 1:
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Sample Question Sheet for Oral History

Growing up and the Family

Could you please start by telling me your name and when and where you were born?

Tell me something about your early childhood.

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

What did your father do for a living?

What about your mother?

Thank you very much

Sample Question Sheet for Oral History

Wash day

Did your mother have a wash day?

How did she organise clothes to be washed?

Go through the washing day with me. What did she do?

What time did she start and finish?

Thank you

Sample Question Sheet for Oral History

Television

When did you first see television?

What was on?

What was your favourite program when you were younger and why?

What is your favourite program today?

Thank you

Sample Question Sheet for Oral History

Growing up and houses

What kind of house were you brought up in?

How many rooms were there?

What was the layout of the house like?

How were the rooms lit?

Tell me about the toilet facilities?

Do you prefer where you live today? Why?

Thank you

Sample Question Sheet for Oral History

Growing up and play

Where did you like to go to play?

Tell me about your friends?

Did you have a best friend?

What was your favourite game?

Do you have one clear memory of growing up that stands out for you?

Thank you

Quick Quiz - How did you do?

Did you?

- Listen carefully
- Show interest in what the interviewee was saying
- Thank the interviewee for their help
- Use follow up questions to find out more about something the interviewee had told you.
- Ask the interviewee to explain anything you did not understand.

You get two points for every box you have ticked.

Did you?

- Interrupt the interviewee.
- Make comments that were not to do with the interview.
- Fidget or look bored.
- Let the interview side-track onto something not relevant.
- Ask more than one question at the same time.
- Talk for a long time yourself.

You lose one point for every box you have ticked.

Grand Total: