



Story
Corps[®]

**THE *Great*
THANKSGIVING LISTEN**

TEACHER TOOLKIT

2021

WITH SUPPORT FROM

Morgan Stanley



Fetzer Institute



Dear Teachers and Families,

It's my pleasure to welcome you to the seventh annual Great Thanksgiving Listen.

At StoryCorps, we believe that sharing humanity's stories deepens our collective empathy and connection. Since 2015, as part of The Great Listen, thousands of students have engaged in an intergenerational interview with a loved one. With your support, this initiative has grown tremendously, with the goal of cultivating a sense of deep listening, compassion, and justice in the next generation.



While many students are back in school this fall, the pandemic has continued to disrupt our lives and create a sense of uncertainty. During these challenging times, it's especially important to foster listening and connection between young people and their elders. Our tools allow students to record rich and meaningful interviews, whether virtually or in person. Using videoconference technology, StoryCorps Connect allows users to record interviews remotely, while the StoryCorps App enables in-person recording.

You will find information on these resources and more in our current toolkit. While we encourage educators to introduce this project at least two weeks prior to Thanksgiving, we also welcome you to adapt these resources in whatever way best suits the needs of your students. Adding The Great Listen to your classroom curriculum allows students to gain critical skills through listening and engaging with a loved one in an intentional and powerful way.

Here are some tips on how to use this toolkit:

- ➔ **Go digital.** Access this toolkit along with a complete library of stories and videos at thegreatlisten.org or on our online learning platform.
- ➔ **Explore our collection.** Invite students to find their own examples of great edited clips and animations in the "stories" section of storycorps.org and thousands of unedited full-length stories at archive.storycorps.org. Students can search by location, themed collection, or keyword.
- ➔ **Go virtual.** This year, students who are far from their families or elders can participate in a recording virtually via our StoryCorps Connect platform and their corresponding user accounts at archive.storycorps.org.
- ➔ **Create a Community.** Create a Community Page for your classroom on archive.storycorps.org where you can collect your students' stories in one place, create custom question lists, track interview progress, and easily host a listening party post-Thanksgiving weekend.

If you'd like to hear from fellow educators or share your own experiences and tips for The Great Listen, visit the [StoryCorps in the Classroom Facebook group](#).

The Great Listen highlights the importance of intergenerational listening and preserving the stories and histories of our communities. Thank you for your support and participation!

Warm regards,

Dave Isay | President and Founder, StoryCorps



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW OF TOOLKIT CONTENTS	1
LESSON PLAN	2
Participating in The Great Thanksgiving Listen	2
Objectives & Materials	3
Part I: About StoryCorps / Why Do Stories Matter?	4
Part II: Great Interviews / Great Questions	6
Part III: Conduct an Interview	8
Part IV: Closing / Debrief	9
Ways to Use StoryCorps in Your Classroom	10
FAST FACTS & BACKGROUND	11
About The Great Thanksgiving Listen	11
About StoryCorps, StoryCorps App, & Archive	12
Fast Facts & Privacy Settings	13
SPONSORS & PARTNERS	15
HANDOUTS FOR STUDENTS	16



WELCOME TO THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN 2021!

We can't create a culture of listening without the help of parents and educators like you. In this toolkit, you will find everything you need to bring StoryCorps to your classroom, including:

- ✓ **A LESSON PLAN**, COMPLETE WITH STUDENT WORKSHEETS
- ✓ **PERMISSION SLIPS**
- ✓ **SUGGESTED STORYCORPS STORIES** FOR LISTENING AND VIEWING
- ✓ **TIPS** ON HOW TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW
- ✓ **GREAT QUESTIONS** TO ASK
- ✓ **MORE WAYS** TO USE STORYCORPS IN YOUR CLASSROOM BEYOND AN INTERVIEW
- ✓ **FAST FACTS** ABOUT STORYCORPS' PRIVACY POLICY

If you have any general feedback or stories of success, please reach out to us at contactus@storycorps.org. We would love to hear from you.



LESSON PLAN

LESSON PLAN

PARTICIPATING IN THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN

For this project, students will learn about the importance of storytelling and use StoryCorps to record an interview with an elder or another member of their family or community.

Storytelling and the gift of listening are critical skills for young people. This project offers the opportunity for young people to honor someone in their lives with an interview. They can spend 40 minutes with a grandparent, a sibling, a mentor, or a friend, asking important questions and listening carefully to their answers.

We invite you to adapt these resources in whatever way best suits the needs of your students. We recommend introducing the project at least two weeks prior to Thanksgiving to provide time for students to plan their interviews and practice using StoryCorps Connect or the App.



Join our [StoryCorps in the Classroom](#) Facebook group to share examples of how you will use The Great Listen in your classroom and to hear from other educators who are doing the same.



OBJECTIVES & MATERIALS

OBJECTIVES

- **LEARN** about StoryCorps and the interview concept
- **ASK QUESTIONS** to develop a story and express a shared experience
- **CREATE** a primary source using technology (and have the option to enter it into the historical record)
- **WRITE** archive-quality titles, summaries, and keywords

TARGET GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

TIME NEEDED

- **2-5 hours** working with an educator. Most parts of the lesson can be structured for in-class or at-home assignments.
- **1-3 hours** working independently. Students will conduct their interviews (5-40 minutes) at home or in a location convenient for the student and their partner

MATERIALS

- ✓ Internet access (at home or in classroom)
- ✓ To record with someone in the same room: Use the StoryCorps App, downloaded to an Android device, iPhone, or Kindle tablet.
- ✓ To record with someone in another location: Use StoryCorps Connect on a computer or tablet.
- ✓ A free StoryCorps Archive account
- ✓ Student worksheets
- ✓ Permission slips (optional)

This assignment is for children 13 and older. Under the [StoryCorps platform terms of use](#), children under the age of 13 may not create an account, and parental consent is required for people under the age of 18 to register for a StoryCorps account, record, and share an interview. You can find a sample permission slip in the back of this toolkit to get additional parental permission for any students participating in the interview.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Meaningful conversations stem from asking great questions. Use our Food for Thought suggestions throughout this lesson plan or think of your own.



PART I: ABOUT STORYCORPS / WHY DO STORIES MATTER?

Introduce students to StoryCorps and discuss the importance of sharing and listening to stories. Use a selection of the following videos, animations, podcasts, and the StoryCorps mission statement.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What is a story in your family or community that feels important to preserve right now? What makes that story valuable?

STORYCORPS' MISSION IS TO PRESERVE AND SHARE HUMANITY'S STORIES IN ORDER TO BUILD CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND CREATE A MORE JUST AND COMPASSIONATE WORLD.

Share these intergenerational stories with your students as inspiration. Consider using the provided prompts for class discussion or individual reflection.

STORYCORPS CLASSICS

["AN INTRO TO STORYCORPS FROM OUR FOUNDER DAVE ISAY"](#) (3 MIN.)

["EYES ON THE STARS"](#) (3 MIN.)

["THE ICING ON THE CAKE"](#) (3 MIN.)

["NO MORE QUESTIONS"](#) (4 MIN.)

["SILVIA'S LEGACY"](#) (2.5 MIN.)

["CLEAN STREETS"](#) (3 MIN.)



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What can you learn by listening to someone else's story?

ABOUT THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN

[DAVE ISAY'S 2016 TED TALK](#) (8 MIN.)

[DAVE ISAY'S 2015 TED TALK](#) (22 MIN.)

[THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN PODCAST](#) (21 MIN.)

FURTHER INSPIRATION

["THE TEMPLE OF KNOWLEDGE"](#) (2.5 MIN.)

["MY FATHER, THE GIANT"](#) (2 MIN.)

["MI ABUELA PANCHITA"](#) (2 MIN.)

["DOUBLE MAJOR"](#) (2.5 MIN.)

["A LIFE WORTH LIVING"](#) (3 MIN.)

["LEADING THE WAY"](#) (2.5 MIN.)



DISCUSSION PROMPTS



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF STORIES IN OUR LIVES? WHY ARE STORIES IMPORTANT?



WHAT QUESTIONS ELICIT COMPELLING STORIES? CAN YOU SHARE AN EXAMPLE FROM ONE OF THESE STORIES?



WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT LESSONS YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM AN ELDER OR A MENTOR IN YOUR OWN LIFE?

We put together these stories as a starting point, but as a follow-up or in place of this suggested list, invite students to explore storycorps.org or archive.storycorps.org and search by location, themed collection, or keyword.



PRO TIP: All videos and content in this toolkit can be found at thegreatlisten.org.



PRO TIP: Have you explored our online learning platform yet? StoryCorps DIY has our complete educational offerings, including this toolkit.



PART II: GREAT INTERVIEWS / GREAT QUESTIONS

Prepare students to conduct great interviews by identifying an interview partner, selecting and asking “Great Questions,” and creating thoughtful titles, summaries, and keywords to aid future historians and researchers.

Students can use the [Interview Planning Worksheet](#) to prepare questions so they are ready to go on interview day.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What’s one interviewing skill you’ll make sure to remember when you’re conducting your own interview? Why is that one important?

- Distribute the [Make History with StoryCorps](#) handout as an overview of the project for students and as a reference for their recording partners.
- Help students to choose an appropriate interview partner. Ask your students with whom they would like to record for this assignment and why. Students should think about an elder or community member whom they would want to honor with an interview. Some helpful questions to ask your students:
 - Who is one person in your life you would like to learn more about?
 - Who in your life might find this type of recording meaningful?
 - What stories or memories are important for you to preserve at this time?
- Prepare students for their interviews by making a plan for interview day and identifying great questions to ask. We have three different tools to support this:
 - Great Questions Generator in the StoryCorps App
 - [Great Questions](#) handout
 - [Interview Planning Worksheet](#)
- Students between 13 and 18 years old should register for their own StoryCorps account, with parent/guardian consent. You can find a sample permission slip at the back of this toolkit.
- Students will need to reach out to their recording partner in advance to plan a date and time for their interview. When contacting their recording partners, students should describe The Great Listen and provide a few sample questions to let their partners prepare for the upcoming interview.
 - If recording in person, students can use the StoryCorps App.
- Students recording with someone in another location can record via [StoryCorps Connect](#). They will need to ensure that their interview partner also has access to an internet connection and a computer, tablet, or other device.
- Learn how to use StoryCorps Connect or the StoryCorps App by practicing in class. You can find additional resources on the App [here](#) and information on StoryCorps Connect [here](#).
- Emphasize the importance of creating a thoughtful interview title, summary, and set of keywords (after recording) by reviewing the [Keywording 101](#) handout.









FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How can you show that you’re truly listening to the person you’re interviewing?



INTERVIEW PRACTICE ACTIVITY (IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL)

→ Watch the animated videos below.

-  [“Q and A”](#) (4 min.)
-  [“Four Tips for an Effective Interview”](#) (2 min.)
-  [“Tips for Active Listening”](#) (4 min.)
-  [“The StoryCorps App: A Recipe for Success”](#) (1 min.)
-  [“How to Use the StoryCorps App”](#) (2 min.)
-  [“How to Use StoryCorps Connect”](#) (1.5 min.)



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How do you feel when you think about conducting your own interview? Nervous? Confident? Excited? Why?

→ Pair students up randomly and designate one as partner A and the other as partner B.

→ Using the Great Question Generator in the StoryCorps App, at archive.storycorps.org, or the [Great Questions](#) [handout](#), instruct each student to select 3–4 questions to ask their interview partner.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What's an example of a great follow-up question?






→ Have each pair record a test interview. If recording in person, they can use the StoryCorps App. If your classroom is meeting remotely, ask students to record in pairs using StoryCorps Connect.

→ Remind students to use the skills they learned in the videos and to ask follow-up questions (e.g., Can you tell me more about that? Why do you think that happened? What do you mean by that?).

→ Practice interviewing! Partner A should start by asking questions to partner B. Switch after 3–5 minutes: Partner B asks questions of partner A.

DEBRIEF

Facilitate a short discussion using the following prompts:

-  What is one thing your partner did during the interview that was effective?
-  What challenges or surprises did you encounter during your interview, and how did you work to address them?
-  What is the significance of what you talked about during your interview?
-  What is one thing from this practice interview that you want to remember for when you conduct your interview over Thanksgiving?
-  Do you have any questions about using the App or StoryCorps Connect?



PRO TIP: Use this opportunity for students to practice recording directly in the app or with someone in another location via StoryCorps Connect, then ask them to enter a title, summary, and keywords and to upload their interviews to your classroom “Community” on archive.storycorps.org.



PART III: CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

Now that students are familiar with StoryCorps Connect and the StoryCorps App, and know how to be great interviewers and listeners, they are ready to record!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Imagine you're the one being interviewed. What questions would you like to be asked? Why?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

While conducting your interview, do you think any difficult topics might come up? If so, what makes them difficult? Make a plan for working through them.

- Use the [Recipes for Success on Interview Day](#) handout as a take-home resource for students.
- Assign students to conduct their interview over Thanksgiving weekend. Remind them to make a plan with their recording partner in advance.
- A complete interview requires the names of the people participating in the interview, the location where the interview took place, a photo, a title, a summary, and keywords.
- Following the interview, students should add keywords, an updated title, and an extended summary to their interview on the StoryCorps App or by logging in to their StoryCorps account from a computer, classroom tablet, or other device.
- With their recording partner, students should discuss privacy preferences for their interview before uploading it to the StoryCorps Archive.
 - Students should familiarize themselves with the three settings available to them and their partner, which can be found on the [Recipes for Success on Interview Day](#) handout.
 - Students who publish their interviews should email teachers the link to the interview.



PRO TIP: There are lots of ways to participate in this project. If a student does not have access to an internet connection or a device, does not have parent/guardian permission, or does not wish to share their interview via the StoryCorps Archive, they can still complete the project using any digital recorder, or they can conduct an unrecorded interview. They should still use the worksheets and, to complete the assignment, turn in a proposed title, summary, keywords, and length of time for their interview.



PART IV: CLOSING/DEBRIEF

After everyone has had a chance to record an interview, take some time to debrief as a group. Facilitate a discussion among students using the questions below. Consider having each student write a brief reflection about the experience using these prompts:

- ? How did your partner react to the interview experience?
- ? How did you feel as an interviewer? What challenges or surprises did you encounter, and how did you work to address them?
- ? Did you have the chance to go “off script” and ask a follow-up question? If so, what question did you ask, and how did that change your interview?
- ? What question evoked a particularly memorable response?
- ? What did you learn that changed the way you previously thought about an event, person, or your recording partner?
- ? What makes an interview different from a text as a historical reference?
- ? What could future historians learn from listening to your interview?
- ? What would you do differently if you were to conduct another interview?
- ? Who else in your life would you like to interview? Why?





ADDITIONAL WAYS TO USE STORYCORPS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- **Write** a reflection paper, a follow-up essay, or a poem inspired by your interview.
- **Describe** what it meant to record with a loved one at this current time in history.
- **Share** your interviews with us @StoryCorps with the tag #TheGreatListen.
- **Listen** to your interview again.
- **Watch** the Intergenerational Stories playlist with your family at home, and then share some of the stories that make your family unique (use the App to record the conversation, if you like!).
- **Transcribe** a part of your interview, and/or use quotes from your interview to support another project or research paper.
- **Create** a video inspired by a TED Talk with Adobe Spark Video based on the process of preparing for and conducting an interview, and present it to the class.
- **Edit** your interview using free editing software (such as Audacity) to create a two-minute excerpt.
- **Produce** a podcast from the interviews recorded by your class.
- **Create** a visual storyboard of the process of preparing for and conducting the interview, plus what was learned, and present it to the class.
- **Draw** or paint a portrait of your partner inspired by your interview with them.
- **Hold** an assembly to highlight favorite stories from your class.
- **Use the App** to investigate a social issue in your community (make a list of “sources” you’d like to interview).
- **Coordinate** with your school or local library to start an oral history project.
- **Commemorate** classroom milestones like graduation with interviews.
-

EXTRA CREDIT FOR TEACHERS

Host a classroom listening party. Use the “Community” feature on archive.storycorps.org to collect your students’ stories in one central place, and then invite students to share out a two-to three-minute clip from each interview.

Learn more about the Community feature [here](#) and find tips from other educators in the [StoryCorps in the Classroom Facebook group](#).

Access additional training and lesson plans at storycorps.org/education.



FAST FACTS & BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN

The Great Thanksgiving Listen is a national movement that empowers young people—and people of all ages—to create an oral history of the contemporary United States by recording an interview with an elder using the free StoryCorps App.

Interviews become part of the StoryCorps Archive at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, where they will serve as an invaluable resource for future historians.

Now in its seventh year, The Great Thanksgiving Listen is a rapidly growing national movement to collect the voices of this country and recognize the importance of intergenerational listening. To date, thousands of high schools from all 50 states have participated and preserved more than 150,000 interviews, providing families with a priceless piece of personal history.

The project is a free, technology-based assignment originally developed for students aged 13 and over studying American History, Social Studies, English, Language Arts, Journalism, Drama, ESL, and Media and Technology. It has also been applied successfully as an extracurricular and community-building opportunity in classrooms, universities, OST environments, community centers, living rooms, and kitchens across the country.

This toolkit, and our website at thegreatlisten.org, contains everything you need to get started.

We look forward to making history with you!



ABOUT STORYCORPS

Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps has given over 650,000 people across the United States of all backgrounds and beliefs the chance to record interviews about their lives. The organization preserves the recordings in its archive at the Library of Congress, the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered, and shares select stories with the public through StoryCorps' weekly podcast, NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. These powerful human stories reflect the vast range of American experiences, wisdom, and values; engender empathy and connection; and remind us how much more we have in common than divides us.

ABOUT THE STORYCORPS APP AND STORYCORPS ARCHIVE

Launched with support from the 2015 TED Prize and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, our free mobile App puts the StoryCorps experience entirely in your hands so that you can record and archive a meaningful conversation with anyone, anywhere.

The App guides users through the interview experience, from start to finish, with easy-to-use tools to help you prepare interview questions, record high-quality conversations on your mobile device, and upload the audio to the StoryCorps Archive.

The StoryCorps Archive is the largest single collection of human voices, featuring conversations recorded in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. The full collection of interviews is housed at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Visit archive.storycorps.org to access a selection of the interviews shared by people who have recorded a conversation with StoryCorps since 2003. This site, made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, represents a growing archive: new interviews are added every day by StoryCorps and by people from across the country and around the world. It was developed as a resource for the public and people who have recorded with StoryCorps, as well as students, educators, researchers, noncommercial media makers, community partner organizations, and others involved in scholarly or cultural work.

ABOUT STORYCORPS CONNECT

StoryCorps Connect is a new platform that makes it possible to record and preserve meaningful conversations with someone in another location.

StoryCorps Connect was developed in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with generous support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and powered by Vonage. This platform will help connect generations, preserve the wisdom of humanity, and offer a source of comfort and meaning to elders who may feel isolated and alone. "Social distancing" is the exact opposite of the StoryCorps ethos, which strives to bring people together and acknowledge and celebrate our common humanity. At this time of physical separation, the StoryCorps interview is a more essential tool than ever before for bringing us together.



FAST FACTS & PRIVACY SETTINGS

The Great Thanksgiving Listen is a technology-based assignment originally developed for high school students studying American History, Social Studies, English, Language Arts, Journalism, Drama, ESL, and Media and Technology. It has also been applied successfully as an extracurricular and community-building opportunity in classrooms, OST environments, community centers, living rooms, and kitchens across the country.

The best place to ask questions and to share resources for this project is the [StoryCorps in the Classroom Facebook group](#). If you are having technical issues, please visit our Help Center at support.storycorps.org.

You and your students can follow @StoryCorps on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) and share interviews and posts about the project using #TheGreatListen.

We invite you to adapt the Great Listen lesson plan and multimedia resources in whatever way best suits your needs. We recommend introducing the project at least two weeks prior to Thanksgiving to provide time for participants to plan their interviews and practice using the StoryCorps App and StoryCorps Connect.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Participants will need access to a smartphone, computer, or tablet with the latest device software. Students recording in person will need to download the StoryCorps App to a smartphone (Apple iPhone or Android) from the App Store, Google Play, or Amazon Store. If recording with someone in another location, students can access StoryCorps Connect for free online at storycorpsconnect.org.

- iPads are not recommended for use with the StoryCorps App.
- StoryCorps does not recommend students use a shared classroom device.
- For students without access to a device or without parental consent (see below), teachers can easily modify The Great Listen to allow for basic participation. Modifications are noted in the lesson plan.
- Currently, the StoryCorps App and StoryCorps Archive prompt users in English; participants may record in any language.

PARENTAL CONSENT & PRIVACY SETTINGS

Under StoryCorps' terms of use: Children under the age of 13 may not participate in The Great Listen, and parental consent is required for people under the age of 18 to register for a StoryCorps Archive account. You can review the full terms of use at archive.storycorps.org/terms-of-use.



If you choose to require a parental permission slip, we have included a sample one here that you can easily customize to your needs. (Please note: The permission slip is for school/community use only and should not be submitted to StoryCorps. You should seek further legal advice from your counsel as needed to finalize any terms.)

After recording, students will have the option to publish their interviews. If published, the interviews will be entered in the StoryCorps Archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and appear publicly online at StoryCorps.org. Students who do not want to publish their interviews can save the interviews to their devices. (Please note: Only interviews recorded via the StoryCorps App can be saved locally to the device.) Students and other participants should not be required to publish their interviews publicly to receive credit. This is to preserve participant privacy. Please see our privacy setting recommendations for those who prefer to keep their recordings private.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

The StoryCorps App and StoryCorps Archive contain user-generated content that is not reviewed before it is posted online. While we adhere to a strict set of Community Guidelines and work to maintain a culture of tolerance and acceptance, not all published content will be appropriate for all individuals. We also have a flagging mechanism in place to help further identify content that violates our Community Guidelines. We ask teachers, educators, and caregivers to familiarize themselves with the StoryCorps Archive, to review the Community Guidelines listed at archive.storycorps.org, and to use discretion in adopting the project.



Connect directly with other educators and StoryCorps staff in our [StoryCorps in the Classroom Facebook group](#) and find answers to your technical support questions in our Help Center at support.storycorps.org.



SUPPORT FOR THE **2021 GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN** FROM

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HANDOUTS FOR STUDENTS

[SAMPLE PERMISSION SLIP](#)

[MAKE HISTORY WITH STORYCORPS](#)

[INTERVIEW PLANNING](#)

[GREAT QUESTIONS LIST](#)

[LISTA DE PREGUNTAS](#)

[STORYCORPS CONNECT: GETTING STARTED](#)

[STORYCORPS CONNECT: PARA GRABAR](#)

[RECIPES FOR SUCCESS ON INTERVIEW DAY](#)

[KEYWORDING 101](#)

[STORYCORPS PRINTABLE PLACEMAT](#)



SAMPLE PERMISSION SLIP

Dear Parents,

Over the coming weeks, our class will be participating in a national program created by StoryCorps called The Great Thanksgiving Listen.

Using computer or smartphone technology, students will record an interview with a grandparent or other elder in person or remotely using the free StoryCorps App or StoryCorps Connect platform. These interviews are meant to foster meaningful connections within families, communities, and the classroom, and create a firsthand archive of American history and wisdom.

In order for your child to participate in The Great Thanksgiving Listen, you must acknowledge that they are not under the age of 13. If your child is between the ages of 13 and 18, they will need your consent to register for an account on the StoryCorps App or StoryCorps Archive platform in accordance with the terms of use.

I understand that this project will include my child recording an interview with an elder and taking a picture with that individual. I understand that with the consent of all interview participants, my child will have the option to publish the interview and photograph online to a public website at archive.storycorps.org. I understand that the publication of the interview and photograph will result in them both being archived in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

I also understand that publishing an interview online is not a requirement for credit in this project and that my child will have the option to keep the interview and/or photograph private if they or their interview partner desire. I hereby give permission for (student's name) to participate in The Great Thanksgiving Listen.

(parent/guardian signature)

(date)

For more information, please see thegreatlisten.org.

ABOUT STORYCORPS

Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps is an independently funded 501(c)3 organization that has given over 650,000 people—Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs, in towns and cities in all 50 states—the chance to record interviews about their lives. The organization preserves the recordings in its archive at the Library of Congress, the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered, and shares select stories with the public through StoryCorps' weekly podcast, NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. These powerful human stories reflect the vast range of American experiences, wisdom, and values; engender empathy and connection; and remind us how much more we have in common than divides us. Learn more at storycorps.org.



MAKE HISTORY WITH STORYCORPS

LET'S MAKE HISTORY TOGETHER

Welcome to The Great Thanksgiving Listen! By participating in this project, you will join thousands of students across the United States in interviewing an elder over Thanksgiving weekend using the StoryCorps App or StoryCorps Connect. If you choose, you and your recording partner will have the option to enter your recording into the StoryCorps Archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, where your interview will become a primary source for current and future historians. You will also have a chance to keep your conversation private if you prefer.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The StoryCorps Archive is housed in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. The Library is the nation's first established cultural institution and the largest library in the world, with millions of items, including books, recordings, photographs, maps, and manuscripts, in its collections.

This project offers you and someone you know the unique opportunity to create a new record and preserve it as part of the Library's collections for generations to come.

GETTING STARTED

- If recording with someone in another location using StoryCorps Connect, you and your partner will both need access to a smartphone, computer, or tablet with the latest device software and an internet connection. If recording with someone in the same room using the StoryCorps App, download the free StoryCorps App to a smartphone (iPhone or Android) or Kindle tablet. You must be 13 or over to use StoryCorps Connect, StoryCorps Archive, and the StoryCorps App; if you are between the ages of 13 and 18, you need parental consent to create an account on the StoryCorps Archive and record a story using either platform.
- Create your StoryCorps Archive account at archive.storycorps.org, a public website where published interviews can be found online. If you decide to publish your interview, this is where it will go. If you record using the StoryCorps App, you can use the same account name and password.
- Get comfortable with the StoryCorps App or StoryCorps Connect before recording the conversation of a lifetime! Register for an account with parental permission, record and publish a 10-second test, and log in to your StoryCorps Archive account from a desktop computer to view your test online. You will receive an email from StoryCorps when your file has uploaded.
- Experiment with editing the title, summary, and keywords of a test interview from a desktop computer or via the StoryCorps App.
- Prepare for your interview by reading this sheet all the way through and using the Interview Planning Worksheet and Great Questions List.



INTERVIEW PLANNING

GETTING STARTED

- Whom will you interview? What is that person's name?
- Why did you choose this person?
- How old is your interview partner?
- Where will you conduct your interview?



PRO TIP: During your interview, remember to ask follow-up questions that may not be written here! Here are some great follow-up questions to try: Can you give me an example? How did you feel when that happened? Can you paint a picture in words?

QUESTION PREPARATION

In this section you will prepare 5–10 questions that you will ask your partner. Refer to the [Great Questions List](#) for inspiration to write out the questions you will ask your partner. If you are using the App, you can select and store your questions in the App, but also write them down below:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.



GREAT QUESTIONS

GREAT QUESTIONS LIST

GREAT QUESTIONS FOR ANYONE

- Tell me about one of the most important people in your life.
- Tell me about the person who has had the greatest influence on your life. What lessons did they teach you?
- Who has been the kindest to you and why?
- Share some important lessons you've learned in life.
- Share some of your earliest childhood memories.
- Are there any funny stories people tell about you from when you were growing up?
- What have you accomplished so far—personally and professionally—that makes you proudest? Why?
- Tell me how you would like people to remember you.
- Would you be willing to share a happy or sad memory with me?

- Thinking about future generations, and knowing that they may hear this recording, is there wisdom or advice you would like to share with them?

FAMILY HERITAGE

- Tell me about some traditions that have been passed down through our family. When and how did they get started?
- Are there any classic family jokes, stories, or songs you can share with me?
- What do you see as our family's legacy?
- Where were our ancestors born? If they moved to the United States, when did they arrive?
- What are some of the jobs/careers held by past generations in our family?
- Of all the family members you have either known or heard stories about, who do you think lived the most interesting life? Why?
- What are your favorite family holidays, and why?



GRANDPARENTS

- Tell me about your parents.
- Tell me about your grandparents.
- Where did you grow up, and what was your childhood like?
- Share with me the story of how you and your spouse met.
- Tell me about when you found out you were going to be a parent.
- What was my parent like when they were growing up? Do you have any favorite stories about them?
- Do you remember any songs you sang to them when they were a baby? Can you sing any for me now?

GROWING UP & SCHOOL

- Tell me about where you grew up and what your childhood was like.
- Did you like going to school? Why/why not?
- What are your most vivid memories of school?
- Tell me about a teacher or other adult that impacted your life while you were growing up.
- What did you do during the summer when you were off from school?
- What jobs did you have when you were a teenager? What did you do with the money you earned?
- If you could go back and relive your teenage years, would you? Why/why not?

- Did you have a nickname? What was it, and how did you get it? Does anyone still call you by that nickname?
- Has your life been different from what you imagined as a teenager?

LOVE & RELATIONSHIPS

- Tell me about the love of your life.
- How did you meet your spouse/partner?
- Describe your first date with your spouse/partner.
- Describe your marriage proposal.
- Tell me about your wedding day. Did it go as you imagined?
- Where did you spend your honeymoon?
- What have you learned from your spouse/partner?
- Tell me about your happiest moments together.

WORKING

- What job do you currently hold, and what jobs have you held in the past?
- How did you find your way to your current job/career?
- Thinking of the jobs you've held, is there one that stands out as your favorite?
- When you were younger, what did you imagine your job would be?
- What lessons has working taught you?
- If you could choose any career, what would you pick? Why?



ELECTIONS & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- How do you feel affected by the current election?
- What elections stand out in your mind, and why?
- What was it like to vote for the first time?
- Has there ever been a time in your life when you wanted to vote, but were not able to? What was that like?
- What issues do you consider when choosing a candidate?
- What advice would you give to a first-time voter?
- What does civic participation mean to you?
- Has a changing role in your community, job, or home ever affected your civic participation?
- Over the years, have you changed your opinion about any major political issues? If so, which issues and why?

MILITARY SERVICE

- When were you in the military? Which branch did you serve in?
- What motivated you to join the military?
- Tell me about basic training. Were you prepared for military life? What were you unprepared for?
- Describe your daily life while in the service.
- What is the most difficult part of being in the military?
- Did you serve in a war zone? When and where?

- What lessons did your service teach you that you still carry with you?
- Describe your transition from military to civilian life. Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- If given the opportunity, would you serve in the military again? Why?

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

- When you were growing up, what role did religion/spirituality play in your life?
- What does religion/spirituality mean to you, and what role does it play in your life today?
- Have you ever had a profound religious/spiritual experience? Will you tell me about it?
- What important lessons have your religious/spiritual beliefs taught you? Will you share them with me?
- Do you have any favorite religious holidays? What do they mean to you?

COVID-19-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- What has it been like for you to live through this pandemic?
- How has this experience made you feel?
- Are you afraid? What frightens you?
- What has given you comfort and hope during this time?
- What has been the most challenging part of this experience?
- How is this experience different from other historical events you've lived through?



- Do you or have you had COVID-19? What was that experience like for you?
- What memory of this time do you think will stay with you?
- Has this experience changed you? If so, how?
- What lessons have you learned from living through this pandemic?
- Is there anything you want to say to me given what we're living through at this moment?
- How, if at all, has the Civil Rights movement affected you personally?
- Can you talk about any barriers your parents or you have faced in education, housing, health, work, entertainment, shopping, or otherwise?
- If your family has not always been able to vote, what were the circumstances that kept them from voting?
- Do you have any stories about how things have changed for the better? Or any stories that show how things have not changed?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTESTS

- What have been your thoughts and feelings as you've watched (and/or participated in) Black Lives Matter demonstrations?
- What lesson(s) do you hope our country can take from this moment?
- What has been hardest for you at this time?
- What are your hopes for the future of this country?
- What are your dreams for me?

QUESTIONS ABOUT SEGREGATION AND CIVIL RIGHTS

- Do you have any stories about how segregation was for your family or you? How, if at all, has the ending of segregation changed your life?
- Do you have any stories that can help me understand any personal reaction you had to an incident of prejudice?
- Can you talk about how your family or you participated in the Civil Rights movement?



STORYCORPS CONNECT: GETTING STARTED

PREPARE, RECORD, AND SHARE A CONVERSATION BETWEEN YOU AND ANOTHER PERSON.

1. LOGIN TO THE STORYCORPS ARCHIVE

Log in or create a free account at archive.storycorps.org. This account will be used to prepare, record, save, and share your interviews. You can also use it to browse our collection and listen to stories that others have shared. This step can be done on any device that connects to the internet.

2. PARTNER, PREP, AND PLACE

To record an interview, all you'll need is a partner, some prep time, and a quiet place. Your partner can be anyone you'd like to get to know better. You can choose your interview questions from question lists provided in StoryCorps Connect, or you can write your own. Arrange a time when both you and your partner will be relaxed, and choose a quiet, comfortable place where you won't be interrupted.

3. HAVE A CONVERSATION

Follow the prompts in the StoryCorps Connect to begin recording, and let the conversation flow! Listen closely, and let your chosen questions guide the discussion, not control it. Make sure you ask follow-up questions. You never know what unexpected and wonderful new things you will learn about a person—no matter how well you think you know them.

4. ENTER PHOTO, TITLE, AND KEYWORDS

After the interview, you'll be prompted to add a title, description, and keywords to your interview before uploading. Titles should be descriptive to help you keep track of your conversations. Keywords are like hashtags, making it easier for you and others to find your interview in our collection.

5. SHARE AND ARCHIVE YOUR INTERVIEW

In order to allow future generations to find, listen to, and learn from the stories you and your partner just shared, your recording will be archived at the Library of Congress. If you prefer, you can choose to keep your interview private by selecting that setting when prompted.



LEARN MORE: For troubleshooting and more detailed how-tos, please visit our [Help Center](#).



RECIPES FOR SUCCESS ON INTERVIEW DAY

INTERVIEW DAY

Now that you know how to use StoryCorps Connect and/or the App, and how to write great titles, summaries, and keywords, you're almost ready to record! Prepare your questions and read through the checklist below before the big day so that you know what to expect.

Both the App and StoryCorps Connect have a built-in timer. Additionally, the App has a question selection tool. We encourage you to use your completed [Interview Planning Worksheet](#) as a guide during your conversation.

- Prepare your questions in advance, but be ready to ask follow-up questions and go “off script” if you hear something interesting.
- If recording with someone in another location using StoryCorps Connect, set up the session and send an invite email to your interview partner. They will be prompted to create a StoryCorps Archive account before joining the session.
- Try to find a quiet place to conduct your interview.
- Ask your partner for permission to record them before you start. If you or your partner prefer not to share your recording with the StoryCorps Archive, consider recording with a digital recorder, over the phone, or via a different online video platform.
- Begin your recording by introducing yourself, and ask your partner to introduce themselves. State the location, date, and year where and when you are conducting the interview (e.g., Today is November 24, 2021, and we are in Grandpa's living room in Detroit, Michigan).
- If you are recording on the App, at the end of the recording, you will be prompted to take a picture with your partner. If you prefer, you can take a picture of an old photograph of your partner or a piece of paper with the interview date on it. If you are recording on StoryCorps Connect, we take five pictures during the interview sessions. After you submit your interview, you'll be able to delete any of these you don't like and/or upload additional photos.



PRO TIP: If you are using your phone to record an interview via the StoryCorps App, put it in airplane mode and close any other apps you may have open.



INTERVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS & CONSENT TO BE RECORDED

After your interview, discuss these privacy setting options with your partner:

Everyone: Your interview and related information are available to anyone on the web.

Archive Users: Your interview and related information are available to anyone with an account on the StoryCorps Archive.

Only You: Your interview and related information are private.



PRO TIP: If you record via another device or platform and still wish to share the interview with the StoryCorps Archive, check out our [Help Center](#) for step-by-step guidance on manually uploading audio files.

For students who publish: After uploading, visit archive.storycorps.org and log in to your account from a desktop or your mobile device. You can edit your title, summary, and keywords and email your teacher a link to the interview.

For students who choose not to use StoryCorps Connect or the StoryCorps App: If you decide to record using different technology, email your teacher with the interview duration and provide a sample title, summary, and keywords.

Remember to thank your recording partner and send them a link to your published interview and/or the final audio file.



PRO TIP: You are welcome to conduct as many interviews as you like.



PRO TIP: If you change your mind after recording, you can remove your interview from public view by logging in to your account at archive.storycorps.org and changing your setting to private.

QUESTIONS

STORYCORPS THANKS YOU FOR MAKING HISTORY WITH US!

- If you have questions, please visit our Help Center at support.storycorps.org. You will find the answers to most of your questions there.
- If you have any trouble, email us at contactus@storycorps.org. You will receive a receipt for your email that you can provide to your teacher while you wait for us to respond promptly.



KEYWORDING 101

TITLE, SUMMARY, AND KEYWORDS

After you conduct your official interview, you will want to give it a great title, summarize it, and add keywords (like tags) to make it easier for your friends and family to find it online. Just like using a # hashtag on social media, tagging your StoryCorps interview connects your story with the stories of others across cities, countries, and cultures. These details will add to the historical archive and serve as guideposts for future scholars who will use keywords to search for and discover your interview in the Library of Congress's digital collections. This section provides some tips on writing great titles, summaries, and keywords.

TITLE: Interview titles are one sentence and refer to the main idea of the interview.

Example: *John Grey and his friend Virginia Brown talk about growing up in Montgomery, Alabama.*

SUMMARY: Summaries are 4- to 5-sentence descriptions of the interview. Include the location and date of the interview, the names and basic autobiographical details of the participants, and a general overview of the topics discussed.


Example: *In this interview, conducted in November 2016 in Montgomery, Alabama, John Grey (17) interviews his friend and neighbor Virginia Brown (82) about her childhood in the city they both call home. Ms. Brown shares stories about her involvement in the civil rights movement and the effects of the Vietnam War on her family. She also talks about her favorite hobbies as a child (swimming) and as an adult (cooking), and at minute 38 she discloses the secret to her legendary peach pie. At the end of the discussion, Ms. Brown and Mr. Grey share their wishes for the future.*

KEYWORDS should include basic places, people, occupations, names of events (especially historical events), and any other important themes or concepts mentioned in the interview.

Example: *Montgomery, AL, civil rights, civil rights movement, Vietnam War, hobbies, swimming, cooking, peach pie, wishes for the future, neighbors, friendship, Booker T. Washington Magnet High School, TheGreatListen2021*

- Try to provide 5-15 keywords.
- If you record in a language other than English, enter that language as a keyword (e.g., Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic).
- Enter your keywords, along with TheGreatListen2021, in the “general” keywords field. Add your state abbreviation (e.g., AK, CA, TX) in the “places” field.



PRO TIP: To edit your title, summary, image and keywords from a desktop computer, log in to your account at archive.storycorps.org, and click on the edit icon in the upper right-hand corner of the interview. If you recorded via the StoryCorps App, you can edit your interview by clicking on () in the lower right-hand corner of your interview and choosing “Edit Info.”

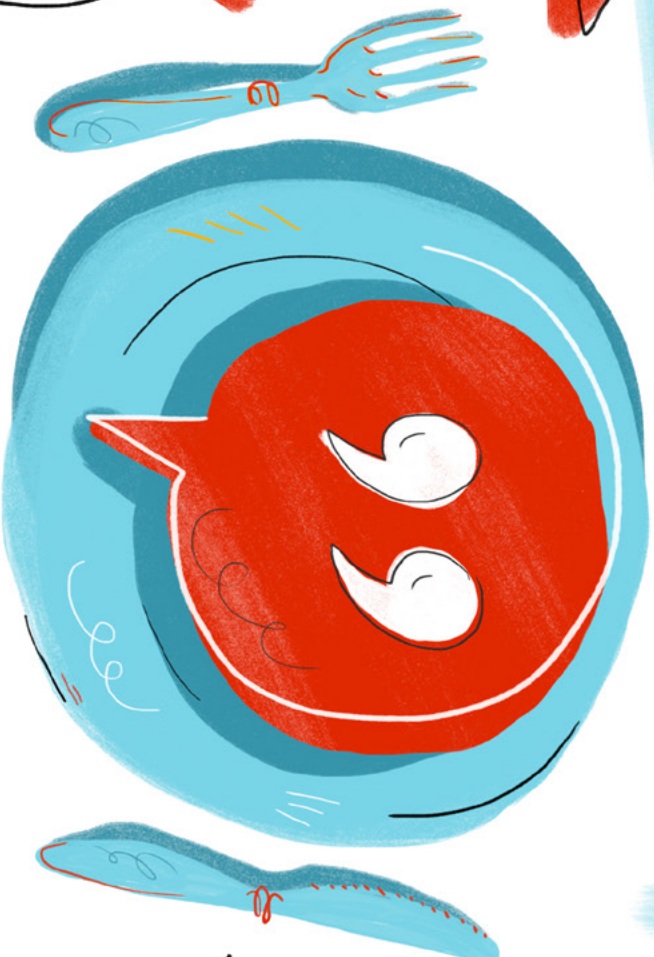
TELL ME
ABOUT A
FAMILY
TRADITION

WHAT ARE
YOU MOST
GRATEFUL
FOR?

WHAT ARE
YOU
PROUDEST
OF IN YOUR
LIFE?

WHO HAS
BEEN THE
KINDEST TO
YOU AND WHY?

WHAT ADVICE
WOULD YOU
GIVE TO YOUR
YOUNGER
SELF?



THE Great

THANKSGIVING LISTEN

#THEGREATLISTEN



COMMON CORE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-12.2-4

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-12.1-10

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-12.6-9

Use technology, including the internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.