

## Oral History Assignment: September 11, 2001

Your first project for US History II will be to conduct an interview with someone about the events and attacks on September 11, 2001. The only prerequisite is that the interviewee must REMEMBER that day (so someone who is older than you most definitely)!

The purpose of this assignment is not to recall what the news reported or specific facts that were learned later, but to understand how everyday Americans remember that day and the impact that it had on them.

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### Directions:

1. **Decide who you will interview!** You will need to obtain permission (form attached) from this person in order to conduct the interview and present your findings to the class.
2. **Do your research!** By that I mean, decide on the questions you want to ask in advance. When conducting an interview, it is important to ask “thought-provoking” questions. A question like “Do you remember September 11, 2001?” would elicit a response of either “Yes” or “No”. Try to create questions that will get the speaker to give detail and recount any specifics about that day. Keep in mind, you are not asking them to teach you about 9-11, but to share their experience with you.
3. **Prepare your questions** and if possible, provide the interviewee with the questions ahead of time so that they can begin to prepare their responses. Please don’t treat this as a “worksheet” where you give them a paper with written questions and they write-in their responses. Providing questions ahead of time allows the speaker to get an idea of what they will be asked during the interview.
  - a. You need to have at least 5 prepared questions to ask. *If other questions come up as you are interviewing the person, that’s OK! But you must have prepared questions ahead of time.*
4. **Show up to the interview prepared with necessary materials.** This needs to be mutually decided on between you and the person you are interviewing. If you want to record (audio/visual) the interview - that’s OK with me, but you must obtain consent from the person you are interviewing. *Suggested items: pen, paper, recording device, etc.*
5. **Explain the project to them.** Make sure that the person you are interviewing is clear on the assignment and the purpose for this interview. As a class, we are gathering oral histories about the events that happened on 9-11. Similar to how people remembered what happened on December 7, 1941, people today have strong recollections of 9-11. You want to find out what that day was like for them so that you can share their story with the class (and others).
6. **Take this seriously.** You want the interview to take place in a comfortable setting and all other distractions “turned off” - phone, computer, etc! Plan to have this person’s undivided attention for at least 20-30 minutes, depending on your questions and how the interview goes. Be respectful and polite - use your best manners!

7. **At the end of the interview, clarify your notes with your interviewee.** This is an important step, you don't want to misrepresent this person because you misunderstood one of their statements. When you are done with the questioning portion of the interview, review the notes that you made with them and make sure that everything you have is accurate or correct. "Did you say you were at a Starbucks or Dunkin' Donuts?" Just double-check!

8. **Type up your report.** Using your notes and your creativity, write a one 1/2 -two page report about the interview. Please include any important background about this individual in addition to their comments. This can be written like a "story" - tell us about the setting where you met, the person's reactions, facial expressions, etc. If you are going to use any quotations, please double-check the statement with the person you interviewed. Your report should make the reader feel as though they were sitting in on the interview too!

9. **Give a two minute presentation to the class sharing what you learned from your interview.** Using your notes from the interview & your report, prepare a 2-min statement that you will present to the class. Please do not read your report to the class, but instead tell us a little about the person and information you found most interesting. The last part of your presentation should include whether or not you found this type of activity helpful and how we can learn from collecting stories like this.

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#### **SPECIFICS:**

#### **To sum up...**

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- Interview someone who lived through and remembers September 11, 2001.
  - Prepare at least 5 questions
  - Write a 1 1/2 -2 page (500-750 words) report (worth 50pts)
  - Give a 2 min speech to the class (worth 50pts)

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Written reports are due \_\_\_\_\_ and Oral Presentations will begin on \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **What am I turning in to be graded?**

- Written Report

#### **How will I be graded on the report & oral presentation/speech?**

- Rubrics will be provided for both. They are weighed equally (50/50 = 100pt Test Grade)

*Please make sure that you plan this project out accordingly. To conduct your interview on Monday October 14th is not leaving you very much time to put your project together...*

*If you get stuck or have questions along the way - LET ME KNOW :)*