

THE ORAL HISTORY/ BIO-SKETCH/ BIO-NARRATIVE ASSIGNMENT

This assignment is being given before the Thanksgiving break and before conferences so any questions can be addressed at the conference. **This is a required homework assignment** that will have some effect on the Trimester 1 grade. It is not intended as a major project, but rather as a chance for students to learn something about their parents, grandparents, family history, etc.--their *roots*, you might say.

Here's how it works.

1. Locate a **family elder**, that is, an adult in your family. In the past, most kids have chosen to talk to grandparents or relatives they don't see frequently, but parents or adult friends of the family make good interview subjects as well. Next, ask that person if they would be willing to sit for a short interview and tell some story about an important event in his or her life. This works best if the subject remembers some details or even dialogue from that event, but the main focus is for them to be able to tell that story while the student takes notes.
2. **Collect basic information for the Bio-Sketch paragraph.** Record the subject's full given name; date of birth; where they live (and lived in the past); whether they were married or not (and to whom); whether they had children or not (and list the children by name and age); what they do or did for work, and a brief *physical* description (what they look like, with hair and eye color and any distinguishing features).
3. **Take notes with some details and quotes if possible.** Those quotes should be potentially useful in the story; for example, all specific words spoken by your interview subject are a quote, right?...but look for and record quotes from the *story* your subject is telling. You can use those quotes when you...
4. **Write a short narrative of the story told by your interview subject.** Use your notes and memory to re-construct the tale told. All narratives are more effective if **details and dialogue** are part of it.

Finally...and this is an option: Take a PICTURE of you and your interview subject together. Clip it to your final copy. Sweet.

This assignment was given on Friday, November 20th, but was posted on my blog on Friday, November 6th, for those who wanted more time. The final, corrected copy of the Bio-Sketch paragraph and the Oral History Narrative will be due on Thursday, 12/3.

>>This work will take place with the Mini-I-Search research in the background.<<

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