

Writing the Questions

Oral History Workshop: writing meaningful interview questions

Welcome: Sample Interview



- Narrator:
- Date:
- Student/Faculty Researcher:
- What went well:

Today's Workshop Training: Outline

- Introduction: What Oral History Teaches Us
- Your Narrator in Historical Context
- Scheduling Interviews
 - Contacting Your Narrator
- Checklist for Interview (Before, During, After)
 - Biographical Questionnaire
 - Oral History Consent Form
 - Talent Release Form
- Question Practice
- Questions DRAFT for Approval



Introduction: Oral History Teaches Us

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All of these skills are contributing to your education while also influencing your own personal awareness, understanding of life span, and enhancing knowledge about older adults, as well as the significance of our historic community.

Student researchers with Dr. Alfredo de los Santos, Fall 2018

Your Narrator in Historical Context

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Student researchers with Nick and Dr. Kathy Nakagawa, Fall 2018

An individual's life can illustrate the systems at play in his/her environment:

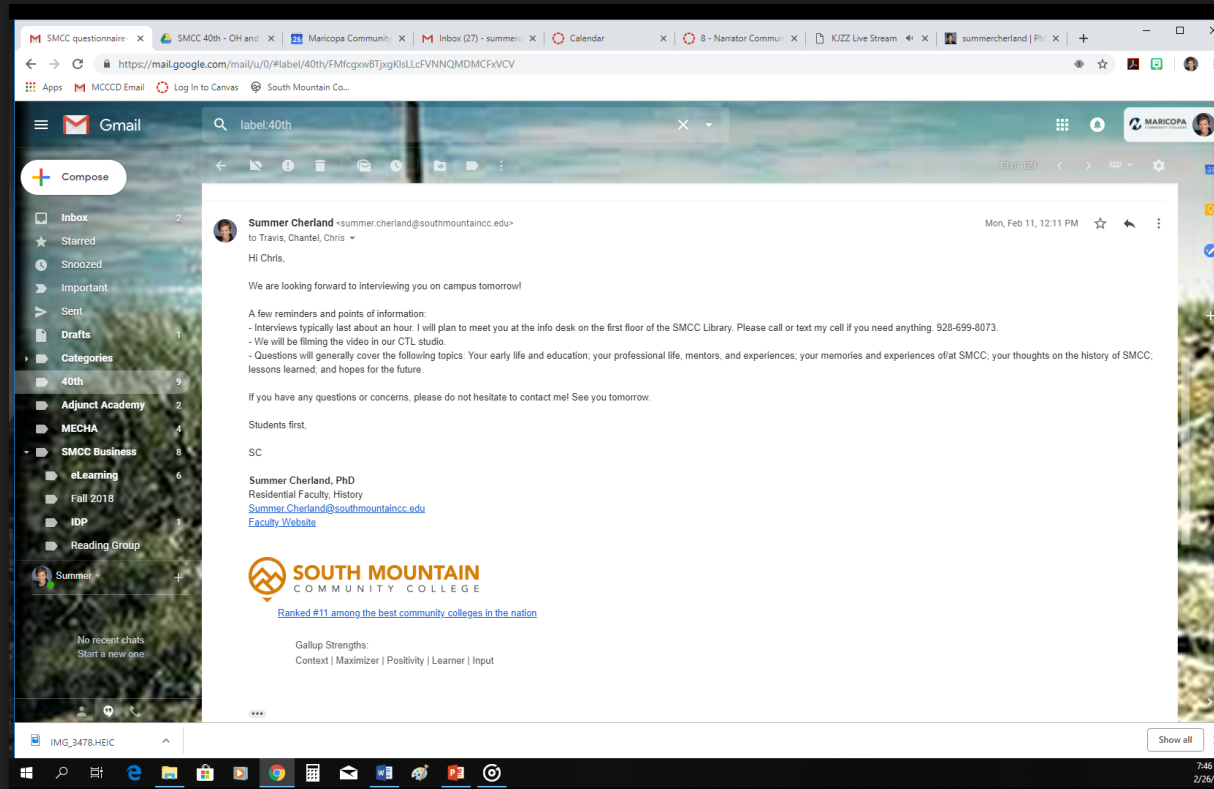
- Birth/Family/Early Life (historical context of his/her young life, sets a stage for how America has changed)
- Spirituality/Guidance (demonstrates the important world views that evolved during his/her lifetime)
- Politics/Education/Volunteerism (identifies key topics that were significant during his/her time)
- Social/Economics (discusses class changes)
- Geography (migration, movement, how America changed)

→ Now, you try!

Scheduling Appointments

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Contacting Your Narrator:

- Email or call your narrator to confirm the time/date/location
- Establish a meeting location
- Share the consent form with him/her
- Include the biographical questionnaire and request a return date
- Provide your contact information
- Copy Dr. C. and include a screen shot for canvas

Checklist for Interview

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- ✓ Today
- ✓ Before the Interview
- ✓ Upon Arrival
- ✓ Conducting the Interview

Faculty researchers with Dr. Paul Elsner, Fall 2018

Question Practice

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Student researchers with Lorraine Calbow, Fall 2018

You've been assigned a narrator. Write a meaningful interview question that you believe will address one of the following topics:

- Early life/childhood/hometown/family
- Education
- Career/Trajectory
- South Mountain Community College/South Phoenix
- Historical Context (relevant to our class)
- Legacies/Future/Words of Wisdom

Question Practice: Follow Up

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Question: What were some of the most challenging jobs you faced?

Her answer emphasized saying “yes” to every opportunity, even if she felt unprepared.

Follow Up: In terms of saying “yes” to so many opportunities, have you suffered at all on a personal level, to find balance?

Her answer emphasized expectations of motherhood for women.

Question Practice: Your Turn

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Students practicing questions with Dr. May, Fall 2018

Write Your Questions

Required Topics

- Early life/childhood/hometown/family
- Education
- Career/Trajectory
- South Mountain Community College/South Phoenix
- Historical Context (relevant to our class)
- Legacies/Future/Words of Wisdom

Using the question bank, write 15-16 meaningful questions and potential follow-up questions for your narrator. Be sure to address each topic!

Question Bank

When and where were you born?
What was your childhood like/what did your parents do?
Share with us a little bit about your schooling experiences.
What were you like as a student?
Where did you go to college?
Were you always involved in/passionate about ---
--- (sports/science/music)? -- Why or why not?
What brought you to Arizona (South Phoenix, etc).
How was Arizona different from -----?
Where in Phoenix did you first settle and why? --
So at that time, what impressions, if any, did you have of South Phoenix?
Do you know much about the origins and founding of South Mountain Community College? If so, can you share that story with us as you've heard it?
We've heard that some people were resistant to the idea of opening a community college in South Phoenix. Do you have an opinion as to why that might have been?
What role do you think South Mountain CC might play in the community here in South Phoenix? -- Is there potential for more service? How so?

What experiences and positions did you have at SMCC? -- How did you end up in these positions?
You're remembered/known for ----- . Can you tell us about that position/project?
Tell us about your favorite aspects of working at ---- (SMCC/business)
How did your career take you to new challenges --- (in the Maricopa Community College District/Nation/Community/Field)?
You've been very active in ----- . From this vantage point, what role do you think SMCC/South Phoenix plays when it comes to ----- ? How are we special or different? | What are your proudest career and personal achievements? |
What are some challenges or frustrations you've faced in your career? | If you could share one part of your story with students who are struggling with academic, personal, or financial challenges, what would you hope to say to them? | What do you hope will be your legacy at SMCC (career/nation) will be? | Write your own

Get to Work! Due Today *Before you Leave*

Contact your narrator

- Email or call your narrator to confirm the time/date/location
 1. Confirmation of your interview
 2. Consent Forms for narrator to sign
 3. Biographical Questionnaire for your narrator to complete
 4. Instructions for where and when to meet you for the interview
 5. A cell phone number the narrator can call if they need to contact you
 6. A list of topics –not questions– to discuss in the interview

Copy Dr. C. and include a screen shot for CANVAS

Draft your interview questions

- Submit your proposed questions for your interview
 - Include 15-16 questions and *potential* follow-ups
 - Use a reasonable chronology – don't jump around
 - Agree on how you will ask the questions