

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

\*This project can be used as a general assignment, or it can be designed to focus on working-class history. Students are allowed to choose their topic, and thus, can focus on an issue that matches with the course. For example, one student wrote about Cement City, in Dallas, Texas. Another wrote about the first use of barcodes and grocery scanners.

The Oral History Project is worth 11.5 % of your final grade. You must **turn in a list of 10 questions** that you plan to ask your interviewee. You do not need answers to those questions when you turn them in. At the top of the list, also **state clearly, the event** upon which you will be focusing.

You will write a five paragraph essay addressing sources about an event in United States history that happened between 1865 and the year during which you were born. Select someone to interview who can give you his/her memory of the event. You may choose the event, but it must be one that happened before you were born and during your interviewee's lifetime. Your assignment is to gather brief information about the event, using both written and oral sources. You are a historian- write in third person. **Include at least one quotation, either from your interview or from your written sources.** Provide citations where appropriate. Your paper must be two and half to four pages long, with five paragraphs. A solid paragraph will be about one-half of a page long. Be sure to answer ALL of the questions in the assignment. Follow the Rules for Writers. Papers which constantly violate the Rules for Writers or fall short of the 2.5 page minimum will not earn better than a "D" grade. Submit your paper to Canvas by 1:00 PM on April 2. Bring your completed checklist to class on April 2. I will not grade your paper until I receive your COMPLETED checklist. **Due on Tuesday, April 2, at 1:00 PM, worth 100 points.**

**Paragraph #1:** Introduction. Hook me in. Tell me something attention-grabbing about the event. Then, give me background information about the person you interviewed. Do not refer to the person by first name only. Provide basic information that will help me to understand why you chose this person to interview, and give me some idea about the perspective from which the person is sharing his or her memory of the event. Provide a thesis sentence that states your argument- what is your paper saying about the event and the information that sources report about that event? In other words, how do the sources compare?

**Paragraph #2:** Topic Sentence: Tell me about the way written sources report on this event. You do not have to write a term paper on it, but rather give me facts about it. What does the written source say about the event? You can get this information from the textbook, encyclopedias, "reliable" websites, etc. Do not use Wikipedia or wiki-related sites. Provide proper citation. You should use written sources, only, for the information in this paragraph.

**Paragraph #3:** Topic Sentence: Connect this event to our theme of American History, American Memory. How does your oral source relay information on this event? Give your interviewee's personal perspective of the event. Remember, you are not writing the person's life story, or transcribing the interview, but rather, explain the impact that this event made on the person you interviewed and what that person has to say about it. Provide citation information where necessary. Tie this back to your argument. How does what you gleaned from this interview reflect your thesis about the different types of contributions from sources?

**Paragraph #4:** Compare the two stories. How does the retelling of history by books/ encyclopedias/professional historians differ from the retelling of history by your

interviewee? Are there any areas that do not correspond? Why or why not? What impact does personal perspective have? What does that tell you about the types of sources used for studying history?

**Paragraph #5:** Conclusion. Wrap it up. Include a few thoughts on the use of oral sources when studying history. Conclude with something thoughtful and relevant.

**Check List for Oral History Paper – Print and bring to class on April 2 as a one page file.**

Directions: Mark a check on the line, indicating yes or no, as you answer these questions.

- |  | Yes   | No    |
|--|-------|-------|
| 1. I clearly stated my thesis sentence.  | _____ | _____ |
| 2. I had topic sentences for my paragraphs.  | _____ | _____ |
| 3. My paragraphs contained evidence, examples, quotations, and analysis.                                 | _____ | _____ |
| 4. My paragraphs are each about ½ page long, and my paper is 2 ½ to 4 pages long, double spaced.         | _____ | _____ |
| 5. I answered all of the questions in the assignment.  | _____ | _____ |
| 6. I finished my paper at least one hour before the deadline.  | _____ | _____ |
| 7. I CAREFULLY proofread my paper.   | _____ | _____ |
| 8. My checklist is a one page document.  | _____ | _____ |
| 9. I used a 12 point, Times New Roman font and one inch margins.   | _____ | _____ |
| 10. I did not use contractions, like didn't.   | _____ | _____ |
| 11. I wrote in third person. I did not use "I," "we," "us," "our" or "you" unless I was quoting someone. | _____ | _____ |
| 12. My pronouns match with my nouns, as did my subjects and verbs.                                       | _____ | _____ |
| 13. I included at least one, properly cited and anchored, quotation.                                     | _____ | _____ |
| 14. There is no extra space in my headers or between paragraphs.   | _____ | _____ |
| 15. I avoided "wobble" words like "things," "interesting," and "important."                              | _____ | _____ |
| 16. I limited my use of passive voice.   | _____ | _____ |
| 17. I did not refer to my subject by first name only.  | _____ | _____ |
| 18. I used proper capitalization and punctuation.  | _____ | _____ |
| 19. I followed my Rules for Writers when completing this paper.  | _____ | _____ |

I want comments to view on Canvas. \_\_\_\_\_

The amount and quality of effort I put into this paper is: \_\_\_\_\_

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The grade that I deserve on this paper is: \_\_\_\_\_