

Historians, journalists, scientists, and many other professionals use interviewing as a way to learn more about a particular person, thing, or event. Before they conduct an interview these professionals usually write up a list of questions that help them to talk to the person they are interviewing. Below is a set of questions and topics to get you started. Practice “interviewing” your family members and test out your skills!

Where were you born?

Do you have brothers or sisters? How many?

Did you always live in the same house?

What kind of games did you used to play?

Where did you go to school?

Did you have pets? Dogs? Cats? Horses?

Once you have practiced asking a variety of questions, then decide on something specific you would like to know more about like holidays, school, vacation, etc. Try to phrase your questions based on that topic and see how much information you can gather about that one thing.

An example is a story that was written by a slave named Anson Harp who was owned by James Henry Hammond. The story was written based on questions that an interviewer asked him about slavery. The interviewer did not learn *everything* about Anson’s life, but he or she did learn some things about how slavery affected him and his family.