

Interview Questions & Prompts

♪ **Return a copy of this questionnaire** to: Cynthia Tickell LLC cyntickell@gmail.com

Name: _____ Birth: ____/____/____ Today: ____/____/____

Phone numbers: (____) _____ - _____ (____) _____ - _____ (____) _____ - _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address(es): _____

♪ **Gather some personal items that might elicit memories and stories**

- Albums, Photographs, Portraits
- Letters, Postcards, Telegrams, Writings, Poetry, Recorded Performances (A/V)
- Diplomas, Certificates, Licenses, Resumes, Awards
- Recognitions in any newsletters/papers, magazines, TV/Radio recordings
- Scrap Books, News Clippings, Old Magazines
- Hobby or Craft items (artwork, finished items, tools, supplies, etc.)
- Musical Instrument or Music Box
- Collections (artwork, collectables, stamps, coins, etc.)
- Sporting or Activity items (baseball, fishing tackle box, bowling shoes, etc.)
- Gifts or Acquisitions (from family, friends, work or travel)
- Jewelry box (rings, pins, necklaces, etc.)
- Clothing or Quilts (tee shirts, outfits, hats, shawls, blankets, quilts)

♪ **Draw a timeline of your life's milestones** (If you can't fit it all, use another page.)

- Family Births, Marriages, Deaths
- Places you have lived
- Education, Occupations, Military or Public Service
- Community involvement, Volunteer work
- Personal Achievements or Rewarding experiences
- Travel, Adventures
- Memorable Historic Events

Birth

Present

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♪ **Make short notes** of names, dates, or other facts. Save the story for the interview.
Only answer what you care to share, cross out what you don't want to discuss...

Questions & Prompts

Childhood

1. Birth name, common name and nicknames (Who gave them and why?)
2. What were you told about your birth?
3. What is your earliest childhood memory?
4. Who lived in your home?
5. Describe your parents...
6. Describe each of your siblings and how you fit into the family...
7. Describe your grandparents and other relatives...
8. What kind of work did your parents and other relatives do?
9. Describe your home, bedroom and kitchen... the colors, smells, furniture...
10. What were your favorite foods? Meals? Desserts? Who was the best cook?
11. Describe your neighborhood and town...
12. Describe your best friend(s)... How did you meet?
13. What was the most fun you had with your best friend(s)?
14. Describe any pets you had...
15. Describe a typical day when you were a child...
16. What chores and responsibilities did you have?
17. What did you do for fun? Physical activities? Indoor activities?
18. Did you have favorite TV, Radio, or Stage shows?
19. What games did you play as a child? What were your favorite toys?
20. What is your earliest memory of school? What subjects did you like?
21. Describe any tricks or pranks you or your friends played?
22. Did you have any special talents or skills?
23. Did you ever have a pen pal or correspond with anyone by mail?
24. Did you ever get lost? Who helped you?
25. Who was the best story-teller in your family?
26. What favorite story did that person tell? Do you think that story was true?
27. What early holiday memories do you have? Describe the sights, sounds, smells...
28. Did you wear a costume for Halloween? Have large gatherings for Thanksgiving?
29. Did you ever give a presentation or perform a solo?
30. Describe your favorite birthday or best gift(s)...
31. What were your favorite songs? Can you sing the words or tune?
32. What did you like to draw, paint or make?
33. What did you want to be when you grew up?

34. For what did you get in trouble as a child?
35. Of what were you most proud, as a child?
36. Describe any difficult times in your childhood...
37. Describe any regrets you remember from your childhood...
38. How did you earn money when you were young?
39. What was your first job? How much did you earn?
40. For what did you save your money?
41. What was the newest toy or technology being sold?
42. Did you travel or take vacation? Did you ever go camping?
43. Were you ever very sick or have to deal with illness or disability?
44. What was the first major, world-impact event that you remember?
45. What were your thoughts about wars or conflicts in the news?

Teen Years

46. How did you change as you became a teenager?
47. What do you remember about high school? Favorite subjects?
48. In what sports or school activities did you participate?
49. What did you plan to do or become after high school?
50. Did you have any dreams of the future?
51. What did other people say you'd be when you grew up?
52. In what ways were you involved in church or the community?
53. What did you do for fun as a teenager?
54. What were your favorite books and movies?
55. What was your favorite music?
56. Can you sing some of the lyrics of your favorite songs?
57. Describe your first date...
58. Did you go to college, technical school or join the military?
59. Describe moving away from home... Did you have roommates?

Young Adult Years

60. At what age do you think you became an adult? Why?
61. What did you think of your parents?
62. What world events left an impression?
63. What people did you admire and respect?
64. How did you meet your spouse?
65. How did you know you were in love?
66. What was so endearing about your spouse?

67. How was the marriage proposal made?
68. Describe your wedding day... Who else attended? What music was played?
69. Describe your honeymoon... Did you go away somewhere special?
70. What were your concerns about becoming a parent?
71. Describe the birth of each of your child(ren)...
72. Describe each of your children and if they remind you of anyone else...
73. What were each child's favorite pastimes?
74. Describe a favorite memory you have of each of your children...

Reflecting on your whole life...

75. What were your favorite books or readings?
76. Describe your favorite and least favorite homes...
77. Describe your favorite neighbors...
78. Describe your most peaceful place...
79. What items in nature do you find most beautiful?
80. What friends have you known for the longest time?
81. Describe how you met your best friends and favorite times with each...
82. Describe how younger members in your family look or act like older members...
83. What was the most difficult time in your life? How did you get through it?
84. What different jobs have you held? Which were most rewarding?
85. What career would you have preferred?
86. What personal achievements or rewarding experiences still make you proud?
87. Were you ever poor or struggling financially?
88. Were you ever on the radio, TV or in the newspaper or a magazine?
89. Did you ever write stories, poetry or essays?
90. What favorite photos or portraits do you have of yourself?
91. What photos do you have that bring back the best memories?
92. What was the biggest mistake you ever made? Do you have any regrets?
93. Did you ever meet someone who was famous?
94. To where have you traveled? What was your most exciting adventure?
95. What historic events mark the timeline of your life?
96. What technological inventions do you remember from each decade of your life?
97. Describe a time when your heart pounded with fear...
98. Describe a time when you wept in sorrow...
99. Describe a time when you nearly collapsed with relief...
100. Describe a time when you cried from joy...

101. Do you have a most embarrassing moment? Several?
102. Did you ever have any special skills or talents? Play a musical instrument?
103. Did you have any favorite hobbies or crafts?
104. Did you ever have a collection or create a scrap book?
105. What are your favorite things to wear? Did you have a favorite outfit?
106. Do you have any favorite jewelry, heirlooms, or gifts you received?
107. What was the favorite gift you ever gave?
108. Can you speak a foreign language or use sign language?
109. What family members or friends have made you laugh the most?
110. In what way have people reached out to you and touched your life?
111. If you have ever attended a reunion, what was that like?
112. Who do you wonder about and would love to see again?
113. What are the oldest items you own that bring back memories?

Looking ahead...

114. What brings you the most joy now?
115. What dreams do you still have today?
116. What do you hope for your children and friends?
117. Is there anything you would like for family and friends to know?
118. What life lessons would you like for everyone to practice?
119. What advice would you give to the youngest members of your family?
120. Describe your faith, beliefs and thoughts of an afterlife...
121. Please sing any favorite songs, lullabies or hymns that bring you joy or comfort...

♪ Is there anything else you want to share?

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♪ Video Portraits can also help you...

- Send a personal message, video or slideshow to one individual or group.
 - Record a special story or songs to pass on to family yet to be born.
- Demonstrate a special skill or craft. Show how to make a favorite recipe.
 - Document your property or collections with a photo/video inventory.
 - Transfer and preserve slides, film and video to digital computer files.