

140 Connecting the Generations

Conversation Starters

Things to keep in mind is all questions should be opened ended. The object is not to have a yes/no answer to the question but allow the question to jog the memory and lead them into telling their story.

1. What is your full name and why were you named that? (Include maiden name for women.)
2. Were you named after someone else?
3. Did you have a nickname when you were growing up? If so, what was it and why were called that?
4. Have you had any other nicknames as an adult?
5. What do your family members call you now?
6. When and where were you born?
7. When were you baptized, and what was your religion?
8. What was the religion of your parents and your grandparents?
9. What church, if any, do you attend now?
10. What church do your parents and your grandparents attend?
11. Where was your first home?
12. In what other homes/places have you lived?
13. What were your earliest memories of your home?
14. Could you tell me a story or any memory of your brothers and sisters?
15. What are the full names of your brothers and sisters?
16. What did your family do for fun when you were a child?
17. Was there a chore you really hated doing as a child?
18. What kinds of books did you like to read?
19. Do you remember having a favorite nursery rhyme or bedtime story? What was it?
20. Do you remember not having enough food to eat because times were hard for your family?
21. What were your favorite toys and what were they like?
22. What were your favorite childhood games?
23. Were there any fads during your youth that you remember vividly?
24. Where did you attend grade school?
25. Where did you attend high school?
26. What were your schools like?
27. How did you like school?
28. What was your favorite subject in school and why?
29. What subject in school was the easiest for you?
30. What was your least favorite subject in school and why?
31. Who was your favorite teacher and why was he/she special?
32. How do your fellow classmates from school remember you best?
33. Did you get good grades?
34. What did you wear to school? Describe it.
35. What school activities and sports did you participate in?
36. Did you and your friends have a special hangout where you liked to spend time?
37. Where was it and what did you do there?
38. Were you ever given any special awards for your studies or school activities?
39. How many years of education have you completed?
40. Describe yourself as a young adult.
41. Did you attend any school or training after high school? If so, what was your field of study?
42. Do you have a college degree(s)?
43. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
44. What was your first job?
45. How did you decide on a career?
46. What jobs have you had?



47. Did you make enough money to live comfortably?
48. How long did you have to work each day at your job?
49. How old were you when you retired? Or when do you want to retire or will be able to retire?
50. If you served in the military, when and where did you serve and what were your duties? Rank?
51. Were you ever injured in the line of duty?
52. How old were you when you started dating?
53. Do you remember your first date? Could you tell me something about it?
54. When, where and how did you first meet your present spouse?
55. Do you remember where you went on the first date with your spouse?
56. How long did you know him/her before you got married?
57. Describe your wedding proposal.
58. Where and when did you get married? (Include date, place, church, etc.)
59. Describe your wedding ceremony.
60. Who was there? Were there a best man, a bridesmaid, other wedding party members and who were they?
61. Did you have a honeymoon? Where did you go?
62. Were you married more than once? If so, answer the previous questions about each spouse.
63. How would you describe your spouse(s)?
64. What do (did) you admire most about them?
65. How long have you been or were you married?
66. When and where did your spouse die?
67. What advice would you give/did you give to your child or grandchild on his/her wedding day?
68. How did you find out you were going to be a parent for the first time?
69. How many children did you have all together?
70. What were their names, birth dates and birthplaces?
71. Why did you give them the names that you did?
72. Do you remember anything your children did when they were small that really amazed you?
73. What is one of the most unusual things one of your children did regularly when they were small?
74. What was the funniest thing you can remember that one of your children said or did?
75. If you had to do it all over again, would you change the way you raised your family?
76. What did you find most difficult about raising children?
77. What did you find most rewarding about being a parent?
78. Did you spoil any of your children?
79. Were you strict or lenient as a parent?
80. Did you find you had to treat each of your children differently? If so, why?
81. How did you feel when the first of your children went to school for the first time?
82. How did you first hear that you were a grandparent and how did you feel about it?
83. What advice do you have for your children and grandchildren about being a parent?
84. Where did your spouse's parents live?
85. When and where did your parents die? What do you remember about it?
86. How did they die? Where were they hospitalized and buried?
87. What do you remember about the death of your spouse's parents?
88. Do you remember hearing your grandparents describe their lives? What did they say?
89. Do you remember your great-grandparents?
90. Who was the oldest person you remember as a child?
91. Do you have any bad habits now or in the past?
92. Have you ever been in a serious accident?
93. What would you consider the most important inventions during your lifetime?
94. Do you remember the first time you saw a television; a car; a refrigerator?
95. How is the world different from what it was like when you were a child?
96. Do you remember your family discussing world events and politics?
97. Do you remember anything about the days of Prohibition?
98. How did the Depression affect you?
99. What U.S. president have you admired the most and why?



100. What did you think of President Franklin D. Roosevelt? How did you react to his death?
101. How did you react to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy?
102. What wars have been fought during your lifetime?
103. What were you doing when you heard the news of the Pearl Harbor bombing?
104. How did World War II affect you?
105. How did the Korean War affect you?
106. How did the Vietnam War affect you?
107. Name a good friend you have known the longest. How many years have you been friends?
108. Has there ever been anyone in your life you would consider a kindred spirit or soul mate? Who was he/she and why did you feel a special bond with him/her?
109. What were the hardest choices you ever had to make?
110. What person really changed the course of your life by something he/she did?
111. Do you remember any advice or comments that had a big impact on how you lived your life?
112. If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?
113. What is the scariest thing that ever happened to you?
114. What kinds of musical instruments have you learned to play?
115. Would you consider yourself creative?
116. What things have you made that others have enjoyed?
117. How would you describe your sense of humor?
118. What is the funniest practical joke you ever played on someone?
119. What activities have you especially enjoyed as an adult?
120. What are your hobbies?
121. What did you like to do when you were not working?
122. What is the most amazing thing that has ever happened to you?
123. Have you ever met any famous people?
124. Who were your parents? Please give full names.
125. Who were your grandparents? Please give full names.
126. Where were they from?
127. How do you feel about the choices you made in school, career, spouse?
128. What organizations or groups have you belonged to?
129. Have you ever won any special awards or prizes as an adult? What were they for?
130. Describe a time and a place you remember feeling truly at peace and happy to be alive. Where were you and what were you doing?
131. What is the most beautiful place you have ever visited and what was it like?
132. What is the longest trip that you have ever gone on? Where did you go?
133. What has been your favorite vacation? Where did you go and why was it special?
134. What was the favorite place you ever visited and what was it like?
135. What pets have you had?
136. Do you have a favorite story about a pet?
137. Is there anything you have always wanted to do but haven't?
138. Have you ever been to a world's fair?
139. What is the single most memorable moment of your life?
140. What or who is your favorite:

Animal? Athlete? Author? Board game? Book? Candy? Card game? Color?

Cookie? Flavor of ice cream? Holiday? Meal? Movie star? Movie?

Restaurant? Song? Sport? Style of music? TV program? Vegetable?

