

GENERAL OUTLINE

1. Who, what, where, when, how.
2. Life details (chronological, by importance, by interest, by personal preference).
3. Surviving relatives.
4. Service details.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- Who has been the most important person in your life? Why?
- What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?
- Who has been the biggest influence on your life? What lessons did that person teach you?
- Who has been the kindest to you in your life?
- What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?
- What is your earliest memory?
- Are there any funny stories your family tells about you that come to mind?
- Are there any funny stories or memories or characters from your life that you want to tell?

- Of what are you most proud?
- When in life have you felt most alone?
- If you could hold on to one memory from your life forever, what would that be?
- How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?
- How would you like to be remembered?
- Do you have any regrets?
- What does your future hold?
- What are your hopes for what the future holds for your children? Your grandchildren?
- Is there any wisdom you'd want to pass on to your grandchildren? What would you want them to know?

GROWING UP

- When and where were you born?
- Where did you grow up?
- What was it like?
- Who were your parents?
- What were your parents like?
- How was your relationship with your parents?
- Did you get into trouble? What was the worst thing you did?
- Do you have any siblings? What were they like growing up?
- What did you look like?
- How would you describe yourself as a child? Were you happy?
- What is your best memory of childhood? Worst?
- Did you have a nickname? How'd you get it?
- Who were your best friends? What were they like?
- How would you describe a perfect day when you were young?
- What did you think your life would be like when you were older?
- Do you have any favorite stories from your childhood?

FAMILY HERITAGE

- What is your ethnic background?
- Where is your mom's family from? Where is your dad's family from?
- Have you ever been there? What was that experience like?
- What traditions have been passed down in your family?
- Who were your favorite relatives?
- Do you remember any of the stories they used to tell you?
- What are the classic family stories? Jokes? Songs?

SCHOOL

- Did you enjoy school?
- What kind of student were you?
- What would you do for fun?
- How would your classmates remember you?
- Are you still friends with anyone from that time in your life?
- What are your best memories of grade school/high school/college/graduate school? Worst memories?
- Was there a teacher or teachers who had a particularly strong influence on your life? Tell me about them.

- Do you have any favorite stories from school?

RAISING CHILDREN

- When did you first find out that you'd be a parent? How did you feel?
- Can you describe the moment when you saw your child for the first time?
- How has being a parent changed you?
- What are your dreams for your children?
- Do you remember when your last child left home for good?
- Do you have any favorite stories about your kids?

WORKING

- What do you do for a living?
- Tell me about how you got into your line of work.
- Do you like your job?
- What did you think you were going to be when you grew up?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What lessons has your work life taught you?
- If you could do anything now, what would you do? Why?
- Do you plan on retiring? If so, when? How do you feel about it?
- Do you have any favorite stories from your work life?

MILITARY

- When were you drafted or when did you enlist?
- What do you remember about the day you enlisted?
- How did you tell your family and friends that you were joining the military? Are there any conversations that stand out from that time?
- If you enlisted, what were some of the reasons that you joined the military? How did you choose your branch of service?
- How did you imagine military life before you joined? How did your perceptions change after serving?
- What was basic training like?
- Can you describe a funny moment from boot camp?
- What are some of the things you remember about adapting to military life?
- Where did you serve during the war?

- If you deployed overseas, how did you tell your loved ones you were being deployed?
- How did you stay in touch with family and friends back home?
- What are some things you remember most about your deployment?
- If you saw multiple deployments, how did they differ from each other? How did you change?
- Can you describe how you felt coming home from combat?
- Was there anything you especially missed about civilian life?
- Is there someone you served with that you remember fondly? Can you tell me about him/her?
- What are some fun things you and your friends did together while you were deployed?
- Did any of your military friends play pranks on each other? Can you describe a funny one?
- Did you ever get caught breaking any rules? Did you ever get away with something you weren't supposed to do?
- Did you ever learn something about a fellow service member that surprised you?
- When did you leave the military? What was that process like?
- What were your first few months out of the service like?
- Was there anything or anyone that helped you during the transition from military to civilian life?
- Do you have advice for others transitioning out of the military?
- How do you think your time in the military affected you?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What are some of your hopes for the future?
- What phrase or word will never be the same now that you served?
- When you were first discharged, what are some things about civilians that were difficult for you to deal with?
- Is there anything you wish civilians understood about military service?
- What are some habits you developed in the service that you like? What are some that you dislike?
- What are some things you miss about being in the service? What are some you are glad to have left behind?
- What has been difficult to communicate to family and friends about your military service?
- Do you have advice for other military couples?
- If you have children, what do you want them to know about your military service?

SERIOUS ILLNESS

- Can you describe your illness?
- Do you think about dying? Are you scared?
- How do you imagine your death?
- Do you regret anything?
- Do you look at your life differently now than before you were diagnosed?
- Do you have any last wishes?
- What have you learned from life? The most important things?
- Has this illness changed you? What have you learned?
- How do you want to be remembered?