

Family History Sample Questions

Family History Interview Questions

This is collection of possible interview questions; by no means should you ask all of these questions. Know who your subject is, go through the list choose questions you feel will draw out key information you wish to learn about your relative. I have attempted to categorize the questions to make it easier to scan the list.

Names

- What is your full name? Why did your parents select this name for you? Do you have a nickname?
- What do you know about your family surname?
- Is there a naming tradition in your family?

Where you grew up

- When and where were you born?
- How did your family come to live there?
- Were there other family members in the area? Who?
- What was the house (apartment, farm, etc.) like? How many rooms? Bathrooms? Did it have electricity? Indoor plumbing? Telephones?
- Were there any special items in the house that you remember?

Your Spouse

- What was the full name of your spouse? Siblings? Parents? When and how did you meet your spouse? What did you do on dates?
- What was it like when you proposed (or were proposed to)? Where and when did it happen? How did you feel?
- Where and when did you get married?
- What memory stands out the most from your wedding day?
- How would you describe your spouse? What do (did) you admire most about them?
- What do you believe is the key to a successful marriage?

Growing Up Years

- What is your earliest childhood memory?
- Describe the personalities of your family members.
- Are there any physical characteristics that run in your family?
- Are there any special heirlooms, photos, bibles or other memorabilia that have been passed down in your family?
- What kind of games did you play growing up? What was your favorite toy and why?
- What was your favorite thing to do for fun (movies, beach, etc.)?
- Did you have family chores? What were they? Which was your least favorite?
- Did you receive an allowance? How much? Did you save your money or spend it?
- What was school like for you as a child? What were your best and worst subjects? Where did you attend grade school? High school? College?
- What school activities and sports did you participate in?
- Do you remember any fads from your youth? Popular hairstyles? Clothes?
- Who were your childhood heroes?
- What were your favorite songs and music?
- Did you have any pets? If so, what kind and what were their names?
- What was your religion growing up? What church, if any, did you attend?
- Have you ever been mentioned in a newspaper?
- Who were your friends when you were growing up? What world events had the most impact on you while you were growing up? Did any of them personally affect your family?
- Describe a typical family dinner. Did you all eat together as a family? Who did the cooking? What were your favorite foods?
- How were holidays (birthdays, Christmas, etc.) celebrated in your family? Did your family have special traditions?
- How is the world today different from what it was like when you were a child?
- Who was the oldest relative you remember as a child? What do you remember about them?
- What stories have come down to you about your parents? Grandparents? More distant ancestors?
- Are there any stories about famous or infamous relatives in your family?
- Do have any recipes been passed down to you from family members?

Being a Parent

- How did you find out you were going to be a parent for the first time?
- Why did you choose your children's names?
- What was your proudest moment as a parent?
- What did your family enjoy doing together?
- What was your profession and how did you choose it?
- If you could have had any other profession, what would it have been? Why wasn't it your first choice?
- Of all the things you learned from your parents, which do you feel was the most valuable?
- What accomplishments are you the most proud of?
- What is the one thing you most want people to remember about you?

