

Story
Corps®



STORYCORPS
Connect

TEACHER TOOLKIT

2020



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INTRODUCTION

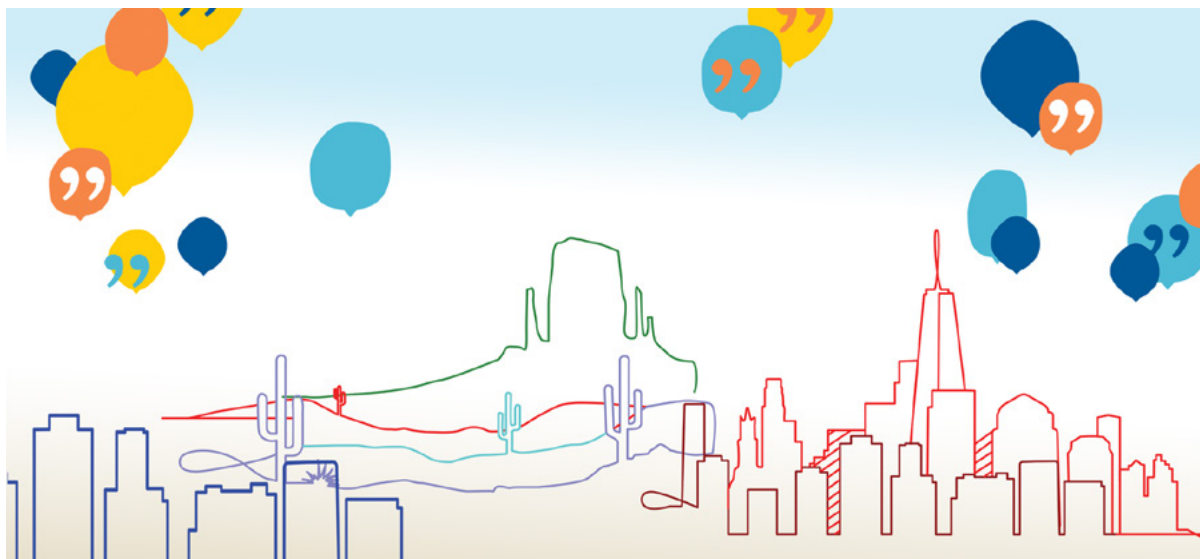
Since 2003, StoryCorps has given over 600,000 people of all backgrounds and beliefs the chance to record interviews about their lives and preserve them in the Library of Congress. An important part of this effort has been connecting with educators and students to begin to create a culture of listening across the United States with the simple concept of asking students to honor someone in their lives with an interview.

Up until now, StoryCorps interviews have been recorded face-to-face. But the largest global health crisis in a century is changing the way we live and interact with our friends, neighbors, and families. In our own small way, we at StoryCorps want to help you to connect and share stories with loved ones at this unprecedented time.

With a fierce determination to honor the wisdom of older generations and to leave a legacy for younger generations, we are excited to share StoryCorps Connect—a first-of-its-kind technology that enables people across the country to take part in the magic of a StoryCorps interview with a loved one, but while doing it remotely.

Through StoryCorps Connect, students and loved ones can interview one another remotely through a computer or a mobile device and instantly share the recording with the [StoryCorps' Online Archive](#) and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

Through this new platform, students can share a meaningful conversation with a grandparent or another elder remotely, asking important questions, and listening carefully to their answers. We put together this Toolkit to help you employ StoryCorps Connect with your students during the COVID-19 Pandemic.



ABOUT STORYCORPS CONNECT

StoryCorps Connect is a new platform that makes it possible to record and preserve meaningful conversations remotely.

StoryCorps Connect was developed in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This platform will help connect generations, preserve the wisdom of humanity, and offer a source of comfort and meaning to elders who may feel isolated and alone. “Social distancing” is the exact opposite of the StoryCorps ethos, which strives to bring people together and acknowledge and celebrate our common humanity. At this time of physical separation, the StoryCorps interview is a more essential tool than ever before for bringing us together.



If you'd like to hear from fellow educators or share your own experiences, head over to the [StoryCorps in the Classroom](#) Facebook group.

**LESSON PLAN****PARTICIPATING IN STORYCORPS CONNECT**

For this project, students will learn listening and interviewing skills and use StoryCorps Connect to record an interview with an elder in their family or community. Storytelling and active listening are critical skills for young people. If students don't have an elder to interview or a grandparent is ill at the moment, please encourage them to think about another important person in their life who they might talk to. Feel free to adapt this lesson plan to best meet your students' needs.

OBJECTIVES

- **Learn** about StoryCorps and the interview model.
- **Ask questions** to develop a story and express a shared experience.
- **Create** a primary source using technology (and have the option to enter it into the historical record).
- **Write** archive-quality titles, summaries, and keywords.

TARGET GRADE LEVEL: 8-12**TIME NEEDED:**

- **2 hours** of at-home assignments. Students will conduct their interviews (ideally 40 minutes, but they can be as short as 20) remotely with their partner.

MATERIALS

- ✓ Wi-Fi access (at home)
- ✓ Access to a computer or mobile device.
- ✓ This assignment is for children 13 and older. Under StoryCorps' [Terms of Use](#), parental or guardian consent is required for people under the age of 18 to register for a StoryCorps account, and to record and share an interview.
- ✓ You can find a sample permission slip on page 13 if you would like to get additional parental or guardian permission for any student participating in the interview.

Please note that publishing an interview is not a requirement for this project and students can participate without recording or signing up for an account on Storycorps Connect.



PART I: ABOUT STORYCORPS / WHY DO STORIES MATTER?

Introduce students to StoryCorps and discuss the importance of sharing and listening to stories. You can use a selection of StoryCorps animations to introduce these core concepts. All videos and content in this playlist can be found at [storycorps.org](https://www.storycorps.org).

ANIMATIONS

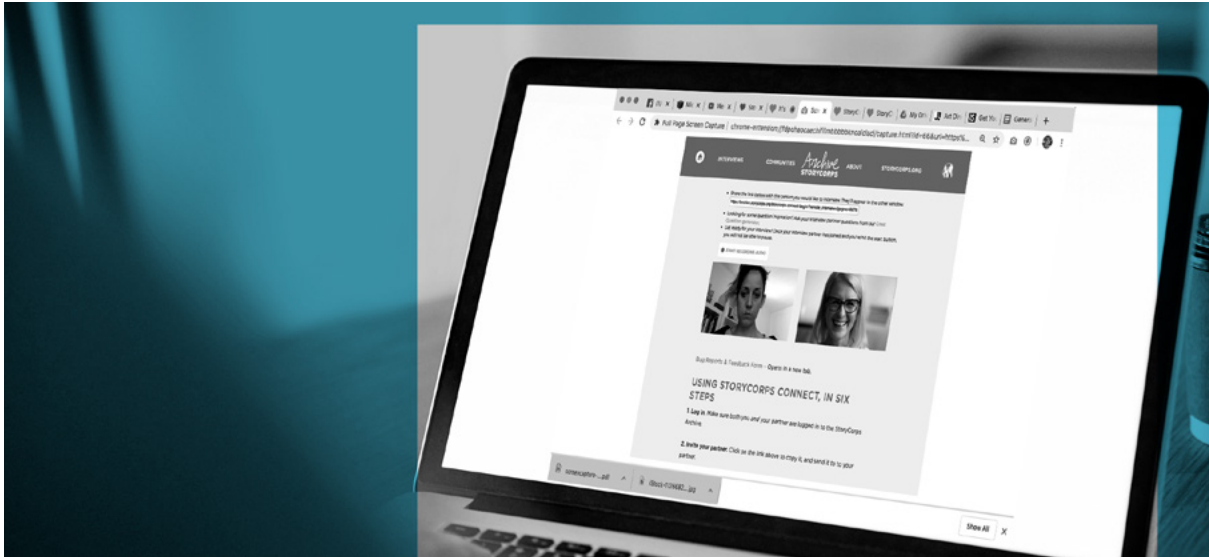
- ▶ **“An Intro to StoryCorps from our Founder Dave Isay” (3 min.)**
- ▶ **“No More Questions” (4 min.)**
- ▶ **“Eyes on the Stars” (3 min.)**
- ▶ **“The Icing on the Cake” (3 min.)**
- ▶ **“My Father, the Giant” (2 min.)**
- ▶ **“Detective Simmons” (3 min.)**
- ▶ **“Mi Abuela Panchita” (2 min.)**
- ▶ **“Silvia’s Legacy” (2.5 min.)**

VIDEOS ABOUT INTERVIEWING

- ▶ **“Q and A” (4 min.)**
- ▶ **“Four Tips for an Effective Interview” (2 min.)**
- ▶ **“Tips for Active Listening” (4 min.)**

After watching one or more of the animations, ask your students to jot down some key points that they learned from the story. Use the following prompts for an online discussion or individual reflection:

- ❓ What are some important lessons have you learned from an elder or a mentor in your life?
- ❓ What did you learn from this story, and why is it important?
- ❓ What is the role of stories in our society? Why are stories important?
- ❓ How can you show that you’re truly listening to someone? Is there an example you can share from one of the animations?
- ❓ What makes you feel respected and heard when you are talking to someone?



PART II: PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Once students have had an introduction to StoryCorps and the importance of stories, they should take some time to reflect on who they might choose as a conversation partner for this project.

- **Choose a Partner:** Ask your students whom they would like to record with for this assignment and why. Students should think about an elder or caregiver who they would want to honor with an interview. Some helpful questions to ask your students:
 - Who is one person in your family whose life story you'd want to celebrate during this crisis?
 - Who in your life might find this type of recording meaningful?
 - What family stories or memories are important for you to preserve at this time?
- **Make a Plan:** Each student should make a plan for their interview day by identifying questions they'd like to ask using the Great Questions List in this toolkit.

These questions are also available in our [Great Questions list](#) or at the end of this toolkit.

- **Set a Time:** Students will need to reach out to their recording partner in advance to plan a time for their interview. When contacting their recording partners, students should describe StoryCorps Connect and provide a few sample questions to let their partners prepare for the upcoming interview.



PART III: RECORD A PRACTICE INTERVIEW WITH A FELLOW STUDENT THROUGH STORYCORPS CONNECT

Now it's time for them to practice using StoryCorps Connect to conduct an interview. Have students take some time as a class or individually to learn how to sign into and use StoryCorps Connect. You can have students refer to the following documents for helpful information:



Getting Started



Recording Tips



Conversation Tips

- Each student should register for their own StoryCorps account, with parental or guardian consent.
- Using the Great Questions handout, instruct each student to select 3-4 questions to ask their interview partner.
- Remind students to use the skills they learned in the videos and to ask follow-up questions (e.g., Can you tell me more about that? Why do you think that happened? What do you mean by that?).



SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT FOR RECORDING USING STORYCORPS CONNECT

- Participants will need access to a smartphone, computer, or tablet with the latest device software as well as a Wi-Fi signal to upload interviews. StoryCorps Connect can be accessed through the current version of most internet browsers.
- For students without access to a device or without parental or guardian consent (see below), teachers can easily modify this lesson to allow for participation. Have students talk to an elder or other important person by phone and write a short narrative about the conversation, instead of recording. They can still take part in the debrief.
- StoryCorps Connect prompts users in English; however, participants may record in any language.



RECORD A PRACTICE INTERVIEW, IN SEVEN STEPS:

1. **Prepare for your interview** using our Great Questions list. A standard StoryCorps interview is forty minutes long (though your interview can be shorter). Most participants have time to ask 6-8 questions over the course of an interview.
2. **Log in.** Make sure both you *and* your partner are logged in to the StoryCorps Archive.
3. **Click the “Record Your StoryCorps Interview” button below to go to the recording page.** Once you are there, send the provided interview link to your partner. Don’t forget that your interview partner will also need to log in to the StoryCorps Archive before you record.
4. **Start recording, and ask important questions.** Click “Start Audio Recording”. Don’t forget to use our **Great Questions**.
5. **End your interview.** Click “Stop Recording,” and then, “Save Interview”.
6. **Add a title and keywords to your interview** if you are the organizer of the interview. If you are the invitee, you won’t need to do anything!
7. **Share and archive your interview.** If you are the organizer of the interview, you’ll be prompted to select your **privacy settings**. Note: it might take up to 30 minutes for you to access to your interview while it is being processed.
 - **Public:** Your interview and related information are available to anyone on the web.
 - **StoryCorps Community:** Your interview and related information are available to anyone with an account on the StoryCorps Archive.
 - **Private:** Your interview and related information are private, and only visible to you on the StoryCorps Archive website.



DEBRIEF

Facilitate a short discussion with your class using the following prompts:

- ❓ What challenges or surprises did you encounter during your interview, and how did you work to address them?
- ❓ What is the most memorable moment of the interview for you?
- ❓ What is one thing from this practice interview that you want to remember for when you conduct your own interview? Why is it important?



PART IV: RECORDING YOUR INTERVIEW WITH A LOVED ONE

Now that students know how to be great interviewers and listeners and use StoryCorps Connect, they are ready to record!

Each student should:

- ✓ Schedule a recording time with their interview partner.
- ✓ Send the **Getting Started**, **Recording Tips** and **Conversation Tips** documents to their partner in advance.
- ✓ Ask their interview partner to register for their own StoryCorps account [here](#).
- ✓ Talk to their interview partner about the privacy settings.



PART V: CLOSING / DEBRIEF

After everyone has had a chance to record a StoryCorps Connect interview, take some time to debrief as a group. Facilitate a discussion among students using the questions below. You could also consider having each student write a brief reflection about the experience using these prompts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❓ How did your partner react to the interview experience?
- ❓ How did you feel as an interviewer?
- ❓ What challenges or surprises did you encounter, and how did you work to address them?
- ❓ What question evoked a particularly memorable response?
- ❓ What makes an interview different from a text as a historical reference?
- ❓ What could future historians learn about this moment in history from listening to your interview?
- ❓ What would you do differently if you were to conduct another interview?
- ❓ Who else in your life would you like to interview?



ADDITIONAL WAYS TO USE STORYCORPS IN YOUR VIRTUAL CLASSROOM :

- **Have students write a reflection paper,** a follow-up essay, or a poem inspired by their interview and what it meant to record with a loved one at this current time in history.
- **Ask students to transcribe a part of their interview,** and/or use quotes from your interview to support another project or research paper.
- **Have students edit a short segment** from their interview using free editing software (such as Audacity)
- **Create a podcast** from the interviews recorded by your class.
- **Create a Community:** You can create a Community Page on archive.storycorps.org to compile and share the stories of your classroom. Collect your students' stories in one place, create custom question lists, track interview progress, and easily host a listening party. Learn more about how to set up a Community Page [here](#).





PARENTAL OR GUARDIAN CONSENT & PRIVACY SETTINGS

Under StoryCorps Connect’s terms of use: Children under the age of 13 may not participate in a StoryCorps Connect recording, and parental or guardian consent is required for people under the age of 18 to register for a StoryCorps Archive account. You can review StoryCorps’ full terms of use at archive.storycorps.org/terms-of-use.

If you choose to require a parental or guardian permission slip, we have included a sample one here that you can easily customize to your needs. (Please note: The permission slip is for school/community use only and should not be submitted to StoryCorps.)

After recording, students will be prompted to publish their interview to the StoryCorps Archive, making the recording publicly available online at archive.storycorps.org and sharing it with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. They will have the option of choosing between three Privacy Settings:

- **Everyone:** Your interview and related information are available to anyone on the web.
- **StoryCorps Community:** Your interview and related information are available to anyone with an account on the StoryCorps Archive.
- **Private:** Your interview and related information are private.

Please be aware that StoryCorps may still use your interview and other materials in the following ways, including but not limited to: broadcasts on public radio, animated and other audio-visual content, educational use, and any other StoryCorps programs. StoryCorps can also share your interviews with community and media organizations for use on their platforms and sites.

Please note: Only published interviews will be accessible and shareable. Those who do not want to publish the interview can still conduct an unrecorded interview via the phone or video call but should not use StoryCorps Connect. This is to preserve participant privacy.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

StoryCorps Connect and Archive contain user-generated content that is not reviewed before it is posted online. While we adhere to a strict set of Community Guidelines and work to maintain a culture of tolerance and acceptance, not all published content will be appropriate for all individuals. We also have a flagging mechanism in place to help further identify content that violates our Community Guidelines. We ask teachers, educators, and caregivers to familiarize themselves with the StoryCorps Archive, to review the Community Guidelines listed at archive.storycorps.org, and to use discretion in adopting the project.

Connect directly with other educators and StoryCorps staff in our StoryCorps in the Classroom Facebook group and find answers to your technical support questions in our [Help Center](https://storycorps.org/help-center) at storycorps.org.



ABOUT STORYCORPS

Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps has given over 600,000 people of all backgrounds and beliefs the chance to record interviews about their lives. The organization preserves the recordings in its archive and with the Library of Congress and shares select stories with the public through StoryCorps' weekly podcast, NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. These powerful human stories reflect the vast range of experiences from across the United States; engender empathy and connection; and remind us of our shared humanity.

ABOUT THE STORYCORPS ARCHIVE

The StoryCorps Archive is the largest single collection of human voices, featuring conversations recorded in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. The full collection of interviews is housed at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Visit archive.storycorps.org to access a selection of the interviews shared by people who have recorded a conversation with StoryCorps since 2003. This site represents a growing archive: new interviews are added every day by StoryCorps and by people from across the country and around the world. It was developed as a resource for the public, as well as students, educators, researchers, noncommercial media makers, community partner organizations, and others involved in scholarly or cultural work.



SAMPLE PERMISSION SLIP

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Over the coming weeks, our class will be participating in a project created through the nonprofit StoryCorps featuring its new platform called StoryCorps Connect.

Using video technology, StoryCorps Connect enables students across the country to take part in the magic of a StoryCorps interview with a loved one, but while doing it remotely.

Students will record an interview with a grandparent or other elder using StoryCorps Connect to foster meaningful connections within families, communities, and the classroom at this time of social distancing. In order to participate, you must acknowledge that your child is not under the age of 13. If your child is under the age of 18, they will need your consent to register for an account on the StoryCorps Archive in accordance with the terms of use.

I understand that this project will include my child recording an interview with an elder and taking a picture with that individual. I understand that with the consent of all interview participants, my child will have the option to publish the interview and photograph online to a public website at archive.storycorps.org.

I understand that the publication of the interview and photograph will result in them both being archived in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

I wish for my child to participate through the StoryCorps Connect platform, I hereby give permission for (student's name) to participate in this national education initiative through StoryCorps and the StoryCorps Connect platform.

(parent/guardian signature)

(date)

ABOUT STORYCORPS

Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps is an independently funded 501(c)3 organization that has given over 500,000 people—Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs, in towns and cities in all 50 states—the chance to record interviews about their lives. The organization preserves the recordings in its archive at the Library of Congress, the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered, and shares select stories with the public through StoryCorps' weekly podcast, NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. These powerful human stories reflect the vast range of American experiences, wisdom, and values; engender empathy and connection; and remind us how much more we have in common than divides us. Learn more at STORYCORPS.ORG.



SUGGESTED QUESTIONS LISTS

! (Remember: Pick between 6 and 8 questions)

Most participants are able to get through about 6 questions during a 40-minute interview, so please select 6-8 questions from the lists below for your interview partner. Keep in mind that sometimes the best questions are the ones that you've always wanted to ask, so feel free to add a few of your own.

GREAT QUESTIONS FOR ANYONE

1. Can you tell me about a person who has been kindest to you in your life?
2. Can you tell me about one of your happiest memories?
3. Can you tell me about one of your most difficult memories?
4. Can you tell me about someone who has had a big influence on your life? What lessons did that person teach you?
5. What do you feel most grateful for in your life?
6. What are some of the most important lessons you've learned in life?
7. What is your favorite memory of me?
8. What are you proudest of in your life?
9. Can you remember a time in your life when you felt most alone?
10. How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?
11. How would you like to be remembered?
12. Do you have any regrets?
13. What are your hopes for me? For my children?
14. If this was to be our very last conversation, is there anything you'd want to say to me?
15. For future generations of your family listening to this years from now: is there any wisdom you'd want to pass on to them? What would you want them to know?
16. Is there anything that you've never told me but want to tell me now?
17. Are there things about me that you've always wanted to know but have never asked?
18. Turn the tables: tell the person you're interviewing what they've meant to you.
19. Add your own question(s) here.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC QUESTIONS

1. How has living through this experience made you feel?
2. Are you afraid? What frightens you?
3. What has given you comfort and hope during this time?
4. What has been the most challenging part of this experience?
5. What is the toughest part of your days right now? the best?
6. What's the biggest way your life has changed because of the pandemic?
7. Is there someone you can't see right now who you really wish you could?
8. How is this experience different from other historical events you've lived through?
9. If you could ask anyone from your life, living or dead, for advice on getting through this, who would it be and what would you ask them?
10. Do you or have you had Covid-19? What is/was that experience like for you?
11. What memory of this time do you think will stay with you?
12. Has this experience changed you? If so, how?
13. What have you learned from this experience?
14. Who do you most worry about in your family or circle of friends right now?
15. If the quarantine ended tomorrow, what's the first thing you'd do?
16. Is there anything you want to say to me given what we're living through at this moment?

GRANDPARENTS

1. Where did you grow up?
2. What was your childhood like?
3. Who were your favorite relatives?
4. What was my mom/dad like growing up?
5. Do you remember any songs that you used to sing to her/him? Can you sing them now?
6. What is the worst thing she/he ever did?
7. What were your parents or guardians like?
8. What were your grandparents like?
9. Are you proud of me?