

Enter our Grandparent Tales Writing Contest

Interview your grandparents or other older adults

Grandparents have lived a long time and tell some very interesting stories. Stagebridge wants to encourage students to bridge the generations, to talk, listen, and then write stories about their elders. We also want to share these stories with others.

The written stories may include oral stories they have heard from their grandparents, stories they heard about their grandparents or, perhaps, stories concerning how they feel about their grandparents or other elders in their lives. Students may also draw a picture to illustrate the story. Fill out the entry form and send the story and/or illustration to our “**Grandparent Tales Writing Contest.**”



Make sure the illustration is on white paper using black pen, paint, or marker because we need to photocopy them for the judges. Colored crayons do not reproduce well.

Prizes Every participating student receives a certificate. Teachers receive Stagebridge storytelling tapes. Winning entries receive prizes from our community and corporate sponsors, and opportunities to have their story printed in the newspaper, read on radio or published on our web site (www.stagebridge.org).

Explore Your Family History Writing about your grandparents can be a family affair. Take time to sit, talk, and listen to your grandparents or other elders in your life. Ask your parents about them, if your grandparents live elsewhere or if they have died. Perhaps your grandparents died before you were born or when you were very young. If your grandparents speak another language, your parents can translate their stories for you. You will hear some fascinating stories. The stories might be drawn from your grandparents' real lives, stories they have made up, or perhaps a story they heard when they were children. Your parents will have memories and stories about their parents (your grandparents). You may also write your own story about what you have done with your grandparents or about how you feel about them.

Tips

- ❖ Sit down with your grandparents at a time and place without a lot of noise or other distractions. Familiar surroundings will also help everyone feel comfortable. Stop the interview if people get tired; then start again later.
- ❖ Try not to ask questions that can be answered with only a “yes,” “no,” or a date.
- ❖ Ask specific but open-ended questions such as “Where did you go to school, and do you remember something exciting that happened to you?”
- ❖ Always listen carefully to the answers to your questions.
- ❖ Be ready with several different questions. Sometimes it takes a little while for your grandparents to relax and talk about their lives. Some questions may remind them of what happened in their lives, and some will not. If they hesitate in the middle of answering, try asking, “What happened next?”
- ❖ Use props whenever possible. Photo albums, scrapbooks, or favorite objects call up memories.

Sample Questions

These questions can help get the interview started. You don’t need to ask them all, but you should have several prepared. You can also ask questions that grow out of your grandparents’ answers.

- ❖ Ask them to pick a family photograph and tell you about it. What was happening in their lives when this photograph was taken?
- ❖ Where did you go to school? Do you remember something exciting, interesting, or embarrassing that happened to you there?
- ❖ What games did you play as a child? What was your favorite? Do you remember an interesting happening while playing?
- ❖ What stories did you like as a child? Would you please tell it to me?
- ❖ How did you learn to cook? What was your favorite or worse dish? Why? Did you ever move from one place to another? Why? What happened?
- ❖ Tell me about one of your first jobs? What were conditions like then?
- ❖ How did you meet the person you married? What was a memorable moment in your relationship?
- ❖ What was one of your most exciting adventures or journeys?
- ❖ How did a war, natural disaster, or other event such as a depression or the civil rights movement affect your life?
- ❖ What would you like me to always remember?