

Activity 2: Before You Begin

Student Name _____ Date _____

Before you begin your oral history project consider the following tips:

Finding veteran participants:

1. One of the easiest ways to find veteran participants is to create personalized business cards with the name of your project and your contact information and disseminate these to your students. Students most likely know someone in the community who may be willing to participate in the oral history interview.
2. Contact your local VFW or American Legion posts, and tell them about your project and the number of veterans you would like to interview. These resources most likely have a newsletter or a website where they can post a flyer advertising your project.
3. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. Call local nursing or veteran's homes to see if they have any residents who might like to participate. You can even approach people in the grocery store or local farmer's market who are wearing proof of their service on a ball cap or t-shirt. When veterans hear this project is for kids, they are much more likely to be receptive.

Documentation

1. It is very important to create credible and verifiable primary source oral histories. One way to do this is to request that each veteran bring a copy of their DD-214 to the interview. Ask them to scratch out their social security number. This document provides a summary of their military career and is therefore one way to make your research stand apart from the regular interview.
2. In addition to the DD-214, you should request that each veteran bring in any memorabilia they may have from their time in Vietnam. Some may have photos, helmets, dog tags, etc. Take pictures of these items to include in the final digital history project.
3. After each interview, have each group pose in a photo with their veteran interviewee. These photos make great keepsakes later!

Videotaping:

1. Ask around for a professional videographer who may be willing to donate their time to teach you how to set up your space. Again, enlist the aid of your students. Some may have parents who know their way around a camera. Many people are willing to donate their time when it comes to veterans and children.
2. You will need a good camera and a solid color backdrop along with a small lavalier microphone to clip to the interviewee (this keeps out a lot of background noise during the critical interview

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process).

3. You will need a quiet space or room in the building, preferably a handicap accessible space.
4. Invest in a portable hard drive to transfer your video files to at the end of every interview day. Video files take up a lot of space, and the camera's memory may not hold all of the files.

Organizing Student Groups

Review with the class the responsibilities of each position in the group. Make handouts of the Worksheet [Choosing Group Positions](#).

Have students pick the position that speaks to them and then answer the question, "I would be good for this position because..." Have each student also pick a second choice just in case.

Organize groups based on the interests indicated in the activity. Be sure that students understand that each role is very important to the final product of the group as a whole and that they must take their responsibilities seriously.