

## Story Detectives!

Did you know you can be a story detective?! Think about someone you love, what stories do they have that can give clues to the past? Use these detective questions to find out more about that story and create a graphic novel or creative project to share what you learned!

### Supplies:

- Pencil & Paper

### Optional:

- Investigation Sheet (included at end)
- Access to phone or laptop
- Crayons/colored pencils/markers
- Construction Paper & Blank Paper
- Graphic Novel Template (included at end)



### Instructions:

Real stories from real people give us important clues about the past and you can help discover and investigate those stories by becoming a story detective! Since stories disappear along with their owners, by learning these stories you are becoming a story keeper too!

1. Think of **someone** you know that has a story you want to know more about or who has had a different life than yours. . . Maybe a parent, a grandparent, a friend, or a sibling!

**Level Up:** Create a detective team! Choose a story partner. Plan to investigate their story and then have them investigate a story in your life!

2. Now that you have a person in mind, think about a **story** that person has that you want to know more about.

**Here are some ideas:**

- What life was like when they were growing up?
- Did they move to this country/city/state from somewhere else? What was the place they moved from like?
- Have they seen a really interesting event from the past? (Maybe people walking on the moon, the Civil Rights Movement, WWII, or right before computers were invented)!
- Do they have an interesting object or picture you're curious about? What is the story behind it?

3. Next, plan your **investigative interview**. Think about what **questions** you can ask them. Using our detective sheet (included at end), write them down. A good story detective is always ready for an interview!

**Here are some ideas of good detective questions:**

- What was it like when you were my age?
- What were your favorite things to eat when you were my age?
- What kind of things did you do for fun?
- How did you travel around your city?
- What is one thing we have now that you didn't have as a kid?
- What is the most amazing thing you've seen in your life?
- What is one thing we have now you never thought would be invented?
- You saw \_\_\_\_\_. What was that like?
- Where did you live before \_\_\_\_\_. What did it look like? What was your favorite place there?
- What was it like to live through/before \_\_\_\_\_ [event].

4. With a grown-ups' help, hold your interview! Call the person on the phone or video call them on a computer. If they live with you, you can interview them in person!

**Level Up:** If you want, you can film or record the interview so you can save it forever! It's very special to have the story even when the person is gone!

5. During the interview **listen** carefully. Sometimes the person will give you **clues** to other questions! Be sure to write these clues and any other facts down on your detective sheet!

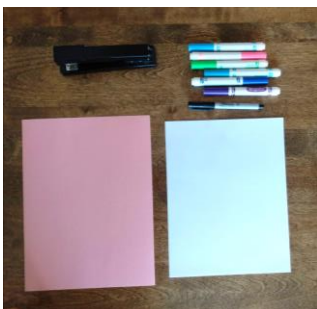
**During the interview these are good clue questions to ask!**

- Why did . . . .?
  - Tell me about. . . .?
  - Describe \_\_\_\_\_ . . . .
  - What did . . . .?
  - How did . . . .?
6. Remember, a good story detective:
- **Always listens** . . .you never know when you're going to get a clue!
  - **Respects the story teller.** Remember, this is *their* story! You get to be the detective who hears it and keeper who saves it.
  - **Avoids yes/no questions.** You want to know as much of the story as possible!
  - Says, "**Thank you** for sharing your story with me."
7. Whew! You aced that interview! Now, finish your detective job! Think about your interview:
- What do you want to know more about?
  - What is the most interesting thing you learned?
  - How does this change the way you think about the past?

**Level Up:** Interview two people about the same event. What did they say that was the same? What did they say that was different?

8. Finally, **share** your investigation with your family and friends!

Create a graphic novel or picture book about the story you learned more about!



1. Gather your supplies.



2. Fold the paper in half. Place blank pages inside your cover.



3. Open to the middle. Staple pages together on top and bottom.



4. Add a title and decorate the cover.



5. Draw the story you just investigated! Be sure to include all the clues!

6. Be sure to share a picture of your creation with the person you interviewed! You can also share it with us! @fcmo

### Here are some other ideas for a creative project:

- Create a newspaper that tells the story you discovered!
- Draw a picture about the most interesting thing you learned.
- Build a scene of the story out of legos or blocks!
- Share the recording with your whole family to have forever!

### Real-Life Story Detectives:

Did you know there are people who work as real life story detectives?! People called **historians** work hard to collect stories of the past from people alive today so that in the future we can learn from those stories! These stories are called **oral histories**! Oral histories are important because they are ways to learn about the past through ordinary people—just like you! They remind us that big events in history were made up of lots and lots of individual stories. We also learn from oral histories that **the past is different depending on who's telling it**. We learn how different people experience the same event and how perspectives can be powerful. It also reminds us that it's important to listen to and respect every side of history.



While historians work hard to save oral histories, oral histories can be collected by anyone—they put the power to record history in the hands of the average person!

**Your story can be history!** Someday people will wonder what your life was like because every day you're living in history. Don't be afraid to tell your story!

## Explore More!

- Check out the Fort Collins History Connection to learn more about local Fort Collins stories and explore pictures of Fort Collins in the past (<https://history.fcgov.com/>)
- Listen to some Oral Histories from the NPS about new immigrants to Ellis Island (<https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/education/classrooms/oral-histories.htm>)
- Read Books About Passing Along Stories:
  - *Song and Dance Man* by Karen Ackerman
  - *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* by Tomie dePaola
  - *My Grandmother's Cookie Jar* by Montzalee Miller
  - *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say
  - *Tea Cakes for Tosh* by Kelly Starling Lyons
  - *Lift Every Voice and Sing* by Kelly Starling Lyons
  - *Mrs. Katz and Tush* by Patricia Polacco

**\*Tip:** Check your local library e-books or YouTube for read-aloud videos!
- Books For Older Kids
  - *Remember Pearl Harbor: Japanese and American Survivors Tell Their Stories* by Thomas Allen
  - *Lasting Echoes: An Oral History of Native American People* by Joseph Bruchac
  - *Voices from Vietnam* by Barry Denenberg
  - *Remember D-Day: Both Sides Tell Their Stories* by Ronald J. Drez
  - *Out of the Mouths of Slaves: African American Oral History* by Carole Marsh
  - *Remember World War II: Kids Who Survived Tell Their Stories* by Dorinda M. Nicholson
  - *Kinderlager: An oral History of Young Holocaust Survivors* by Milton J. Nieuwsma

Interview File #:

\_\_\_\_\_

# Detective Log

Person's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

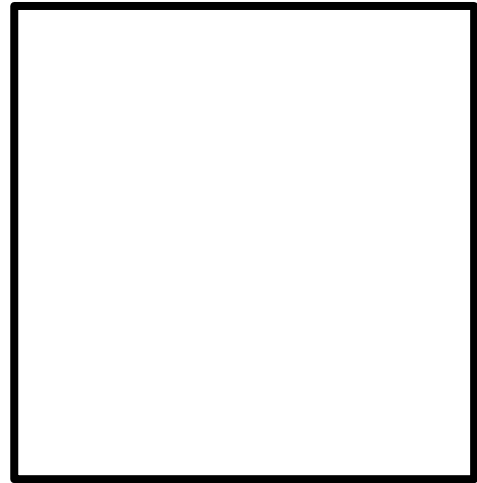
When were they born? \_\_\_\_\_

Where were they born? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where do they live now? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Draw a picture of your person.

Question 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Clues:

Question 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Clues:

