

Lesson Plan: Title: Gathering the Evidence: Mastering Oral History and Interviewing Family Interest/Topic: Personal & Family History; Communities & Cultures; Intro to Geography Content: Sequential Lesson 2 (Building on Primary Sources and Personal Timelines) Materials Needed: Notebook or blank paper (the same one used in Lesson 1) Pen/Pencil Handout/Whiteboard displaying sample open-ended and closed-ended questions Optional: Access to simple audio recording software (for practice/modeling, adaptable to phone/tablet) I. Introduction (5 minutes) Review Previous Concepts (Bridge Language) Educator Prompt: In Lesson 1, we identified existing Primary Sources, like photos or old toys, that told *your* personal history. Now that we know history relies on firsthand accounts, how can we create new primary sources? (Expected answer: By talking to the witnesses!) Hook: Stories That Live Educator Prompt: Think about the two family members you identified last time. They hold stories—memories of a time you never experienced. Those memories are living history. Learning Objectives (Tell Them What You'll Teach) By the end of this lesson, you will be able to: Define 'Oral History' and recognize its importance as a Primary Source. Differentiate between closed-ended (weak) and open-ended (strong) interview questions. Develop a set of respectful, open-ended questions targeting generational changes in Social Structures (S) and Culture (C). Success Criteria: You have successfully completed this lesson when you have finalized a list of 5-7 well-structured, open-ended questions suitable for collecting detailed historical accounts from a family member. II. Content Presentation & Modeling (I Do) (10 minutes) What is Oral History? (The Big Idea - I, C) Oral History is a method of gathering and preserving historical information through recorded interviews with people who participated in or observed past events. It creates a new Primary Source! Connecting to Lesson 1: If a photo is a Primary Source because it was taken at the time, an Oral History interview is a Primary Source because it is a direct, firsthand account of someone's experience. The Historian's Challenge: Asking the Right Questions We cannot get deep historical evidence with simple questions. We must ask open-ended questions that require detailed, narrative answers, not just "yes" or "no." | Closed (Weak) Question | Open-Ended (Strong) Question | Why? (Historical Value) | |---|---|---| | Did you like your school? | Describe a typical school day when you were my age. | Elicits context, social norms (S), and detailed environment. | | Did you have cell phones then? | How did your family communicate important news before cell phones and email were common? | Focuses on communication technology (T) and family structure (S). | Educator Modeling: I model asking a closed question to a student, receiving a one-word answer, and then rephrasing it into an open-ended question that forces a narrative response (e.g., "Tell me the story of your favorite family tradition."). III. Guided Practice (We Do) (15 minutes) Activity 1: Question Conversion (Social Structures & Technology - S, T) We will take weak questions and turn them into strong, historical ones that reveal Social Structures (family norms, community roles) or the impact of Technology (how daily life changed). Instructions: (Display these on the board/screen) 1. "Did you always live here?" -> Convert to: "What was the biggest difference between the neighborhood where you grew up and the neighborhood where you live now?" (Focus: S/N) 2. "Was your job hard?" -> Convert to: "How did technology change the way your job was done between the time you started and the time you retired?" (Focus: T/E) Check-In (Formative Assessment): Learners participate in a quick Q&A, offering their own conversions for a third prompt (e.g., "Did your grandparents teach you things?" Convert to: "What specific skills or knowledge were passed down from your grandparents to you, and how did they teach them?"). Ensure they grasp that the best questions prompt stories. Activity 2: Drafting Core Questions (Culture & Social Structure - C, S) Building on the identified family members, learners will draft three core questions, focusing on either Culture (traditions, values) or Social Structure (family roles, community life). Instructions: Use the format: "Tell me about..." or "Describe..." IV. Independent Practice (You Do) (15 minutes) The Historian's Questionnaire (Application and Refinement) Learners will now finalize their interview guide, ensuring their questions are specific, open-ended, and target verifiable historical memories. Instructions: 1. Review your three drafted questions and ensure they are open-ended. 2. Add 2 to 4 more questions, making sure your final list (5-7 questions) covers at least two different categories: * **Life Events/Ideas (I):** E.g., How did your view of the future change after a major event (war, technological change)? * **Culture (C):** E.g., Describe a typical family meal and what was discussed at the table. * **Technology/Economics (T/E):** E.g., How did your family

acquire things like clothes or food when you were young (use of shops, internet, making things)? 3. Write one sentence explaining why asking *these specific questions* will help you uncover a Primary Source about your family's history. Differentiation: * *Scaffolding:* Provide question stems ("Tell me the story of the first time you...") for those struggling with phrasing. * *Extension:* Advanced learners should include a final question designed to connect their family member's history back to a significant local or national event (e.g., "Where were you when [historic event] happened?"). V. Conclusion & Recap (5 minutes) Closure and Takeaways (Tell Them What You Taught) Review the Objectives: Why is an interview transcript considered a Primary Source? (Because it is a firsthand account). What is the main characteristic of a good historical interview question? (It must be open-ended, generating a story.) Summarize the Journey: We started by analyzing *our own* artifacts (L1); now we are preparing to *collect* new artifacts—the stories—from our first community: the family. Summative Assessment Check The educator quickly reviews each student's final list of 5-7 questions, verifying that they are primarily open-ended and demonstrate an attempt to gather narrative, historical detail rather than simple facts. Flow to Next Lesson Now that you have your historian's questionnaire, the next step is the interview! Your homework is to conduct this interview, either by recording it (if possible) or by taking detailed notes. Next lesson, we will analyze the data you collected to understand how your family history reflects changes in Social Structures (S) and Culture (C) across generations.