



Episode 19: I Want to Interview a Living Relative

5 Minute Challenge—**Choose a living relative, and set up an appointment!**

Steps:

1. **Review the genealogical information you have and the information you need:**

Decide what information you need and what you'd like to learn about your family.

2. **Select a relative who you think can provide the information you need:**

Ask relatives who might be the best resource to learn the things you want to learn.

3. **Call, e-mail, or write a letter to set up the interview:**

Prepare your relative. Explain what you are doing and why.

Let the person know what you want to learn from him or her.



Helpful hints:

Prepare for the interview!

Know what you want to learn. Send a copy of your questions to your relative in advance so that he or she can feel comfortable and ready.

Enjoy the experience! Help it be a great experience for both you and your living relative.



Vocabulary

See page 2 for helpful tips and vocabulary to know, to ensure your interview is a success.

Tips for Conducting an Interview with a Relative

Once you've made an appointment to interview a relative, you've completed the challenge. Congratulations! Now here are some suggestions for conducting the interview:

Send a follow-up letter:

This gives your relative some time to find papers or to think about what he or she can remember. Include in the letter:

- Date, time, and place of the interview.
- Things you would like to learn and some questions you will ask. (See below.)
- Documents, photos, heirlooms, etc. that you would like your relative to find ahead of time.

Write down the questions you want to ask:

Here are some suggestions:

1. What is your full name? When and where were you born? Who did you marry?
2. What memories can you share about your father? Mother? Siblings?
2. Do you have photos of your family members that we could look at?
3. Who is your father? Mother? Brothers? Sisters? When and where were they born? Married?
4. Will you show me some of your old family documents or artifacts? Do you have things like family Bibles that might have names and birth dates in them?
5. Is or was anyone in the family interested in family history? Do you have any genealogical forms (family trees, pedigree charts, family group records) about your family?

Prepare in advance:

Gather and organize materials before your visit:

- Blank genealogy forms to record information.
- Genealogy information that you have, such as family trees, family group records, and photographs. You can share this information and ask if it is correct.
- Pencil and paper, a tape recorder, a camera, or a video to record the interview.

During the interview:

- Ask your relative to review any genealogy information you have for accuracy and to identify people in photos you brought with you. Ask for names, dates, and places.
- Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a "Yes" or "No."
- Ask open ended questions that begin with "What can you tell me about..?" "What memories do you have..?" etc.
- Give the person time to think and respond at his or her own pace.
- Ask about family records, certificates, photographs, or other artifacts.
- Ask for permission to make copies of records or take snapshots of them.
- Before leaving, ask for the names of other relatives you should interview next.

After the interview:

- Update your records with any new information you gathered from the interview.
- Make a transcript or report of your interview. Ask your relative to review it for accuracy.
- Ask for permission to copy the report and distribute it to family members.
- Contact other relatives you learned about, and set up more interviews.