Interview an older relative and keep their memories



Use AI to suggest good questions, then turn the answers into a short story to keep and share.

By the end, you'll be able to:

- write open questions that get people talking
- use AI to suggest questions, and to write up notes
- check AI has only used what was said

Warm-up Who has a story worth keeping?

Talk about it: a grandparent, a neighbour, a friend, or you? Which time or place would you like to hear about?

1 Open or closed?

A closed question gets a short answer, like yes or no. An open question gets people talking. Tick each one.

	Open	Closed
Did you like school?		
What do you remember about your first school?		
Where did you grow up?		
What was your street like when you were young?		
Did you have a job as a teenager?		
What games did you play with your friends?		

Rewrite one of the closed questions as an open one.

2 Ask AI for questions

If you have a device, open an AI chat app, start a new chat and type this prompt. Change the words to suit your interview.

TRY THIS PROMPT

I'm going to talk to my grandmother about her childhood. Please suggest eight gentle, open questions in plain English, about home, school, games and family. Avoid anything that might be upsetting.

Choose your four best questions, from the AI or your own.

No device? With a partner, write four open questions together.

3 The interview

- Ask if they're happy to talk, and to have their story written down.
- Listen, and let them choose what to share. It's fine to skip a question.

Part 3, continued: your notes from the interview.

4 Turn it into a story

Type your notes into the chat, after this prompt. Use first names only.

TRY THIS PROMPT

Here are my notes from talking to my grandmother about her childhood. Please turn them into a short story, about one page, in her own words as far as possible. Only use what's in my notes, and don't add anything made up.

Check it: did the AI add anything that wasn't in your notes? Write it here.

Find out more: read the free step-by-step guide, with a 10-second video, at **nosebleed.si/ideas/write-down-your-family-memories**

Teacher notes: Interview an older relative and keep their memories

Time: two sessions of 45 minutes, with the interview in between

Level: beginners; no AI experience needed

Group: any size; works well in pairs

You'll need: a copy per learner; phones or tablets with an AI chat app (optional)

Before the session

This works well across generations: pupils can interview a grandparent or a care-home resident, and older learners can record their own memories, or interview a friend. Agree with the group who they'll interview, and when.

Running order

Session 1	**Warm-up and Parts 1 and 2.** Open and closed questions, then choose four questions.
At home	**Part 3.** The interview, with notes.
Session 2	**Part 4.** Write up the story with AI's help, check it, and share some aloud.

Answers: Part 1

Open: "What do you remember about your first school?", "What was your street like...?", "What games did you play...?"
Closed: "Did you like school?", "Where did you grow up?" (a short answer), "Did you have a job as a teenager?"

Example rewrite: "Tell me about the jobs you had when you were a teenager."

Answer: Part 4

Look out for details the AI made up, such as the weather, feelings, or people who weren't mentioned. Learners should take them out, so the story stays true.

Discussion points

- The finished story can be printed, read aloud, or given as a present.
- For history topics, compare the memories with what learners have read about the time.

Safety and care notes

- Ask permission before interviewing anyone, and before sharing their story.
- Use first names only in the AI chat, and leave out addresses and other private details.
- Memories can bring up sad feelings. Let the person choose what to talk about, and stop if they'd like to.

© FirstM Ltd 2026