**Immigrant Experience Project**

**You will complete either the diary project OR the biography project. Each are based on an interview with an immigrant.**

To start, you need to choose an adult immigrant. This could be someone in your family, a family friend, or a neighbor. You are provided with a list of questions that you can ask your immigrant (you, of course, can come up with your own questions too).

Once your interview is completed, you will turn your questions into either diary entries or a biography essay on your interviewee.

DETAILS on DIARY PROJECT: After your interview, your task will be to interview an immigrant and create a diary from his/her point of view. You should include at least 8 different entries, each a minimum of a half page long (double spaced).

DETAILS on BIOGRAPHY PROJECT: you will write a mini biography of your person and their immigration experience. It should be a minimum of 4 pages (double spaced). Use the following format to guide you:

Introduction: You will introduce the person to the reader. Include the name, age, or year the person was born, their relationship to you, their birthplace, where they immigrated from, etc. Also include why you chose to interview this person.

Body: Include when and why they left (experiences), travel (such as how they left their country), and new experiences in America. Also, where they live now and how their life has changed since immigrating.

Conclusion: Talk about what the immigrant is like today. Would the person like to return to their homeland?

EVERYONE WILL START WITH THE IMMIGRANT INTERVIEW

You must choose a minimum of 20 questions. You can chose more! This does not mean that you will use the answers from all 20 questions, but the more questions you ask, the easier it will be to write the diary entries. You will be required to have a minimum of 8 diary entries that are at least a minimum of half a page each.

\*\*If you have trouble finding an immigrant to interview, please come speak with me.

**Immigration Project Interview Questions**

The following list of questions will help you get started on your project. They are listed in no particular order. You need to design your own list of questions and put them in an order that makes sense to you. Using these as a guideline, I recommend that you choose those that will best help you understand your interviewee’s immigration journey. Type your list and print 2 copies, one for you and one for you interviewee. It is not necessary that you ask all of these questions. The best interview will be one where conversation back and forth feels natural. For example, a specific answer may encourage you to ask “follow-up” questions. Those answers may lead to others. Try to think of the interview as a comfortable conversation. Relax and have fun!

1. What is your full name?
2. Is your name different in your native language? Pronunciation/spelling?
3. Where did you live before you immigrated to the U.S.?
4. What specific circumstances caused you to immigrate?
5. Was it a personal decision or one that someone else made for you?
6. How old were you?
7. What had you heard about the U.S. before you came? What stereotypes/expectations did you have?
8. Had you seen pictures or photos of U.S.? What did you think of them?
9. What had people told you about the U.S.?
10. Were your initial expectations accurate? Can you give me an example?
11. Where specifically in your former country did you live?
12. What was your life like there?
13. What was going on there at the time?
14. Can you tell me about the government in your native country before you left?
15. What year/date did you arrive in the U.S.?
16. Did you immigrate alone, or with friends/other family members?
17. Can you share a memorable experience with me about what it was like, how you were feeling when you first arrived?
18. Was it hard to leave or was it exciting?
19. Did you experience any “culture shock”? Was it hard to adapt? If so, what was challenging? Can you think of a story or experience that will give me an idea?
20. Did you miss family members/friends? Are you in touch with them? How?
21. What possessions did you take with you? What important things, if any, did you leave behind?
22. How did you arrive? Method of transportation?
23. Did you consider living anywhere else?
24. Did you know anyone here when you arrived?
25. Did you feel welcome?
26. How did people treat you? Do you find people treat you differently now if you have been here for a while?
27. Who/What helped you get settled, find a place to live, etc.?
28. Tell me about any language barriers that you experienced/or currently experience?
29. Did you know any English before you arrived?
30. Was it difficult to communicate when you first arrived?
31. What were your first 24 hours/days like?
32. Can you tell me how your life has changed since you came to this country?
33. What sacrifices, if any, have you made to live in U.S.?
34. Are their specific things/people that you miss? Who/What? Why?
35. What is the best thing about your immigrant experience?
36. What has been most challenging or difficult about your experience?
37. What kind of job did you have in your home country?
38. What job(s) did/do you have in U.S.?
39. How did you go about finding a job?
40. Did you bring any specific skills with you that you were able to use here?
41. If you had not immigrated, what do you think your life would be like today? Can you give me an example of how it might be different?
42. If you have children, were they born in this country? Do they speak your native language?
43. Do they know about your immigrant experience/native culture?
44. How might your children’s live differ if you had not emigrated?
45. How has the U.S. changed since you arrived?
46. Can you tell me a story or give me an example of how your country has changed since you’ve been here?
47. Has your lifestyle changed since you left? Since you’ve been here?
48. Are there specific cultural traditions that you’ve brought with you?
49. Can you tell me about one of them or why/how you celebrate it? Why is it important to you?
50. Did you attend school here?
51. Did classmates/teachers treat you differently?
52. Do you miss anything specific about your home country?
53. Do you feel that our culture appreciates immigrants?
54. What do you think about the future of immigration in our country?
55. Would it be possible to contact you if I have any additional follow-up questions?

**Tips for Conducting a Good Interview**

* Make sure the location you choose to conduct your interview is quiet and comfortable
* Make sure you tell your interviewee that you will be taking notes on what they are saying. (Remember, the more detailed your notes, the easier you diary entries will be.) You can chose to record the interview to help you remember it.
* Give a list of questions to your interviewee so that they know what to expect. This is a good opportunity to explain the purpose of your project
* Be encouraging to your interviewee
* Look at your interviewee and smile when they are talking
* Be familiar with your questions so that you can pay attention to your interviewee and not the paper in your hand
* Really listen to what your interviewee is saying
* Make sure your interviewee has answered your question and that you have received the information you are looking for. If not, ask the interviewee to elaborate
* Pay attention for something that you find interesting so that you can ask a follow-up question. (Write it down if you need to so that you don’t forget to ask it!)
* Don’t be afraid to ask questions that you might not have written down. What your interviewee says might lead you somewhere unexpected
* Wait for at least 3-5 seconds after you think your interviewee is done speaking to ask your next question. They might have more to say
* Thank your interviewee for their time. Be sure to ask permission to contact them again if you need to clarify or get any additional information
* Be gracious and appreciative
* **Have Fun!**

**WHEN YOU HAND IN YOUR PROJECT YOU SHOULD ATTACH YOUR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND THEIR RESPONSES**