

# EDUCATION TOOLKIT

*The National Day of Listening is an effort to honor friends, loved ones, or members of your community by interviewing them about their lives. The Education Toolkit provides resources to bring the National Day of Listening to your classroom or community.*

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# From the StoryCorps Founder & President

*Dear Educators,*

StoryCorps is a project about the transmission of wisdom across generations. By recording interviews with older members of their families and communities, young people will gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. The National Day of Listening offers everyone the chance to discover what wonderful and unexpected stories can emerge from the simple question, “Tell me about your life.”

This holiday season, StoryCorps encourages all Americans to celebrate the National Day of Listening by interviewing friends, loved ones, or members of their communities about their lives. To help educators and students participate, StoryCorps has created this Education Toolkit with instructions for conducting interviews. The Toolkit also includes links to StoryCorps audio segments that can be played along with subject- and skills-based discussion questions and activities. The resources here can easily be made into lessons that address state standards for social studies or language arts curricula.

Last year we heard from a variety of educators who embraced the National Day of Listening as a way to promote curiosity and learning. At Minneapolis Schools, Adult Basic teacher Darlene Hays used StoryCorps’ book *Listening is an Act of Love* in her ABE/GED classes, along with audio segments from StoryCorps’ website. Students interviewed each other and learned how to record their interviews on computers.

*“This has been an amazing experience for students, as well as staff!” Hays said.*

This kind of feedback has proven what a powerful teaching tool the National Day of Listening can be. Please share your thoughts on the National Day of Listening with us at [nationaldayoflistening.org](http://nationaldayoflistening.org), and tell us how you, your school, or your students participated this year.

Thank you for being such an important part of StoryCorps’ second annual National Day of Listening.



Dave Isay



Dave Isay

Dave Isay is the founder of StoryCorps and the recipient of numerous broadcasting honors, including five Peabody Awards and a MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship.

He is the author/editor of four books that grew out of his public radio documentary work, including the first-ever StoryCorps book, *Listening Is an Act of Love*, a *New York Times* bestseller.

# Promote Learning with the National Day of Listening

*The National Day of Listening is an effort to honor friends, loved ones, or members of your community by interviewing them about their lives. This toolkit contains activities developed for students in 7th grade and higher. It provides the resources necessary to teach students how to conduct interviews, and it includes audio clips to be played with corresponding activities. It also addresses these educational themes outlined by the National Council for the Social Studies:*

## Culture

By listening to the experiences of others, students will confront the similarities and differences that exist between people. They will see themselves as part of both local and extended cultures and will consider how those cultures help shape them as individuals and members of a group.

## Individual Development & Identity

Students will differentiate among the voices represented in the stories to recognize the influences that shape a person's identity, including culture, groups, and institutions.



## Time, Continuity, & Change

Listening to the diverse, authentic voices in the audio segments allows students to understand differences in historical and contemporary perspectives. They will view significant historical events through individual experiences and understand how individual Americans shaped those events.

## Civic Ideals & Practices

Students will use individual stories as evidence to evaluate the gap between our country's past and present practices and the democratic ideals upon which it is based.



Incorporate the National Day of Listening into your educational programming:

- Assign Do-It-Yourself interviews to your students during the holiday season.
- Open a quiet location in your school or community to record interviews.
- Sponsor a National Day of Listening essay contest; ask students to write about what they learned from participating in the day's events.
- If you have experience with audio equipment, host training seminars for interviews, recording, and audio editing.
- Print out and distribute the flyer, Great Questions List, and Do-It-Yourself Instruction Guide.
- Write a blog post or article in your school newsletter explaining how and why you are participating in the National Day of Listening.
- List your National Day of Listening events on community bulletin boards and social networking websites.

Continue the conversation:

- Write about your experience at [www.nationaldayoflistening.org](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org).
- Sign up for the StoryCorps weekly newsletter at [www.storycorps.org/ml](http://www.storycorps.org/ml)
- Join StoryCorps on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter.
- Post your National Day of Listening photos to StoryCorps' Flickr Group.
- Post your National Day of Listening recordings on Facebook or [www.box.net](http://www.box.net).

# Recording Interviews

*Personal interviews are a useful tool for studying the past, and they also preserve the voices of our time for future generations. Collectively, they tell our shared history in the voices of the people who lived it. By sharing these interviews in a community, we can discover how much more we share in common as a nation than divides us.*

Students can conduct interviews with local senior citizens, older relatives, and mentors. The stories on this page provide examples of what can happen when people sit down to interview a friend or loved one. Listen as these participants tell their stories, both personal and historical. Use the Do-It-Yourself Instruction Guide on pages 6-7 to record similar stories that reflect your community.

## STORIES

### *José & Grace Cruz*

José Cruz tells his daughter, Grace, about living in Villa Juana, a neighborhood in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, while his mother was living in New York City.

### *Anthony D'Andrea*

Anthony D'Andrea tells his daughters Monica and Mary about autograph hunting outside Yankee Stadium in the 1940s.

### *Ezra Awumey & Sam Harmon*

Ezra Awumey interviews his grandfather, Sam Harmon, a World War II veteran.

### *Tom Geerdes & Hannah Campbell*

Hannah Campbell interviews her father, Tom Geerdes, about coming home from war.

### *James Lacy & Jamie Breed*

90-year-old James Lacy tells his daughter, Jamie Breed, about his father's general store in Comanche County, Texas.

Audio is available at:

[www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/recording-interviews](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/recording-interviews)

You can also select stories from *Listening Is An Act of Love*, StoryCorps' first-ever book, to read aloud. You can find it at your local library or bookseller.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kinds of things did the interviewers in these stories learn about the storytellers?
2. Why was it important for the storytellers to share their stories?
3. What do you think is the importance of telling your own story? How would it make you feel?
4. When was the last time you sat down with a loved one and asked to hear about his or her life? Were there any distractions during the conversation? What is the difference between talking over the phone and talking face-to-face?
5. Of all the people you know, whom would you most like to interview? Using StoryCorps' Great Question List, what are the questions you would most like to ask that person? Share three questions you would want that person to ask you.

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## Do-It-Yourself Instruction Guide

**The StoryCorps experience is not limited to our recording booths. We encourage everyone to conduct Do-It-Yourself interviews in your home, workplace, or community. Choose a friend, colleague, or loved one to interview, and find some recording equipment. There's no wrong way to do it. Just listen closely, and ask the questions you've always wanted to ask. Here's how:**

### 1. Select Your Interview Partner

Start by selecting whom you wish to interview. A beloved relative? A mentor? A local hero? Some people may be hesitant to participate; emphasize that everybody's story is important. Let your interview partner know that you would be honored to record the conversation.

### 2. Create a List of Questions

Preparing ahead of time will greatly improve the quality of your interview. Think about what you would like to learn from your partner, then make a list of 5-10 questions. Here are some questions that have led to great conversations:

- What are some of the most important lessons you have learned in life?
- What are you most proud of?
- What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?
- Who has been the biggest influence on your life? What lessons did they teach you?
- How would you like to be remembered?

For more suggested questions, visit [www.storycorps.org](http://www.storycorps.org) to use our online Question Generator.

### 3. Find, Borrow, or Purchase Recording Equipment

Your recording equipment can be as simple as a cell phone, a tape recorder, a video camera, or a computer. You can find both basic and more sophisticated recording equipment at your local electronics store or for purchase online. You might even borrow equipment from a friend or relative. Whatever recording equipment you choose, we strongly suggest that you practice with it before your interview. See our Equipment Recommendations page for more details.

### 4. Choose an Interview Location

Pick the quietest place possible. A carpeted room is best. Avoid kitchens, which have reflective surfaces and noisy appliances. Be sure to turn the volume off on any TV, radio, or stereo. Close the door and listen for anything else making noise: buzzing fluorescent lights, ticking clocks, air conditioners, etc. If possible, turn off or move any noisy electronics out of the room. Listen for noise during the interview as well. If your storyteller fidgets, for example, feel free to respectfully remind him or her that the microphone picks up the sound. Make the space peaceful and calm by turning the lights low.

### 5. Set Up and Test the Equipment

Set up your equipment before the interview, and make sure you know how to use it. Once the interview starts you will be able to focus on your interview partner instead of the equipment. Before the interview, record your storyteller answering a few throwaway questions, such as, "Tell me what you had for breakfast." Stop, rewind, and listen to the sample recording to determine if everything is working. Remember to press RECORD again when you begin the actual interview.

#### A few tips for better audio quality:

- Wear headphones when recording. Your headphones are your "ears" for the interview; they tell you exactly what you'll hear on your finished recording.
- When possible, use an external microphone when recording. Always hold the microphone in your hand, moving it between you and your storyteller. Hold the microphone about one hand span (about 7 inches) from your storyteller's mouth. If you're using an internal microphone on a camera, set up the camera just far enough away to keep the picture in focus.
- Be careful of "mic-handling" noise. That's the low, rumbling sound you hear when you move the microphone in your hands. Use a light touch when handling the microphone, and minimize movement.

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## Do-It-Yourself Instruction Guide

### 6. Begin the Conversation

Start the interview by stating your name, your age, the date, and the location of the interview. For example, “My name is Marissa Martinez. I’m forty years old. The date is November 27, 2009, and I’m sitting with my grandfather, Frank Jackson, in his living room in Hamilton, Missouri.” Then ask your storyteller to do the same.

Remember, the questions you prepared in advance are just suggestions. Trust your instincts and ask questions in whatever order feels right. If something interests you, ask more about it. Sometimes your storyteller may need to know that it’s okay to talk about a certain topic. Grant permission by saying, “Tell me more.” Take breaks if your storyteller needs them. Avoid saying “uh huh” or interrupting. Instead, use visual cues like nodding your head to encourage the storyteller to keep going.

### 7. Keep the Conversation Flowing

**Listen closely.** Look your storyteller in the eyes. Smile. Stay engaged.

**Stick with the good stuff.** Try to keep to the topics that move you. If the current topic isn’t what you wanted to put on tape, gently steer the conversation in another direction.

**Ask emotional questions.** Asking “How does this make you feel?” often elicits interesting responses. Don’t be afraid to ask.

**Respect your subject.** If there is a topic that your interview partner doesn’t want to talk about, respect his or her wishes and move on.

**Take notes during the interview.** Write down questions or stories you might want to return to later.

**Be curious and honest, and keep an open heart.** Great things will happen.

### 8. Wrap It Up

We’ve found that 40 minutes is a good length of time for StoryCorps interviews, but you can talk for as long or as short as you like.

Before you turn off the recorder, ask the storyteller if there is anything else he or she wants to talk about. Then make sure to thank the person; opening up can be difficult. Express your gratitude, and let him or her know that it was a privilege to listen to the story.

Finally, hit STOP on your recorder. Congratulations! You have just joined the StoryCorps Do-It-Yourself community!

### 9. Preserve and Share the Conversation

Start your own archive at home by labeling your interview and storing it in a safe place. (At this time, only interviews recorded on StoryCorps equipment can be archived in the Library of Congress.) To share your interview, you can transfer the interview to your computer and burn copies for your family and friends. You can also upload your interview to [www.entertainment.com/nationaldayoflistening](http://www.entertainment.com/nationaldayoflistening) to share it online.

Your recording is likely to become a treasured heirloom. Invite loved ones to your home to listen to it. Bring it to special occasions, reunions, or memorials.

Help StoryCorps record, preserve, and share even more stories throughout the United States. Donate today at [www.storycorps.org/donate](http://www.storycorps.org/donate).

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## Selected Great Questions from our Question Generator

### Great questions for anyone

- What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?
- Who has been the biggest influence on your life? What lessons did they teach you?
- Who has been the kindest to you in your life?
- What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?
- What is your earliest memory?
- Are there any words of wisdom you'd like to pass along to me?
- What are you proudest of in your life?
- When in life have you felt most alone?
- How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?
- How would you like to be remembered?
- Do you have any regrets?
- What does your future hold?
- Is there anything you've never told me but want to tell me now?
- Is there something about me that you've always wanted to know but have never asked?

### Questions for parents

- Do you remember what was going through your head when you first saw me?
- How did you choose my name?
- What was I like as a baby? As a young child?
- Do you remember any of the songs you used to sing to me? Can you sing them now?
- What were the hardest moments you had when I was growing up?
- If you could do everything again, would you raise me differently?
- What advice would you give me about raising my own kids?
- What are your dreams for me?
- How did you meet mom/dad?
- What are your hopes for me?

### Questions for grandparents

- What was your childhood like?
- Do you remember any of the stories your parents used to tell you?
- How did you and grandma/grandpa meet?
- What was my mom/dad like growing up?
- Do you remember any songs that you used to sing to her/him? Can you sing them now?
- What is the worst thing she/he ever did?
- What were your parents like?
- What were your grandparents like?
- How would you like to be remembered?
- What are your hopes for me? For my children?

### Questions for friends

- What is your first memory of me?
- What was the most difficult moment in our friendship?
- What makes us such good friends?
- Is there anything you've always wanted to tell me but haven't?

### Questions about growing up

- When and where were you born?
- Who were your parents?
- What were your parents like?
- How was your relationship with your parents?
- What is your best memory of childhood? Worst?
- Did you have a nickname? How did you get it?
- Who were your best friends? What were they like?
- What did you think your life would be like when you were older?
- Can you tell me any favorite stories/memories from your childhood?

### Questions about love & relationships

- When did you first fall in love?
- Can you tell me about your first kiss?
- What lessons have you learned from your relationships?

### Questions about marriage & partnerships

- How did you meet your husband/wife/partner?
- How did you know he/she was "the one"?
- How did you propose?
- What were the best times? The most difficult times?
- What advice do you have for young couples?

### Questions about working

- What do/did you do for a living?
- Tell me about how you got into your line of work.
- What did you think you were going to be when you grew up?
- What lessons has your work life taught you?
- Do you have any favorite stories from your work life?

### Questions about serious illness

- Can you tell me about your illness?
- Do you think about dying? Are you scared?
- How do you imagine your death?
- Do you regret anything?
- Do you look at your life differently now than before you were diagnosed?
- If you were to give advice to me or my children, or even children to come in our family, what would it be?
- What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?
- Has this illness changed you? What have you learned?
- How do you want to be remembered?

### Questions about military service

- Were you in the military?
- Did you go to war? What was it like?
- How did war change you?
- During your service, can you recall times when you were afraid?
- What are your strongest memories from your time in the military?
- What lessons did you learn from this time in your life?

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## Equipment Recommendations

**Although StoryCorps cannot archive Do-It-Yourself recordings at the Library of Congress, we still encourage you to record, preserve, and share Do-It-Yourself interviews for generations to come. Here are some equipment recommendations to help you along the way.**

### Portable Digital Recorders

Digital recorders will produce the highest-quality sound recordings. Like a digital camera, you must use a flash card compatible with your recorder.

**Recommended digital recorders:** Marantz PMD661 or the smaller, more portable Edirol R-09

### MP3 Players

You can convert an MP3 player into a digital voice recorder using a microphone attachment, which plugs directly into an iPod or other MP3 player.

**Recommended iPod attachments:** Blue Mikey, Alesis Pro-Track

### Traditional recorders

Many people prefer more traditional recorders, such as a cassette deck, DAT (digital audio tape), or micro cassettes. We recommend transferring any analog recordings to a digital format for preservation.

### Computers

It's likely that your computer has a built-in microphone, which will allow you to record with free, online audio software like Audacity. GarageBand, which comes pre-installed on all Apple computers, also works well. We suggest you plug in an external microphone into your computer whenever possible.

**Recommended audio recording and editing programs:** ProTools, Logic, or Audacity.

### Mobile Phones & Video Cameras

Some mobile phones, like the iPhone and G1 (Google Phone), also have a recording device built-in. If you use a video camera, avoid excessive camera movement by setting your camera down on a level surface or tripod.

### Headphones

A good set of headphones is essential. They will block out background noise and allow you to hear how the finished recording will sound. Many audio players already have headphones or earbuds. You can also purchase separate headphones at most general electronics retailers for as low as \$10.

**Recommended headphones:** Sony MDR-7506

### Microphones

An external microphone will yield better sound than the internal mic on your computer or recorder. When connecting an external microphone to a computer, you may need to change your audio settings in your System Preferences (Mac) or Control Panel (Windows).

#### Recommended microphones:

Dynamic microphones (*compatible with both digital recorders and computers*) — Shure SM-58  
USB microphones (*compatible only with computers*) — Blue Snowball

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### Share your interviews online

Free file-sharing websites, such as Box.net, allow you to easily upload and share digital audio or video recordings. Social networking websites like MySpace and Facebook also host audio applications that allow you to upload and share your interviews.

### Additional online resources

- *Transom*, an online public radio community, has extensive product equipment reviews and instructional recording guides at [www.transom.org](http://www.transom.org).
- *Audacity* features instructions and tips for downloading, installing, and using their audio editing software package at [www.audacity.sourceforge.net](http://www.audacity.sourceforge.net).
- *The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress*, StoryCorps' archive partner, provides basic notes on folklife fieldwork at [www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/index.html](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/index.html).

# Subject-based Audio Resources

*In the pages that follow, you'll find a track list and sample discussion questions and activities to explore each subject area listed below. Each page can be photocopied and handed out for individual study or used to help build a lesson plan for the class as a whole. To access the audio, follow the URL at the bottom of each track list.*

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## SUBJECTS

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# Immigration

*How do stories from immigrants both challenge and embody the American Dream?*

## STORIES

### *Juliet Jegasothy & Sheena Jacob*

Juliet Jegasothy came to the United States from Sri Lanka. In this story she tells her friend Sheena Jacob about one American tradition for which she was not quite prepared.

### *Ramon “Chunky” Sanchez*

Ramon “Chunky” Sanchez grew up in a small farming town in California in the 1950s. As happened with many Mexican American children during that time, his name was changed at school.

### *Blanca & Connie Alvarez*

Blanca Alvarez talks with her daughter Connie about coming to Los Angeles more than thirty years ago. She came to join her husband after illegally crossing the border from Mexico. Blanca and her husband became naturalized citizens in 1985.

### *Lourdes & Roger Villanueva*

Lourdes Villanueva’s parents were migrant workers, harvesting fruit throughout the South. In this story, Lourdes talks with her grown son Roger about going to school throughout her family’s many moves.

### *Lourdes Cereno & Julia Markley*

Lourdes Cereno Markely was born in the Philippines. When she was a young woman in the 1960s, she was determined to attend college in the United States.

Audio is available at:  
[www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/immigration](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/immigration)

## QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. What challenges do immigrants face after they arrive in a new country? How did the people in these stories cope with these challenges?
2. What stories have you heard from older relatives about moving to a new country or a new place? Do you have any traditions in your family that you carried with you from another place or culture?
3. What factors might drive people to leave their homes? What might attract them to move to a new city or country?
4. In some of these stories, language, pronunciation, and personal names present points of confusion and contention. Why might a language or a name be worth preserving? What are some experiences you’ve had with the misunderstandings across cultures?
5. Who are the people new to your school or neighborhood? Research personal histories from those countries or regions. If possible, talk with new residents to learn about what have been the challenges or rewards of moving to your area. Share what you learn with your class.



*Lourdes Cereno & Julia Markley*

# Labor History

*How does a person's job shape his or her life?*

## STORIES

### *Joyce Butler*

Dot Kelly helped build ships during World War II in the South Portland Shipyards in Maine. As a recent divorcee, she raised four children on her own. In this story, Dot Kelly's daughter Joyce Butler remembers her mom's struggle to keep the family together.

### *Elmore Nickelberry & Taylor Rogers*

Elmore Nickelberry and Taylor Rogers remember the working conditions that prompted them to go on strike as Memphis sanitation workers in 1968.

### *Ken Kobus*

Ken Kobus tells his friend Ron Barraff about his father, John Kobus, who worked in a steel mill for nearly 40 years.

### *Betty Esper & Mark Fallon*

Betty Esper talks to her friend Mark Fallon about life in Homestead, Pennsylvania, before the U.S. Steel mill closed in the 1980s. For more than a century U.S. Steel-Homestead Works was the flagship mill of the American Steel industry. When the mill closed, Esper, a desk clerk, lost her job.

### *Mark Sullivan*

Mark Sullivan grew up in Connecticut during the late 1950s, when the state produced very large amounts of shade leaf tobacco. During the summers local teenagers such as Mark went to work in the fields.

### *Lawrence Anthony and David Shirley*

Lawrence Anthony, who has been cutting hair for more than 60 years, and his fellow barber David Shirley talk about their work.

Audio is available at:

[www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/labor-history](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/labor-history)

## QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. What wisdom or specific knowledge do you gain from the people in these stories? What follow-up questions would you want to ask these storytellers and why?
2. How does your work as a student compare to the jobs described in these stories? What parts do you relate to and why?
3. Do these jobs exist today? What is different and what has stayed the same?
4. Why do people stay in jobs that are difficult or dangerous? In what ways have workers gained protections in their jobs?
5. Interview your parents or neighbors about their jobs. Ask specific questions and be sure to ask how their job has changed over time.



*Betty Esper & Mark Fallon*

# War & Conflict: Personal Impacts

*How does war impact the lives of those in the military and those back home?*

## STORIES

### *Joseph Robertson*

Joseph Robertson speaks with his son-in-law, John Fish Jr., about his 26 years of service in the army. Here, he remembers a German soldier he killed at the Battle of the Bulge during World War II.

### *Tom Geerdes & Hannah Campbell*

Tom Geerdes served in Vietnam as an Army medic. He tells his daughter Hannah Campbell how the experience stayed with him long after his deployment ended.

### *Rebecca Fuller & Jenny Francis*

Rebecca Fuller and her sister, Jenny Francis, remember their brother First Lt. Travis John Fuller. On Jan. 26, 2005, Lt. Fuller and 30 others died in Iraq when their helicopter crashed in a sandstorm.

### *Papsy & Griselda Lemus*

Sergeant Papsy Lemus served in Baghdad in 2007. She is also the mother of two little girls. In this story, her nine-year-old daughter, Griselda, asks her some questions about her time at war.

### *Allen Hoe*

Allen Hoe's son, First Lieutenant Nainoa Hoe, died in Iraq in early 2005. On Memorial Day of that year, Allen traveled from his home in Honolulu for services held at the Vietnam monument in Washington, D.C. Army nurses returning home from the war were also being honored there, and in this story Allen talks about meeting one of them.

### *Wayman Simpson*

Wayman Simpson served in the Korean War. He was captured in 1950, soon after fighting began. As a POW, Simpson came under the command of a Korean officer, nicknamed The Tiger, who led the prisoners on a brutal, 9-day trek that claimed nearly 100 lives. The ordeal came to be known as the Tiger Death March.

Audio is available at:  
[www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/war-and-conflict](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/war-and-conflict)

## QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. How did war affect these veterans' friends and families? How do time and memory play a role in these stories?
2. What has been your experience with war? Have you or anyone you know experienced anything similar to the people in these stories?
3. How do the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan affect you? How does hearing the stories from Iraq (Fuller, Lemus, & Hoe) add to your understanding of those conflicts?
4. These stories reveal the personal side of war. Interview members of your family or seniors in your community about their experiences with military conflict. You can work on a question list as a class.
5. Research oral histories from others involved in these same wars and conflicts—including both civilians and members of the military. What do you learn from reading multiple perspectives on the same events?



*Tom Geerdes & Hannah Campbell*

# The Civil Rights Movement

*How did African Americans experience life in the Civil Rights era?*

## STORIES

### *Sam Harmon & Ezra Awumey*

Sam Harmon tells his grandson Ezra Awumey about visiting Washington, D.C., while he was serving in the Navy during World War II.

### *Theresa Burroughs*

In the early 1950s, Theresa Burroughs had reached voting age and was ready to vote. But actually exercising that right proved difficult. Here, she tells her daughter, Toni Love, about trying to register at the Hale County Courthouse in Alabama.

### *Jim McFarland*

Jim McFarland was born in New York City in 1944, but his family was originally from the South. In this story, he recalls annual trips to the segregated state of South Carolina when he was a boy.

### *Reverend James Seawood*

Reverend James Seawood describes Sheridan, Arkansas, where he grew up in the early 1950s. When the Sheridan school district started to discuss integration, black families were soon forced to leave the area. The local lumber mill owned their houses and forced them to relocate out of town. But as Reverend Seawood tells us, the small African-American school held on.

### *Leon & Angela May*

Leon May joined the Marine Corps in 1943, shortly after it was integrated. May was eighteen-years-old and had recently graduated from high school in Detroit. In this conversation, he tells his daughter, Angela, about leaving for basic training at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

### *John Hope Franklin*

The late John Hope Franklin, historian and scholar, lived through many defining eras of racism in America. Here he speaks with his son about growing up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the 1920s.

Audio is available at:

[www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/the-civil-rights-movement](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/the-civil-rights-movement)

## QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. How does discrimination affect the lives of the storytellers both physically and emotionally? Have you experienced similar situations? How did that make you feel?
2. These stories refer to events that occurred both during and after the Civil Rights era. What has changed since then? What hasn't?
3. What are the major civil rights concerns of your time? Brainstorm whom you might want to interview about today's struggles and the specific questions you would want to ask.
4. What role did your own town or region play in the Civil Rights Movement? Interview long-time residents or research oral histories from your area to find out more. How do those stories compare to the stories in this section?



*Leon & Angela May*

# The Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike & the Martin Luther King Jr. Assassination

*How did the people of Memphis experience the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.?*

## STORIES

### *Elmore Nickelberry & Taylor Rogers*

Former sanitation workers Elmore Nickelberry and Taylor Rogers remember going on strike in 1968.

### *Taylor & Bessie Rogers*

Taylor Rogers and his wife, Bessie, talk about the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike and Dr. King's visit. The Rogerses were both at Mason Temple on April 3rd, 1968, when Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his final speech.

### *George Turks*

Reverend George Turks Jr. remembers witnessing the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike as a teenager.

### *Ella Annette Owens*

Ella Owens tells her daughter, Lynn Reed, about participating in a march during the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike.

### *Herb Kneeland & Martavius Jones*

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Herb Kneeland spun records at WDIA, the first radio station in America programmed entirely by African Americans for African Americans. In this conversation with his sons, Martavius Jones and Herb Junior, he remembers being on air after Rev. King was assassinated.

### *Kathy Dean Evans*

Kathy Dean Evans remembers the night Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

Audio is available at:

[www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/memphis-strike-and-mlk-assassination](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/memphis-strike-and-mlk-assassination)

## QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. What were the working conditions of the Memphis Sanitation workers? Why did Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. come to Memphis to work with them?
2. From what you've heard here, what do you think it would be like to have been in Memphis at this time? What would you have been doing?
3. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was known for his ability to move crowds through his speeches. Why do you think his speeches had such a profound impact on listeners like Taylor and Bessie Rogers? Do you think his speeches are still relevant today?
4. The speech that Taylor and Bessie Rogers remember is one of the most famous speeches in American history. Ask your grandparents or seniors in your community if they remember hearing it. What was it like to be alive then? How has the speech's message stood the test of time?
5. Talk to sanitation workers in your town. What is their daily work like? Do they know about the strike? You can play them the story of Nickelberry & Rogers. How are their jobs the same and how are they different?



*Herb Kneeland & Martavius Jones*

# Hurricane Katrina

*What was it like to live through Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath?*

## STORIES

### *Rufus Burkhalter & Bobby Brown*

New Orleans Pump Station workers Rufus Burkhalter and Bobby Brown remember the night Hurricane Katrina hit.

### *Douglas P. deSilvey*

Doug deSilvey lives in Gulfport, Mississippi. Here he talks about his wife, their daughter, and his mother-in-law.

### *Antoinette Franklin*

Antoinette Franklin and her niece, Iriel Franklin, talk about relocating to Houston after Hurricane Katrina.

### *David Duplantier & Melissa Eugene*

New Orleans police officer David Duplantier tells his wife, Melissa Eugene, about patrolling the Superdome during Hurricane Katrina.

### *Dr. Kiersta Kurtz-Burke & Dr. Justin Lundgren*

Dr. Kiersta Kurtz-Burke tells her husband, Dr. Justin Lundgren, about caring for patients at Charity Hospital in the days following Hurricane Katrina.

### *Joshua Norman & Rachel Leifer*

Newspaper reporter Joshua Norman tells his girlfriend, Rachel Leifer, about reporting on Hurricane Katrina.

### *Roy & Anthony Calabrisi*

Roy Calabrisi and his brother, Anthony, talk about rebuilding their lives after Hurricane Katrina.

### *John W. Taylor Jr.*

John W. Taylor Jr. describes how New Orleans has changed since Hurricane Katrina.

Audio is available at:

[www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/hurricane-katrina](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/hurricane-katrina)

## QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. What did you learn about living in the New Orleans area during the storm and its aftermath? What surprised you?
2. Why were several of the storytellers so determined to stay in New Orleans? Discuss or write about the place you think of as home. Why is that place important to you? What would it take to make you leave?
3. After listening to the stories, what do you think was lost with the storm? What remains?
4. These stories were recorded in 2006, less than a year after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans. What has changed since then? Search for evidence of how today's New Orleans compares to the New Orleans of 2006. How might it change in the future?
5. What natural disasters or challenging times have hit your town or area? Interview residents who lived through those times. Use the stories here to get inspiration for what questions to ask.



*Iriel & Antoinette Franklin*

# Skills-based Audio Resources

*We've designed some simple skills-based activities to go along with StoryCorps stories. On the following two pages, you'll find prompts and story links for creative writing and public speaking activities. Each page can be photocopied and handed out for individual study or used to help build a lesson plan for the class as a whole. To access the audio, follow the URLs found at the bottom of each page.*

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## SKILLS

- 17 Creative Writing
- 18 Public Speaking

*As you listen to these stories, try to imagine yourself as the storyteller or a person in the story. Once you've finished listening, follow the prompts below to write creatively about the people and places in these stories. What might the other characters in the stories think or feel? What do you think their lives will be like?*

## ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1: Unexpected Turns

31-year-old Julio Diaz is a social worker from New York City. Every night Diaz ends his hour-long subway commute home one stop early so he can eat at his favorite diner. But one night, as Diaz stepped off the train and onto a nearly empty platform, his evening took an unexpected turn.

#### Activities:

- Where is the turning point in this story? Imagine a change at the point you have identified, and create an alternate ending.
- Write this story from the perspective of the mugger. What might have happened that night before he tried to mug Mr. Diaz? What were his reasons for eating with Mr. Diaz? What was he thinking as they shared their meal? What could have happened after the mugger left the diner?
- Write a mock news article covering the events recounted in this story. How would you portray Mr. Diaz and his mugger?

### Activity 2: Hard Times

After leaving the Marines, George Hill became addicted to drugs and alcohol. He soon found himself on the streets of Los Angeles, homeless for a dozen years. Hill has now been off the streets for more than ten years.

#### Activities:

- George Hill talks about the misery of rain. How might being homeless alter your reaction to otherwise small inconveniences such as rain? Write about how these experiences would change your life over the course of a day, a week, or a year.
- Veterans account for more than 20 percent of all homeless people in the United States. Research factors that can result in homelessness, then write a story from the perspective of someone's first day on the streets. What situations or circumstances led to their homelessness? What are they thinking about? How do they perceive others around them—those with homes and those without?

### Activity 3: Clash with History

Eric Lamet was a boy living in Austria during the 1930s. His family was Jewish. When Nazi Germany overtook Austria, Eric Lamet's family fled to Italy. There they were separated from his father and had no contact with him through the end of World War II.

#### Activities:

- Imagine a conversation between Eric Lamet and his father when they reunited. How would such a meeting begin? For example, what thoughts or emotions might their body language convey?
- Contrast Eric Lamet's memories of his father before and after the war. Include details such as mannerisms and dress to show how the physical changes represent mental and emotional differences as well.

Audio is available at: [www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/creative-writing](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/creative-writing)

# Public Speaking

*The stories for each topic are designed to be played before beginning work. After listening, tell your own story related to the topic as a public speaking exercise.*

## IMPORTANT INFLUENCES

The people we know can have a significant impact on our lives. They can challenge us, offer us guidance, or provide support and encouragement. Speak about a person who has had an impact on your life.

### *Dr. Lynn & Kimberly Weaver*

Dr. Lynn Weaver talks to his daughter, Kimberly, about the importance of his father in his life.

### *Ricky Boone*

Magician Ricky Boone, who has a rare bone disorder, tells his friend Patti Barber about learning magic.

### *Joe & Lorraine Pigott*

Willy Earl “Pip” Dow often found himself on the wrong side of the law. His exploits repeatedly landed him in the courtroom of Judge Joe Pigott. Judge Pigott served nearly two decades on the bench in Jackson, Mississippi, but he says no defendant confounded him more than the man called “Pip.”

### *Hee-Sook and Joyce Kim Lee*

Hee-Sook Lee tells her daughter, Joyce, about a couple who gave her a model for the kind of relationship she wanted to have.

## MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Misunderstandings can be both humorous and painful; they can bring people closer together or push them further apart. Speak about a moment when you felt misunderstood or a time you misunderstood someone else.

### *Brian Miller and Johnathan Emerson*

Brian Miller talks to his son, Johnathan Emerson, about adopting him nearly ten years ago.

### *Betty Jenkins*

Betty Jenkins is 94 years old. As a younger woman, she received a gift from her mother. It was meant to attract the attention of young men. But the attention she received was not the kind she wanted.

### *Sarah & Joshua Littman*

Joshua Littman was diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome, a form of autism, when he was five. His mom, Sarah, describes children with Asperger’s as “born without social genes.” They can come across as eccentric and have obsessions; for Joshua, it’s animals. At the time this interview was recorded, Joshua was in the seventh grade.

### *Tomas Kubrican and Carol Mittlesteadt*

Tomas Kubrican is from Slovakia. Carol Mittlesteadt is from Wisconsin. Working at a restaurant brought them together.

Audio is available at: [www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/public-speaking](http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org/resources/public-speaking)

StoryCorps

# national day of listening

The National Day of Listening is November 27, 2009.



Join StoryCorps on the National Day of Listening to record and share the stories of your family, friends, and community members. This year, plan to sit down with people in your community on the day after Thanksgiving to ask the questions that matter and to record your conversations to enjoy for years to come.

Become a part of this new and exciting movement that demonstrates the power of listening, the joy of storytelling, and the value of every life.

Find out more:

[nationaldayoflistening.org](http://nationaldayoflistening.org)

the  
national  
day of  
listening is

- giving back to your community
- a chance to listen closely
- preserving family history
- the least expensive gift to give
- asking important questions
- remembering your first love
- telling a funny story
- passing on wisdom
- the conversation of a lifetime

We offer free resources to individuals and families, educators, and community service organizations who want to participate in the National Day of Listening.

Get involved today!

# About StoryCorps

## About StoryCorps

StoryCorps is an independent nonprofit project whose mission is to honor and celebrate one another's lives through listening.

Since 2003, over 50,000 people have interviewed family and friends through StoryCorps. Each conversation is recorded on a free CD to share and is preserved at the Library of Congress. StoryCorps is one of the largest oral history projects of its kind, and millions listen to our broadcasts on public radio and on [www.storycorps.org](http://www.storycorps.org).

Help StoryCorps record, preserve, and share even more stories from communities like yours throughout the United States at [www.storycorps.org/donate](http://www.storycorps.org/donate).

## Listen to stories



Stories from StoryCorps interviews are broadcast every Friday on **NPR's *Morning Edition***.



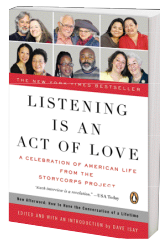
Listen to hundreds of stories online at [www.storycorps.org/listen](http://www.storycorps.org/listen).



Subscribe to our podcast on iTunes and at [www.storycorps.org/listen/podcast](http://www.storycorps.org/listen/podcast).

## Read our book

Purchase our bestselling book, *Listening Is an Act of Love*, available wherever books are sold. 100% of the royalties from your purchase will support the StoryCorps mission.



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