

Personal History Questions

If you look at the length of this document, you may be horrified. *Nobody* can answer that many questions! Relax. *You're not supposed to.* Don't think of this as a homework assignment, or you'll never do it. Instead, think of this as a buffet where you can pick and choose the items that look good to you. You can answer as many or as few as you want. After all, it's *your* personal history.

The hardest questions are these bulleted ones that are first on the list because they concern your family before you were born. If you don't know the answers, skip them altogether or come back to them later. After you get past the Family Background, the rest of the questions are easy. After all, they feature the person you know best in the world — you.

Family Background:

- What do you know about your family before you were born? Start with father's father's family. Tell all your memories about who they were and what stories you were told about them, including names and dates if you know them. (If you don't know specifics, don't worry!) Then go to your father's mother's family, your mother's father's family, and your mother's mother's family, answering the same questions.
- Do you know any stories about your father's childhood? Tell them. What about your mother's childhood?
- How did your parents meet? What do you know about their wedding and their marriage?

That's the end of the hard ones. These should be more fun for you.

Early Years:

What is your full name and why were you named it? (Maiden name for females)

Were you named after someone else?

Did you have a nickname as you were growing up?

If you did, what was it and why did you get that nickname?

Have you had any other nicknames as an adult?

What do your family members call you now?

When and where were you born?

Where was your first home? What do you remember about it?

What about other homes/places you have lived?

What were your earliest memories?

Give full names of your brothers and sisters, along with their birth dates if you know them. Going down the list, tell stories you remember about each of them — character traits or stories. It only makes sense that they remember the stories differently from you. That's fine. If they disagree, they can write their own personal histories.

How were your parents as a couple when you lived under their roof? Did they have a loving relationship, or was it adversarial? Can you illustrate this? How were they as parents? Did they work together, or was there a good cop/bad cop routine they used?

How did your parents execute discipline, and were there ways you could get out of it? How?

What examples did your parents set without even knowing it?

Did your parents have any interesting sayings they used over and over — timeworn words of advice? What about interesting habits or activities?

What did your family do for fun when you were a child?

Was there a chore you really hated doing as a child?

What kind of books did you like to read?

Do you remember having a favorite nursery rhyme or bedtime story? What was it?

What was your family's financial situation? Were you affluent, poor, or somewhere in between? What stories do you have that will illustrate your family's financial situation?

What were your favorite toys and what were they like?

Did you have a security blanket (or the equivalent)? What about imaginary friends?

What stories did your family tell about you as a young child?

What was your first word?

What were your favorite childhood games?

What is the first family vacation you remember, and what did you remember about it? What about other vacations?

Were there any fads during your youth that you remember vividly?

Where did you attend grade school(s)? High school?

What were your schools like?

How did you like school?

What was your favorite subject in school and why?

What subject in school was the easiest for you?

What was your least favorite subject in school and why?

Who was your favorite teacher and why did he stand out?

How do think your fellow classmates from school remember you best?

Did you get good grades?

Did you like school?

What did you wear to school? Describe your look.

What school activities and sports did you participate in?

Did you and your friends have a special hang-out where you liked to spend time?

Where was it and what did you do there?

Were you ever given any special awards for your studies of school activities?

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Spiritual Matters:

What was the religion of your parents and your grandparents? Do you still practice that religion? If not, why did you convert and what religion are you now?

When were you baptized? What memories do you have of that?

What church-related memories do you have as a child?

Why do you believe you're on earth? What are your feelings about God? Is religion important to you? Why or why not?

What are some of the spiritual milestones in your life? Include seminary, missionary work, patriarchal and other priesthood blessings, and other high points as they are applicable to you.

What spiritual lessons have you learned in your life? What experiences have you had that have taught you those lessons?

After High School:

Describe yourself as a young adult.

Did you attend any school or training after high school?

Do you have a college degree(s)? From where? What was your field of study?

Talk about your college days.

What was your first job?

How did you decide on a career? What jobs have you had?

Did you make enough money to live comfortably?

How long did you have to work each day at your job?

How old were you when you retired? (Or when do you want to retire?)

Romance and Family Life

How old were you when you started dating?

Do you remember your first date? Who was your first date? What do you remember about it?

When, where and how did you first meet your spouse? What were your first impressions?

Do you remember where you went on the first date with your spouse? Describe it.

How long did you know him or her before you got married?

Describe your wedding proposal.

Where and when did you get married? (Include date, place, location, etc.)

Describe your wedding ceremony. Who was there? Best man, bride's maid, other wedding party members?

Did you have a honeymoon? Where did you go? Any significant memories?

How would you describe your spouse?

What do (did) you admire most about him/her?

How long have you been married?

What advice would you give to your children or grandchildren on their wedding day?

How did you find out you were going to be a parent for the first time?

How many children did you have all together?

What were their names, birth dates and birthplaces?

Why did you give them the names that you did?

Do you remember anything that your children did when they were small that really amazed you?

What is one of the most unusual things that one of your children did regularly when they were small?

What was the funniest thing you can remember that one of your children said or did?

If you had to do it all over again, would you change the way you raised your family? How?

What did you find most difficult about raising children?

What did you find most rewarding about being a parent?

Did you spoil any of your children? How?

Were you a strict or lenient parent?

Did you find that you had to treat each of your children differently? If so, why?

Were there any family tragedies that stood out? What were they, and how did you deal with them?

How did you feel when the first of your children went to school for the first time? How did you feel when the oldest one grew up and left home?

How did you first hear that you were a grandparent and how did you feel about it?

What advice do you have for your children and grandchildren about being a parent?

Where did your spouse's parents live?

When and where did your parents die? What do you remember about it? How they died, where hospitalized, buried?

What do you remember about the death of your spouse's parents?

Do you remember hearing your grandparents describe their lives? What did they say?

Do you remember your great-grandparents? What do you know about them?

Who was the oldest person you remember as a child?

Did you have any of the childhood diseases? What are your memories of those?

Do you have any health problems that are considered hereditary? What are they? What about other health problems through the years?

What do you do regularly for exercise?

Do you have any bad habits now or in the past? What were they? If you got rid of them, how did you do it?

Have you ever been the victim of a crime? What happened, and how did it affect you?

Have you ever been in a serious accident?

Has anyone ever saved your life? Describe.

Have you ever been hospitalized? If so, what for?

Have you ever had surgery? What for?

What would you consider the most important inventions made during your lifetime?

Do you remember the first time you saw a television; a car; a refrigerator?

How is the world now different from what it was like when you were a child?

Do you remember your family discussing world events and politics?

How would you describe yourself politically?

Are you Conservative or Liberal and why?

Do you remember what you or your parents thought about income tax when it began in 1913?

Do you remember anything of the days of prohibition? How did it affect you and yours?

How did the depression affect you?

What US. President have you admired the most and why?

Do you remember the death of President Kennedy? How did you react?

Where were you on September 11, 2001? What do you remember about that day?

What wars have been fought during your lifetime? How did you feel about them?

If you served in the military, tell about your service experiences.

How did the Vietnam War affect you?

Name a good friend that you have known for the longest period of time. Why have you remained friends for so long?

How many years have you been friends?

Have there ever been any people in your life that you would consider to be your kindred spirits or soul mates? Who were they and why did you feel a special bond with them?

What were the hardest choices you ever had to make? Do you feel like you made the right choices?

Who was the person that really changed the course of your life by something he or she did? Who were they and what did they do?

Do you remember someone saying something to you that had a big impact on how you lived your life? What was it?

If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?

Was the most stressful experience that you ever lived through? What helped you get through it? What did you learn from it?

What are some of the trials you had in life? What did you learn from them?

What is the scariest thing that has ever happened to you personally?

What kinds of musical instrument have you learned to play?

Would you consider yourself to be creative?

What things have you made that others have enjoyed?

How would you describe your sense of humor?

What is the funniest practical joke you ever played on someone? What is the funniest practical joke that someone else played on you?

What activities have you especially enjoyed as an adult?

What are your hobbies?

What did you like to do when you were not working?

What is the most amazing thing that has ever happened to you?

Have you ever met any famous people? Describe what happened.

What organizations or groups have you belonged to?

Have you ever won any special awards or prizes as an adult? What were they for?

Describe a time and a place you remember feeling truly at peace and happy to be alive. Where were you, and what were you doing?

What is the most beautiful place you have ever visited and what was it like?

What is the longest trip that you have ever gone on? Where did you go?

What has been your favorite vacation? Where did you do and why was it special?

What was the favorite place you ever visited and what was it like?

What pets have you had?

Do you have a favorite story about a pet?

Is there anything you have always wanted to do but haven't?

Have you ever been to the world's fair?

What is the single most memorable moment of your life?

Here are some quick questions to round out your personality. What or who is your favorite:

- Animal?
- Artist?
- Athlete?
- Author?
- Book?
- Candy?
- Card game?
- Board game?
- Color?
- Cookie?
- Drink?
- Flavor of ice cream?
- Flower?
- Fruit?
- Holiday?
- Meal?
- Movie star?
- Movie?
- Musical group?
- Singer?
- Song?
- Hymn?
- Musical instrument?
- Style of music?
- Painting?
- Poem?
- Poet?
- Restaurant?
- Season?
- Sport?
- Tree?
- TV program?
- Vegetable?

If you had to pick a label for your family members (spouse, children, mother, father, brothers, sister...) Who befits the following descriptions?

- Animal lover;
- Best cook;
- Best gardener;
- Best housekeeper;

- Best looking;
 - Best memory;
 - Best storyteller;
 - Biggest tease;
 - Calmest;
 - Funniest;
 - Hardest worker;
 - Most athletic;
 - Most colorful;
 - Most creative;
 - Most frugal;
 - Most generous;
 - Most mischievous;
 - Most politically active;
 - Most reclusive;
 - Most relaxed;
 - Most sociable;
 - Quietest;
 - Shortest;
 - Tallest;
 - Wildest lifestyle;
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