



## Preparing For Your StoryCorps Interview

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## About StoryCorps

StoryCorps is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide people of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, preserve, and share the stories of our lives. Since 2003, tens of thousands of everyday people have shared life stories with family and friends through StoryCorps. Each conversation is recorded on a free CD to share as well as preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. StoryCorps is one of the largest oral history projects of its kind, and millions listen to broadcasts on NPR's *Morning Edition* and at [storycorps.org](http://storycorps.org).

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

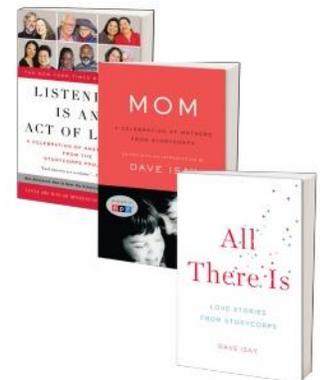
**READ:** Read our *New York Times* best sellers: *Listening Is an Act of Love, Mom: A Celebration of Mothers from StoryCorps*, and *All There Is: Love Stories from StoryCorps*.

**WATCH:** Watch our original animated shorts series at [storycorps.org/animation](http://storycorps.org/animation).

**Contact StoryCorps for:**

Technical questions

Assistance in recruiting and scheduling interviews



## About the American Library Association

Established in 1876, the American Library Association (ALA) is the oldest and largest library association in the world. Through its Public Programs Office, ALA promotes cultural and community programming as an essential part of library service in all types and sizes of libraries. Successful library programming initiatives have included "Let's Talk About It" reading and discussion series, traveling exhibitions, film discussion programs, the Great Stories CLUB, LIVE @ your library and more. Recently, the ALA Public Programs Office developed Programming Librarian.org, an online resource center bringing librarians timely and valuable information to support them in the creation of high-quality cultural programs for their communities. Additional information is available at the [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org) and [www.ala.org/programming](http://www.ala.org/programming).

# What to Expect at Your Interview

**Welcome (2 min)**– The Facilitator will welcome you, talk to you about the interview process, and answer any questions you may have

**Prep (8 min)**– The Facilitator will walk you through the paperwork which asks for basic personal information such as name, address, and ethnic background.

**Sound Check (5 min)** – Once you and your interview partner are ready to proceed, the Facilitator will make sure you are positioned well for recording and check the audio levels.

**The Interview (40 min)** – While you and your partner are talking, the Facilitator will take notes, keep time and monitor audio levels.

**Photos (6 min)** – The Facilitator will take photos of you and your interview partner, together and separately, to be included in the Library of Congress Archive.

**Release Forms (4 min)** – The Facilitator will explain StoryCorps’ release forms, which allow your library and StoryCorps to keep copies of the interview and send another to the Library of Congress. A copy will be mailed to you in a few weeks.

## Do you have Photographs or Artifacts?

If you have any pictures or items that would enhance or enrich your story, please feel free to bring them along. We will take a photo of objects and/or scan your photographs; returning them safely to you. The addition of these items will greatly augment the Bellmore Memorial Library’s local history collection which we are hoping to expand.

### Examples of Artifacts

1. Postcards, bank calendars, menus
2. Train timetables
3. Dog tags, medals or other military decorations
4. Commemorative giveaways (e.g. matchbooks, coasters, napkins)
5. Journals, diaries, ledgers, or correspondence
6. Programs from concerts or other events
7. Pennants, buttons, posters, etc.

# Interview Tips

## (For relatives, friends, neighbors, or loved ones of Storytellers)

Forty minutes can seem like a long time, but the recording session may go faster than you think. Here are some tips for getting the most from your interview experience.

**Think about what you want to talk about during your interview before the recording session.** There won't be time to go over every aspect of one's life during the 40 minutes, so choose a few areas you would like to ask your partner about. If you like, you can use the Great Questions list (on the next page) as a guide.

**Ask general, open-ended questions that don't assume the answers.** An open-ended question is a question that cannot be answered with one word, such as "yes" or "no." Questions such as, "Tell me about..." or "How did you feel when..." are good places to start.

**Make the interview a natural conversation.** Ask follow-up questions if you are curious about something. If your partner goes off topic, let them do so. You can redirect them to your original question later.

**Be patient.** Keep in mind that it might take a while for your interview partner to process a question or come up with an answer. Don't follow up with another question too quickly.

**Share favorite stories and memories about your interview partner as your conversation goes along.** The interview is a great time to tell your interview partner how much they mean to you or to share something you've always wanted to tell them.

**Be prepared for an emotional experience.** The interview can evoke all kinds of feelings for you and your partner.

**End your interview with reflective questions.** "What are the most important lessons you've learned?" or "What legacy would you like to leave?" You may also want to thank the Storyteller for sharing with you.

**The most important thing is to be in the moment, listen carefully, and enjoy your time together!**



# Great Questions List

Before your conversation, ask your interview partner what they would like to talk about and what stories they would like to share. Then prepare a list of questions to ask during the interview. **You can use some of the suggested questions below, or come up with your own list.** For more great questions, visit [storycorps.org/questions](http://storycorps.org/questions).

## Historic Bellmore

How long have you lived in Bellmore?

Why did you come to live in Bellmore? Where had you lived before and how do the two places compare?

What was it like when you grew up here/first moved here? How has it changed over those years?

What do you miss most about the way it used to be?

Who are some of the great characters from Bellmore? Do you remember any great stories or legends about our town?

Did you attend school in Bellmore? Which one? What is your most vivid memory?

What is your earliest memory of Bellmore?

What was shopping on Bedford Avenue like? Is there any store, shopkeeper, or restaurant that you really miss?

When the railroad was elevated how did it change the feeling of the town?

## Superstorm Sandy

Did you struggle with the decision to stay in your home or evacuate?

What was the most challenging part of the storm and its aftermath?

What issues are you still dealing with?

What was the storm's impact on your family?

How has surviving Superstorm Sandy changed the way you will live going forward?

## Topics I don't want to forget to bring up!

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Who are the Facilitators and what do they do during the recording session?**

Facilitators are staff and volunteers from your local library. All Facilitators receive training from StoryCorps on how to use the equipment and promote a comfortable and meaningful experience. The Facilitator is present with you throughout the entire interview process and handles all technical aspects of the recording.

## **How long is the interview?**

The interview process takes about 90 minutes. Recording time is 40 minutes, but can be flexible based on your needs. You will be able to take breaks as needed during the interview.

## **What will happen to my recording after my interview session?**

Five to seven weeks after your interview you will receive a CD copy (one per interview pair) of your interview to share with your friends and family. With your permission, a copy of your interview will be archived for generations to come at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., StoryCorps, and with your local library.

## **Will my story be excerpted for the public to hear?**

With permission from the Participants, a few of the thousands of stories we collect are excerpted for posting on our website and/or broadcast on NPR's Morning Edition. These interviews comprise less than one percent of the total number of interviews StoryCorps records. You will be contacted beforehand if your story is chosen.

## **What happens if I don't want my CD to go to the archive?**

If you do not sign the StoryCorps release, your CD will not be archived and we will not keep a copy. However, you will still receive a CD of your conversation to share with your friends and family.