

**What is the
point of oral
history?**



Oral History Toolkit

CREDITS

"What is the point of oral history?" Oral History Toolkit

This toolkit has been created by the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust for the Heritage Lottery Fund North West. It is based on our experience of delivering oral history projects in Manchester and of the kinds of questions we are asked by community groups working to deliver their projects. The toolkit contains very practical guidance and templates on all aspects of running and managing an oral history project.

Credits

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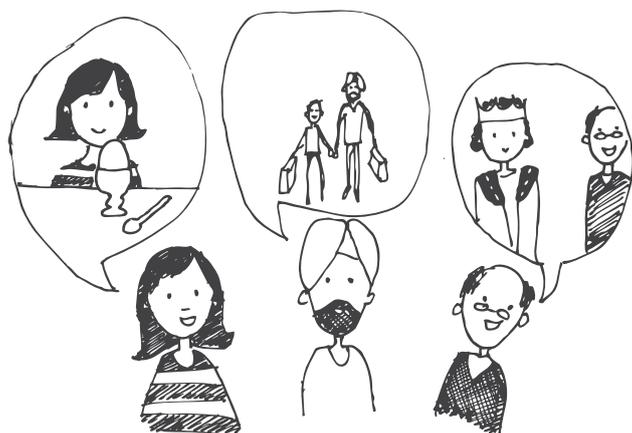


www.racearchive.org.uk

www.hlf.org.uk

Contents

What is the point of oral history?



- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. What is the point of oral history? | p4 |
| 2. How do I get people involved? | p5 |
| 3. What's involved in an interview? | p6-10 |
| 4. What equipment do I need? | p11-13 |
| 5. How do I keep a record of my interviews? | p14-16 |
| 6. How do I store audio files? | p17-19 |
| 7. Do I have to transcribe every interview? | p20 |
| 8. How do I share my project with a wider audience? | p21-22 |
| 9. Templates | p23-27 |

1 What is the point of oral history?

Oral history widens official history by recording ordinary people and everyday experiences as well as forgotten and untold narratives. It **fills gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the past** providing insights based on the experience, memories and beliefs of people. **Oral history acknowledges the lives and achievements of groups that often get overlooked or forgotten.**

People have used oral history to

- Bring participants of different ages/ backgrounds together.
- Capture the stories of elders before they disappear.
- Document evolving traditions as they pass from generation to generation.
- Encourage younger community members to learn about their heritage.
- Share their history with others.

"Oral history is an opportunity for people to tell their own stories, unmediated and as they remember them. It's a very powerful technique for historical documentation. I like that it's subject-centric and gave me the chance to meet people I wouldn't ordinarily come across."

Jen Allanson, Arthur Dooley Archive project volunteer

"[In school] it wasn't a history that related to me. It was talking about Henry VIII – I just found it so boring... This type of history is what I can relate to."

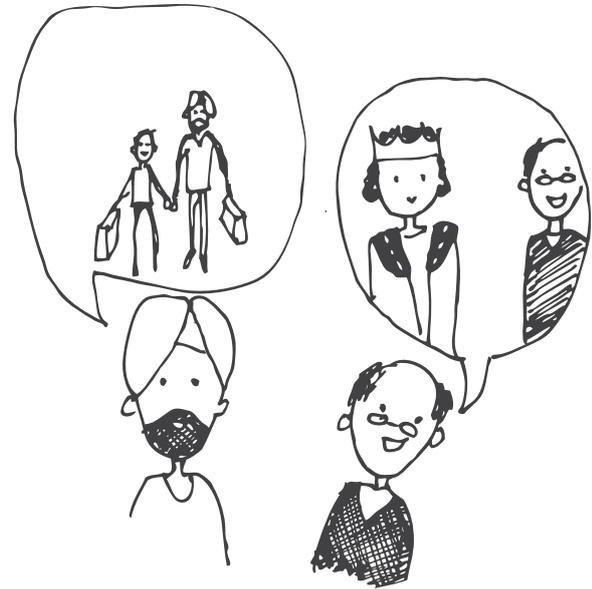
Aziz Hussain, Yemeni Roots Salford Lives participant

**Oral History
is someone's
story in their
own words.**



2 How do I get people involved?

- Set up a steering group for your project. It should represent your community and include people with a range of skills, experience and views. It may also include representatives from partner organisations and/ or a professional oral historian. Agree roles and responsibilities and set dates to meet at regular monthly/ quarterly intervals.
- Think about where you will deposit your interviews at the end of your project. A local library, archive or museum may be the best place. Find out how they can help you and what they will need from you to allow the interviews to be deposited. People in these organisations can also help you to get off to a good start with advice on buying the right equipment, setting up record-keeping systems and training volunteers. Remember to budget for any charges they may make.
- As a group, consider who you would like to interview and draw up a list. Try to include a wide range of people with differing opinions and experiences in your project. Your project is an opportunity to include people whose voices are not usually heard so make sure you are not just meeting one type or group of people.
- Write a clear description of your project, so you can easily explain it to others.
- Publish excerpts from your first interviews (on a website or in a newsletter/ press release) to give others an idea of the kind of material you are collecting.
- Search for project volunteers in logical places. Your local college or university should be able to put you in touch with students seeking work experience. They may be willing to help with interviews, summaries and transcriptions in return for training in new skills. You could also contact your local volunteer agency or talk to community groups that meet in your area.
- Invite potential interviewees and volunteers to a talk or open day. Explain the different opportunities available making the project aims as clear as possible. You can encourage volunteers from within your community by making sure they know your project will provide training in oral history and other skills.
- Approach local radio and press, to help you publicise your project. Attend community events and festivals and distribute promotional material. Send information to similar people or groups. Give copies of printed material to your local museum, library, archive, community centre or place of worship. Invite local councillors and MPs to attend events, write the introduction to your book or speak in public about your project. It will help with publicity and may lead to further useful connections.



3 What's involved in an interview?

Asking questions and listening carefully to answers.

Who makes a good interviewee?

Anyone! We all have a unique perspective and interesting stories to tell. Try to include a wide range of people with differing opinions and experiences in your project. Think about how you will encourage people who say "I'm not important and have nothing to say."

If possible, try to interview just one person at a time. In recordings of group conversations it can be difficult to distinguish who is speaking. People tend to talk over one another and stronger individuals can dominate the conversation. Group conversations can be a useful starting point for collecting memories, but one-to-one interviews are easier to manage.

What sort of questions should I ask?

Oral histories usually take the form of life stories. Most people start by describing where and when they were born/ grew up and progress through their lives from there. Some projects explore memories of a specific event or theme, rather than a whole life story. If possible, include these focused memories within the wider life-story as it will help you to understand the influences that shaped the interviewee's opinions, beliefs and ideas. **See example questions on Page 27.**

When you are thinking of questions:

Use open questions beginning with what/ where/ when/ who/ how

Use phrases such as

- Tell me about...
- Describe...
- Explain...

Ask interviewees to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Sometimes drawing a map or picture can help with descriptions. Objects and photographs can also help to trigger memories and can be scanned or photographed to go with the interview.

**What
sort of
questions
should I
ask?**



What's involved in an interview? *Continued*

You could be the only person to record these stories and you are being an historian for future generations.

"I have seen for myself how oral history in the community can open up debate and engage others to share stories that would otherwise have been forgotten whilst providing a useful research tool for local history."

Catherine Parker, Cabinet of Curiosities (Warrington Museum) project volunteer



Things to remember:

- **Turn on the recorder!** Carry out a recording test before starting the interview. Continue to check that equipment is switched on and working.
- Explain the process and try to put the interviewee at ease.
- Speak as little as possible and avoid commenting with 'mmm' and 'I sees'. It's not your story but theirs, and 'conversation' can lead to extra work later on.
- Keep questions open and objective. Avoid leading statements/ questions e.g. 'That must have made you angry?'
- Pick up on interesting points introduced by the interviewee, even if they are a diversion – unanticipated stories are often the most interesting. Keep the next intended question in mind and return to it later.
- Remember that your audience might be from different backgrounds to the people you are interviewing. They might not understand a phrase, reference or place name that has an obvious meaning within your community. Ask the interviewee to explain.
- Ask the interviewee to spell personal and place names to avoid getting these wrong later.

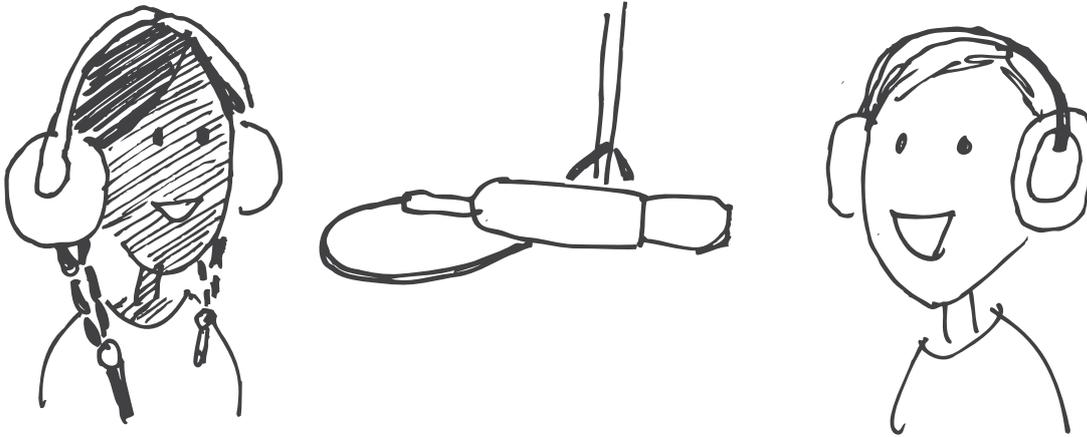
Things to avoid:

- Making people nervous – do all you can to put them at ease.
- Asking questions with 'yes' or 'no' answers. The interview will be very short!
- Expressing your own opinions or assumptions.
- Discussing someone else in detail – oral history is about individuals and they must speak for themselves.
- Speaking at the same time as the interviewee – clarifying what people are saying can be a problem later on.
- Giving people a list of questions before the interview – they often write out the answers and insist on reading them out, which makes a terrible recording.
- Background noise – pets, running water, creaky pipes, the hum of a fluorescent light, the roar of passing buses can ruin a recording.

Things to remember, things to avoid

What's involved in an interview? *Continued*

Interviewees should feel in control of the process.



Meetings should be safe and comfortable for both parties.

Often a quiet, neutral space (community centre / office meeting room) or the interviewee's own home is preferable. Ask the interviewee if they are comfortable talking one to one or would like a friend or family member to be present. When visiting someone at home you should make sure you are safe by letting a friend know where you are going.

Respect boundaries. Interviewees have the right to privacy and can withhold information or change their minds about what they have said. Remember to make this clear from the beginning and again when returning to review summaries and transcripts.

If someone gets upset during an interview, do your best to put them at ease. Offer to stop the recording and take a break. Check if the interviewee feels comfortable continuing and whether they would like to change subjects. Make it clear now and later when reviewing summaries/ transcripts, that relevant sections can be edited or removed.

If an interviewee prefers to remain anonymous, avoid mentioning names, or asking for specific, identifiable information during the interview. You can also 'anonymise' interviews at a later date, by transcribing speech and deleting such references. Written scripts can then be made public in place of the original recording.

What's involved in an interview? *Continued*

What if English is not the first language?

Family and community members can often help with interpretation during interviews but may find it difficult not to let their own thoughts, ideas or experiences affect meaning. A professional interpreter may be more objective, but you will have to cost this in to your budget.

If you decide to conduct questions and answers in your community language, bear in mind this could limit your audience. For content to be made accessible to a wider group of people, you will need someone who can translate and summarise the interview in English. You might need to pay for a full transcription to be translated into English.

Like all summaries and transcriptions, it is a good idea to get a third party to check the content for accuracy against the original recording.

For more information about transcription, see section 7.
For more information about summaries, see section 5.

Quality is better than quantity. Full, well-documented interviews are the most useful – now and in the future. You should not underestimate the time involved.

A full-time, experienced worker might expect to complete 30-50 interviews (150 to 250 hours) in a year. The interviewer is the best person to write interview summaries: as a rule of thumb it takes two hours to write or index and summarise 1 hour of recording. Inexperienced people need to learn and practice new skills so are expected to take longer. If the interviewee has a strong accent or is difficult to understand this will also affect the amount of time it takes.

Life story interviews range from around 1- 3 hours. Some can take place over several meetings and be even longer.

Make sure you allow time to:

- Identify and contact potential interviewees. This will include explaining the project and building trust, which can be very time consuming.
- Rearrange cancelled and missed appointments. It is not always easy to pin interviewees down!
- Save, edit and document recordings (and related material), ready for archiving.
- Review content with interviewees in order to gain informed consent.

How many interviews should I carry out?



What's involved in an interview? *Continued*

What is informed consent and why is it important?

'Consent' means permission. 'Informed' means the interviewee has approved the content of any recording/ summary and understands how it might be used both now and in the future. Informed consent is agreeing how people are represented and gaining permission to share their recordings with others.

Consent forms outline intended conditions of storage and use and ensure that oral histories can be shared with others.

Remember to go through the form with interviewees, explaining unfamiliar terms. The form includes space to record specific instructions or omissions. These might include a timetable for when information can be disclosed, restrictions on the use of imagery or the voice, exclusion from the web, or a wish to remain anonymous. To show that both parties agree to abide by the terms set down, the form should be signed by both interviewer and interviewee. In the case of children, a parent or guardian should sign on their behalf.

Without informed consent it may be unethical or even illegal to make use of a recording. Archives may also refuse to accept material without a corresponding consent form.

This toolkit includes a template for a consent form.

EXAMPLE:

(insert your logo here)

ORAL / VIDEO HISTORY RECORDING AND DEPOSIT AGREEMENT

(Your Project Name here)..... is grateful for your kind help and co-operation in its recording programme. The purpose of this Deposit Agreement is to ensure that your contribution is handled in accordance with your wishes (as stated below) and within the rules of the 1988 Copyright Act.

All material will be deposited at (insert name of archive here)..... and preserved for future research and this form, once signed, ensures that the copyright of the recording belongs to (insert name of archive). Under the Data Protection Act, your personal details such as name and address will be stored by us (either on paper or electronically). However we will not divulge these details to outside agencies.

1. Do you agree that both this project and the future repository may use your contribution:

- In public exhibitions, displays or performances YES/NO
- On our websites YES/NO
- For broadcasting purposes (radio or TV) YES/NO
- For educational uses (school, college, university) YES/NO
- In publications such as books, leaflets, posters YES/NO
- And make it available for public and research needs YES/NO

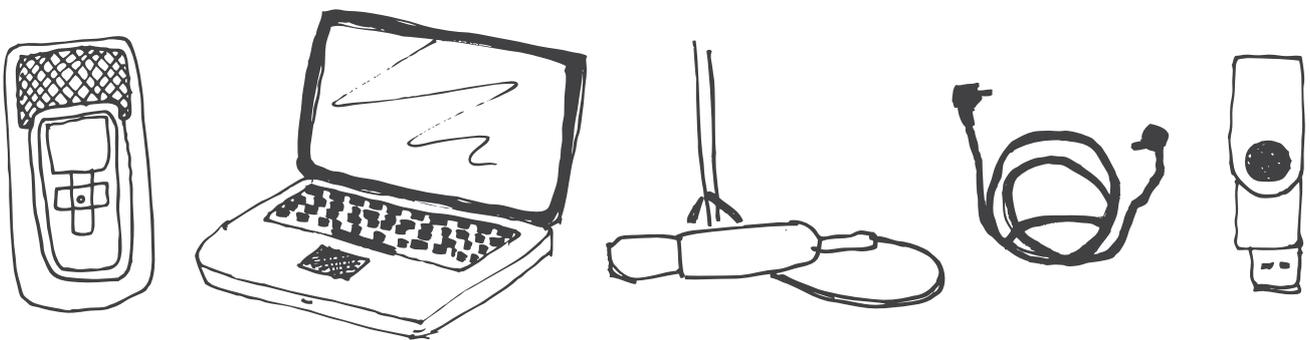


4 What equipment do I need?

Most oral histories are now recorded digitally, on 'solid state' machines (meaning no moving parts, discs or tapes). **Sound is recorded in stereo, digitised and stored as a file on the recorder's memory.**

Basic Equipment Checklist

- A digital recorder.
- Two lapel microphones per recorder.
- PC or laptop with adequate memory – up to 4GB.
- Portable hard-drive or other stand-alone memory device to store back-up recordings.



Digital recorders

Recorders are available to suit every pocket. You could even consider using a computer, tablet or mobile phone. Most importantly, ensure your machine records sound as WAV files. Waveform Audio File Format (WAV) is uncompressed, and is therefore the 'gold-standard'. WAV files give the best quality sound and the flexibility to convert and compress recordings into other formats. However they take up lots of memory on your computer. MP3 is smaller (compressed) and suitable for sharing on the internet or sending via email.

For the technically minded, you should aim to record WAV files at a minimum quality of 44.1kHz 16 bit (CD quality). Either 44.1kHz or 48kHz at 24 bits is usually reckoned to be better.

Marantz, Zoom H4n, TASCAM DR05 and Roland recorders are all high quality. They record WAV files which can be transferred to your computer via a USB port (much like a digital camera). Recorders come with a memory card. 4Gb is equivalent to 2-6 hours capacity, depending on your recording mode. It's worth checking what card comes with your machine before you buy.

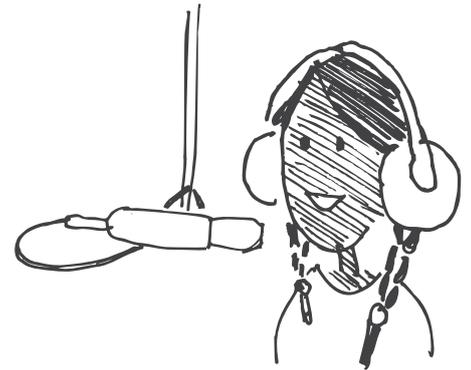
Help and advice:

- Inquit audio - www.inquitaudio.co.uk
- www.solidstatesound.co.uk

What equipment do I need? *Continued*

Other types of recorders

Your group may already own a mini-disc recorder or cassette machine. If resources are limited you can still use them to create good quality recordings. In fact, to those wary of technology it can be reassuring to see reels going round and know the machine is 'definitely recording'. However, to edit content and share it online you will need to convert recordings into digital files, which can be time-consuming.



To convert tapes into digital files:

- To do this you need an 'in-out' or jack cable to attach your machine to a PC.
- Plug one end into the headphone or 'out socket' of your device.
- Plug the other into the microphone or 'in socket' of your PC.
- Press play on your machine and record on the editing software installed on your PC (see page 15 for more information).

Be warned you can only do this in real time – so an hour of interview will take an hour to digitise.

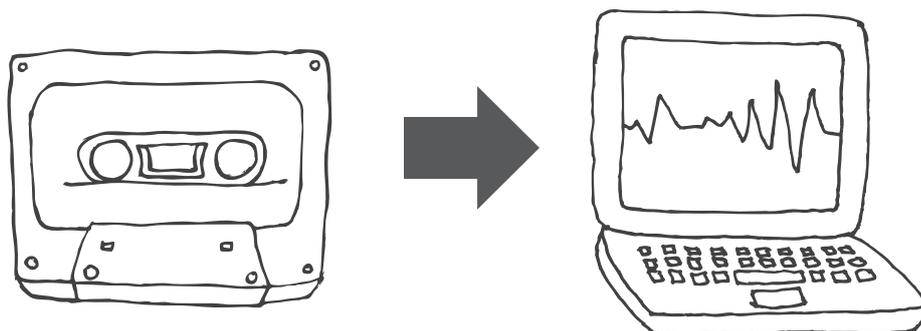
For a fuller description of how to do this go to:

www.theguardian.com/technology/askjack/2008/aug/07/convertingcassettetapestod

Microphones

Good microphones are important for clear sound. Lapel microphones are the ideal, as they cut out a lot of background noise. Don't forget that you will need two microphones per recorder. Microphones often come without leads, which can be an additional expense. Check when buying that you have everything you need. You may also wish to consider hand-held or table top microphones if you are doing group interviews.

Wiring interviewees to a microphone can make them nervous and may not be appropriate if you have spent a long time building confidence or trust. Most machines also have reasonable built-in microphones, which you can use to create a more relaxed environment. In most cases people will quickly forget a recorder is there. Just be aware of background noises, which will be much more audible on the recording.



What equipment do I need? *Continued*

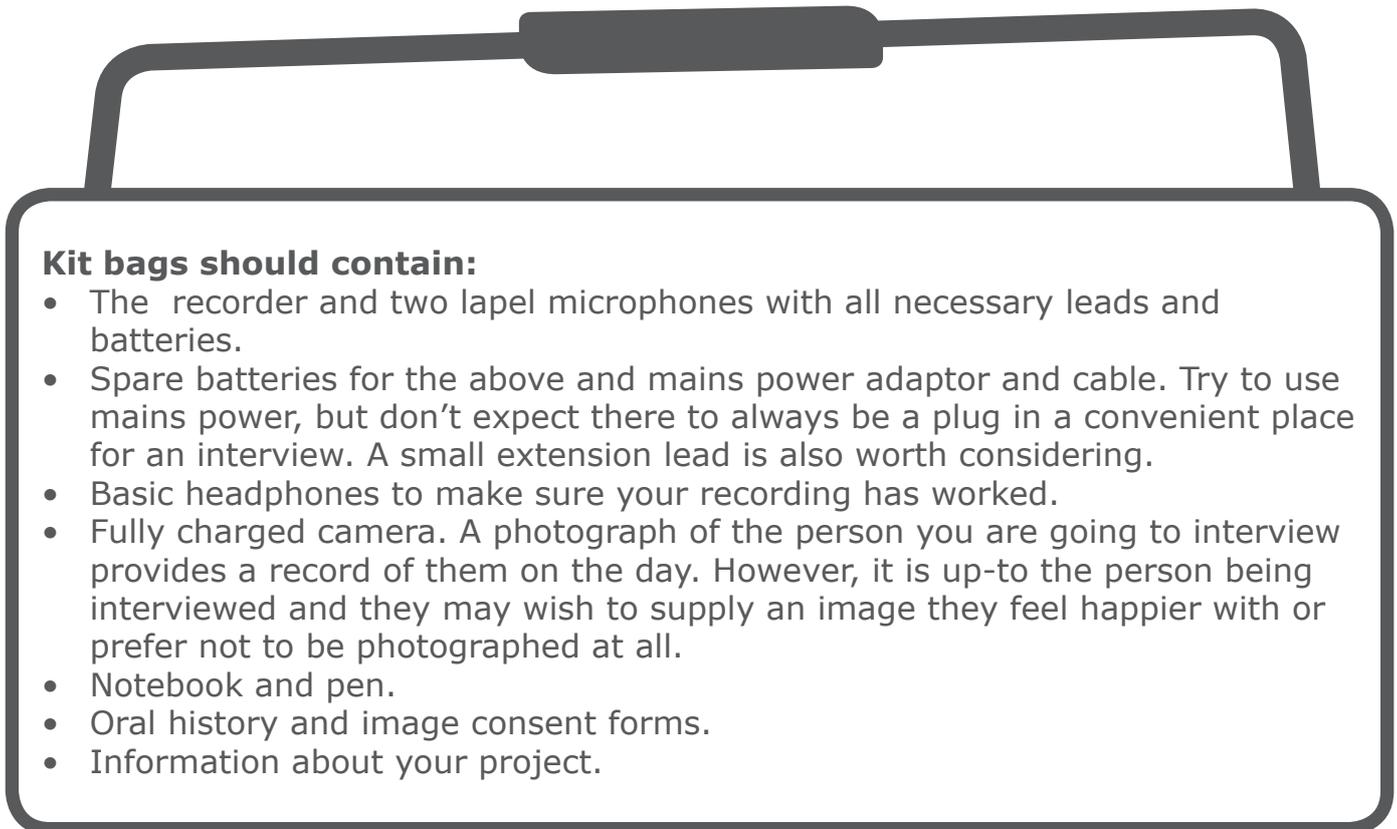
Film and video

If you are thinking of filming interviews, consider the following:

- Cameras can be intrusive and change the nature of an interview. It's more difficult for people to forget they are there and behave naturally unless they are used to appearing on screen.
- Footage of 'talking heads' is not particularly visual and will only retain people's interest for a short period (much like audio). Try using a selection of photographs to accompany interview excerpts instead.
- The in-built microphone on a camera is likely to produce sound of an inferior quality to a recorder. Though it's possible to record separate audio and visual tracks or link your recorder to a camera it requires additional technical expertise.

Kit bags

Use kit bags to store your equipment. Chose something discreet – like a rucksack – which doesn't broadcast that it contains technical equipment. For projects using several recorders keep a record of when kit bags are borrowed and returned. Create a kit bag checklist, to make sure that you have everything you need.



Kit bags should contain:

- The recorder and two lapel microphones with all necessary leads and batteries.
- Spare batteries for the above and mains power adaptor and cable. Try to use mains power, but don't expect there to always be a plug in a convenient place for an interview. A small extension lead is also worth considering.
- Basic headphones to make sure your recording has worked.
- Fully charged camera. A photograph of the person you are going to interview provides a record of them on the day. However, it is up-to the person being interviewed and they may wish to supply an image they feel happier with or prefer not to be photographed at all.
- Notebook and pen.
- Oral history and image consent forms.
- Information about your project.

5 How do I keep a record of my interviews?

Keep an inventory

An inventory or log of your interviews is a list of basic details and information about them. Keeping an accurate inventory or log of your interviews will make them more useful and accessible in the future. It should include details of the interviewer and interviewee, the date, time and location of each recording. It is also helpful to keep track of whether summaries, transcripts and copies have been made and where they have been stored/ distributed. Maintaining a central list of consent agreements and restrictions can also help you remember which information is suitable to share with the public.

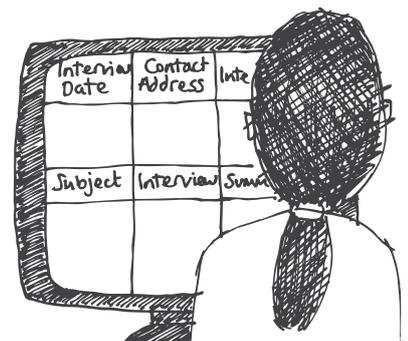
You may wish to keep a separate inventory of associated objects, photographs or documents relating to interviews, for future reference.

This toolkit includes a guide on how to set up an oral history interview log. There is also a guide to creating an image and object log.

EXAMPLE:

Interview date	Contact Address	Interviewee	Subject	Duration	Interviewer	Stored on
12.03.14	1 Tudor Court, Bolton, BL1 1JD	Mr A. Ahmed	Life story - formative years in Somlia, journey to Britain, working life and community involvement.	01:27:10	JV	P/Journe INTERVIE
20.03.14	22 Bailey Close, Manchester, M14 5YP	Mrs S. Chatterjee (PERSON A) and Mrs F. Chatterjee (PERSON B)	Life stories - mother and daughter discuss childhood, family, education and work	39:52	JV	P/Journe INTERVIE B
01.04.14	15 Main Street, Stockport, SK4 2TP	Mr J. Robinson	Life Story - childhood and schooling in Jamaica, journey to Britain, work and return to education	11:06:00	WL	P/Journe INTERVIE

Record Keeping



How do I keep a record of my interviews? *Continued*

Create Index and summary documents

An index is a list of the topics covered in each interview. You should complete one for each recording, as close to an interview as possible while the details are still fresh in your mind. An index helps researchers to understand the scope of an interview and locate specific information. **It describes the interview as it unfolds**, so is usually written in the present tense. (E.g. Mumtaz explains the situation, Saira recalls an incident.)

AN EXAMPLE OF AN ORAL HISTORY INDEX:

Interview with Mr. A. Ahmed, total duration: 1 hour 27 minutes
Interview and summary by Jennifer Vickers

The interview plays as one long recording, but is made of 3 tracks of varying lengths

1	start time:	finish time:	aprox duration:	brief description of content:
	00:00	32:08	32 mins 8 secs	Name, date and place of birth. (0:03) Grows up in a rural area. Father and most neighbours are farmers. Large family sharing a modest house. (10:23) Attends the local school, remembers teachers and friends. Recalls his favourite subjects and career ambitions. (29:41) A friend shows him an advert for jobs in Britain. Suggests going together. 'It will be an adventure'. [ICE CREAM VAN INTERRUPTS RECORDING]
2	start time:	finish time:	aprox duration:	brief description of content:
	32:10	01:04:16	38 mins 6 secs	Describes journey – long and tiring, with only a small amount of money. Travel to Manchester by train.



An index should always include:

- the names of the interviewer, interviewee and the person doing the summary.
- the date of the interview and the name of the project.
- the interview length (plus details of how many separate recordings it includes).
- a column to record timings.
- another column to record topics.
- separate rows for separate tracks – to make visible where one recording session ends and another begins.



How do I keep a record of my interviews?

Continued

Make a note of the time a new subject is introduced. Keep descriptions brief and accurate. When the interviewee changes subject, write a new entry on a new line. Some entries may last seconds, others several minutes. At the end of each recording, explain why it has ended (e.g. interviewee answers the doorbell/ takes a break). Start a new section for each new recording (even if you have edited sections together). The index should be an exact representation of what took place.

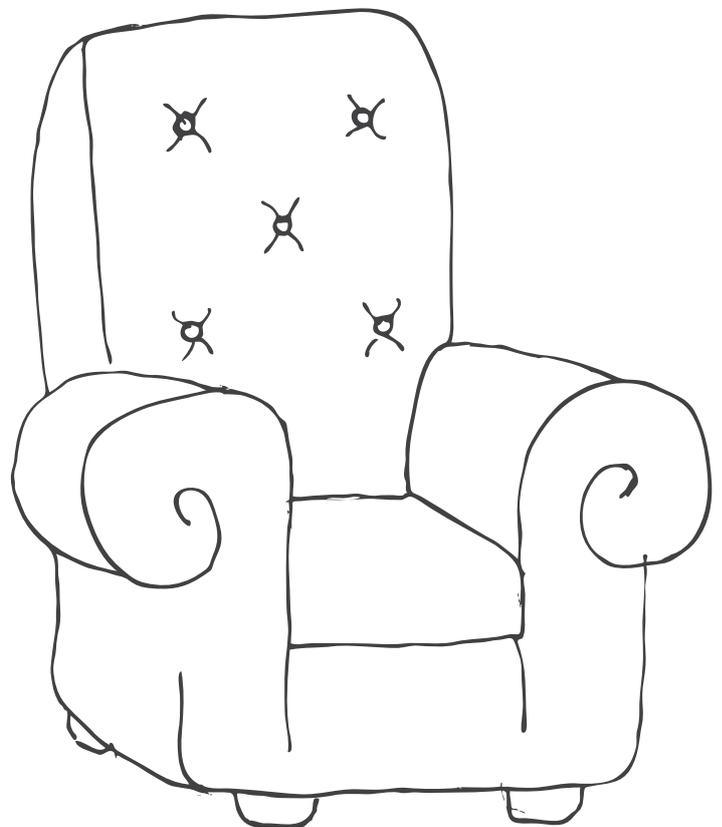
Summaries are optional. They are usually written in the past tense and give an overview of a person and their key opinions/ life experiences.

They also provide a snapshot of the interview, focusing on those subjects given the most time and significance. (Not all subjects in the index need to be mentioned in the summary.) Information is usually grouped chronologically or by subject, so that it reads like a story. It should however follow the general flow of the interview.

Summaries can be useful in publications and exhibitions when there is limited time or space to include an entire interview. They can also help with issues of anonymity, providing insight into opinions and experiences without necessarily revealing an individual's personal details.

Summaries often make use of short quotations to emphasise a key point of view, or to stand in place of a description (where content is subjective). When formatting your summary remember to indent quotes, so they appear distinct from the main body text. These can be useful later if you need quotes for an exhibition or website. Quotations should be word for word, not paraphrased.

Recordings should take place in a safe and comfortable space.



6 How do I store audio files?

On a disc, external drive or computer

WAV files are optimum and MP3 for day-to-day sharing.

Do not use the recorder to store interviews as there is always a danger of deleting material or losing it altogether (if the device is lost or stolen). **For safety, download material to a computer as soon as possible after each interview.** As a precaution back up recordings by saving them in a range of formats and locations.

How to download files from recorder to PC

- Plug digital recorders into the USB port on your laptop or PC and download the audio files.
- If you have never done this before, wait for the recording device file to open. (This should happen automatically).
- Drag the appropriate folders from the file to 'My Documents' and replace the given name (which will probably be a series of numbers) with something memorable.
- If your interview was done in several recordings give each one a sequential name/number. For example: Usain Bolt 1, Usain Bolt 2, Usain Bolt 3



At some stage you may decide to edit sequential files together, to create one long recording per interviewee. In this case, remember to keep section breaks visible (by indicating where one ends and another begins), so it remains a true record of what took place.

Create a compressed, MP3 version of files for day-to-day use and sharing online. (See below for details of how to do this). Only wipe recordings off your machine when you are sure you have several backed up copies.

How do I store audio files? *Continued*

Compressing and editing interviews

Interviews should always be stored as WAV files and archived for future research. For day-to-day use and editing, compress sound files to MP3 format. Wave Lab (£60) and Sound Forge (£30) are common, though Audacity is adequate and free to download from the internet.

www.audacity.sourceforge.net

How to use Audacity

- In Audacity import the WAV file you wish to compress/edit. (Audacity will then convert it to Aup (Audacity's unique sound format) for editing purposes. The recording appears as a digital 'graph' with a corresponding time code.)
- You can mark and cut out, move or delete sections of sound, rather like cutting and pasting from a Word document. Be aware that if you save your file on Audacity it will automatically save it as an Aup file, which cannot be played on Windows media.
- To complete your edit make sure you export your file to your computer as WAV or MP3.

For full details of how to use Audacity go to:

www.audacity.sourceforge.net/manual-1.2/tutorial_common_ed_2.html

Storing and archiving audio

It is good practise to deposit recordings from oral history projects in an archive to maximise public access. Ask archive staff which formats are acceptable. Regional sound-archives in the NorthWest include:

The Northwest Sound Archive, based in Clitheroe:

www.nwsoundarchive.co.uk

The Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre:

<http://www.racearchive.org.uk/>

Lancashire County Records Office:

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=4528&pageid=30539&e=e>

Manchester Local Studies Library (at Archives +):

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/448/archives_and_local_history

You can also try approaching organisations like trade unions, charities or special interest groups who may also have archives relevant to your project.

How do I store audio files? *Continued*

Technology advances all the time and files may need to be converted at some point in the future. In the past archive-quality quality CD-Rs or DVD-Rs (known as gold CDs) were recommended. However, there is evidence that even premium products can begin to deteriorate after ten years. If you are saving to CD your computer will ask if want to do this in audio or PC format. Audio format allows you to play CDs on a stereo and PC versions on a computer. If in doubt make a copy in each format. But bear in mind that many laptops no longer have CD drives, so be prepared to distribute your recordings in other formats (on memory sticks or via email as MP3s) if necessary.



Whatever you do make sure you have copies which can be opened on different devices before storing or depositing them in an archive. It's best to keep at least one copy of your files on a portable hard-drive so it can be accessed, even if you have problems with your computer.

7 Do I have to transcribe every interview?

The short answer is no... though there are many reasons why people do.

Paper versions of an interview tend to last longer than recorded formats. They can also help to clarify difficult-to-hear speech and make content more publicly accessible. After all, reading does not require specialist equipment or software. Transcripts can improve our understanding of recordings but should only act as a replacement in exceptional circumstances (e.g. at the specific request of an interviewee).

Transcripts should be an accurate record of the interview. They should include pauses, stammers, changes of thought and slang – to show a true reflection of the interviewee. However, transcribing is very time-consuming. Baylor University (USA) estimates that one hour of interviewing can take between 10 and 12 hours to transcribe. Knowledge of the subject, understanding of an interviewee's accent and the quality of recordings can all have an impact.

For further information and tips see:

www.baylor.edu/oralhistory/index.php?id+23607

For both summarising and transcribing, a transcription pedal and software can really help to reduce the amount of time it takes to find information and with repeated play back. This equipment enables you to type and listen in one complete package (instead of constantly flipping between Media Player and Word) It also allows you to slow down the speed at which someone is speaking and pause / return easily to the point at which you stopped listening and typing.

For further information and tips see:

Start Stop

<http://www.startstop.com/>

Infinity (available from Inquit Audio)

<http://www.inquitaudio.co.uk/foot-pedals.html>

A transcript is a written version of a recorded interview.



8 How do I share my project with a wider audience?

You can use excerpts from oral history interviews in all kinds of publications and displays. Choose a range of people and viewpoints to tell stories via **posters, newsletters, books or pamphlets**. It can often be interesting to compare the attitudes of different generations or to highlight areas of common experience.

- Make a list of subjects you would like to explore (e.g. 'Community', 'Education' or 'Mealtimes'). Be sure to include questions about them in your interview.
- When summarising, search for short, succinct excerpts on these topics. A good quote will tell a contained story or sum up a subject in three minutes or less. Remember – longer quotes may be suitable for books (where people can sit to digest content, or return to view material several times). Exhibition audiences have short attention spans!
- Make a note of where the excerpt appears in the interview so you can find it later. Create a separate recording and transcription.
- For publishing purposes only, 'clean' excerpts by adding missing words, removing irrelevant sentences and deleting coughs or hesitations. This will make written quotes easier to read and understand.

"We wanted people to engage with the rest of the community, to become better within themselves, to show [other] people who we are and where we're from."

Yusuf Bagail, Yemeni Roots Salford Lives participant



Working in partnership

Some groups work with their local museum, library or archive to develop an exhibition, talk or series of events. Ask staff about the space they have available and the support they can offer before developing project outcomes. For exhibitions, websites and printed material, try collecting maps, photographs and documents to create visual interest and bring people's stories to life. Items may be loaned from participants or gathered via research at your local archive. Personal or museum objects can also provide added interest but need to be stored and displayed securely.

How do I share my project with a wider audience? *Continued*

The internet

Many groups use websites, social media or blogs to document their project and share outcomes. Some sites (like Facebook) allow you to set up closed groups, so that only invited members can view content or make a contribution. Others (like Wordpress) offer different levels of access, so that some members can add, delete or update content, while others can only view pages or post comments. Most websites will allow you to upload sound and video clips but will not have the capacity to support your entire collection of interviews. Soundcloud.com is a relative newcomer in this area and could be called 'the Youtube of sound and music'. You can upload clips and use it to embed audio in your own website, but bear in mind that, like Youtube, material on soundcloud is available for anyone online to access.

Consider developing a website early in the project, so you can keep participants up to date with developments as they happen. You may need to budget for help to do this. Remember though that not everyone has access to the internet or is able to use a computer. Websites also have a limited lifespan, so should not be used as the sole place to store recordings from your project.

You might be inspired by these examples of oral history project websites:

Burngreave Voices

<http://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk/project-archive/burngreave-voices/>

Foundling Voices

<http://foundlingvoices.foundlingmuseum.org.uk/>

London Chinatown Oral History Project

<http://www.london-chinatown.org.uk/our-interviewees>

Lisapo - The Congolese Tales

<http://can.uk.com/archive/lisapo-oral-histories/>

Recollection: Kettle's Yard

<http://recollection.kettlesyard.co.uk/>

Unlocking Salford Quays

<http://www.thelowryusq.com/stories>

Yemeni Roots, Salford Lives

<http://www.yemeni-community-manchester.org.uk/yemeni-roots-salford-lives>

Useful education resources:

Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees - key stage 3 resources

http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/files/5413/7362/9787/KS3_KS4_Belonging_resources_1112.pdf

Talking Time: A Guide to Oral History for Schools

Published by Tower Hamlets Education, available to loan from The Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre



(insert your logo here)

ORAL / VIDEO HISTORY RECORDING AND DEPOSIT AGREEMENT

(Your Project Name here)..... is grateful for your kind help and co-operation in its recording programme. The purpose of this Deposit Agreement is to ensure that your contribution is handled in accordance with your wishes (as stated below) and within the rules of the 1988 Copyright Act.

All material will be deposited at (insert name of archive here)..... and preserved for future research and this form, once signed, ensures that the copyright of the recording belongs to (insert name of archive). Under the Data Protection Act, your personal details such as name and address will be stored by us (either on paper or electronically). However we will not divulge these details to outside agencies.

1. Do you agree that both this project and the future repository may use your contribution:

- In public exhibitions, displays or performances YES/NO
- On our websites YES/NO
- For broadcasting purposes (radio or TV) YES/NO
- For educational uses (school, college, university) YES/NO
- In publications such as books, leaflets, posters YES/NO
- And make it available for public and research needs YES/NO

2. Do you agree to your name being mentioned? YES/NO

3. May we use your contribution immediately, without any time restriction on its release. (If NO, please state time) YES/NO

4. Details of any other restriction that may apply:

Name of Interviewee:	
Nature of contribution:	
Address:	Date of Birth:
Signature of Interviewee	date:
Name and position of Interviewer:	
Signature of Interviewer	date:

9 - Templates

Keeping an Oral History Interview log

This document is best set up as an excel spreadsheet.

The categories should cover basic facts about the interviewee, audio storage and the written processing of the interview. This log will help you to keep track of your collection and be essential when you deposit it with an archive.

Columns should be:

1. Date
2. Interviewee
3. Address
4. Interview Subject
5. Interview duration
6. Computer download (date)
7. CD/DVD copy (date)
8. Hard drive copy (date)
9. Index & summary written (date)
10. Transcription made (date)
11. Copyright & Deposit agreement
12. Note on any restrictions on use

9 - Templates

ORAL HISTORY INDEX

Interview with, total duration: hour minutes

Interview and summary by

The interview plays as one long recording, but is made of..... tracks of varying lengths

1	start time: 00:00	finish time:	approx duration:	brief description of content:
2	start time:	finish time:	approx duration:	brief description of content:
3	start time:	finish time:	approx duration:	brief description of content:
4	start time:	finish time:	approx duration:	brief description of content:
Summary of interview content:				

9 - Templates

Keeping an Image and Object log

This document is best set up as an excel spreadsheet.

The categories should cover basic facts about the interviewee, images and objects used within the interview. This log will help you to keep track of your collection and be essential when you deposit it with an archive.

Columns should be:

1. Date
2. Lender
3. Address
4. Image/ Object description
5. Source (if other than the donor)
6. Additional information
7. Scanned date
8. Reference name/no.
9. Return date
10. Restrictions on use
11. Linked to interview...

9 - Templates

Oral History Life Story Example Questions

What is your full name?

Childhood

Where and when were you born?

Tell me about your childhood. What sort of home did you live in? Was there a garden? What sort of things did you do together as a family? What about mealtimes – what were they like?

Can you remember any games that you played? Describe them. What was your favourite toy?

What did your parents do for a living? Describe your relationship.

How many brothers or sisters did you have? How did you get on together?

Can you remember any days out or holidays? Tell me about them. How did you travel and where did you stay?

Where did you go to school? What was it like? Which subjects did you like/ dislike? What about the teachers?

Describe your school friends. Did you have a girl/ boyfriend?

Work

When did you get your first job? Explain what it involved. Can you remember the interview process? Describe the conditions and rates of pay. What did you buy with your first pay packet?

Explain the process of finding employment – was it easy or difficult?

Have you ever belonged to a trade union?

How did you travel to and from work? How much did it cost?

Explain how you eventually became [a train driver/ nurse/ MP]. What impact has it had on your home life/ outlook/ future aspirations?

What was life like outside of work? Did you socialise with colleagues or belong to any clubs/ societies?

Relationships

When did you meet your partner? Tell me about them. Where and when did you get married? Describe the event. Where was your first house together? What was it like?

Do you have children/ grandchildren? Tell me about them.

How often do you see parents/ grandparents/ extended family?

Culture & Lifestyle

Describe your identity. How would you see yourself or feel you are perceived by others?

Do you speak additional languages? When and how did you learn?

What are your religious/ political beliefs?

Did you vote in the last election? How do you feel about politics?

Describe an annual festival. Which traditions were passed down to you by your parents/ grandparents? How do your celebrations differ from theirs?

What kind of food do you like to eat? Describe an everyday meal and one you would eat on a special occasion.

Who prepares meals and where do you eat them?

Where do you go shopping? How much do you spend on food/ clothing/ entertainment?

What do you like to do in your spare time?

For older people

What is life like now?

Where do you live/ work?

How does your parent's/ child's/ grandchild's upbringing differ from your own?

What changes have you noticed?

Looking back, how do you feel about your career/ hobbies/ relationships?

What are your hopes/ concerns for the future?

What is the point of oral history?



This toolkit has been created by the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust for the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is based on our experience of delivering oral history projects in Manchester and of the kinds of questions we are asked by community groups working to deliver their projects. The toolkit contains very practical guidance and templates on all aspects of running and managing an oral history project.



**Ahmed Iqbal Ullah
Education
Trust**

Oral History Toolkit

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