

Lesson #1: Interview

Option A: Interview Guidelines

~ created by Monica Rosas-Baines, California State University, Dominguez Hills

The purpose of this assignment is to expand your understanding of the immigration experience and serial migration (separation between children and parents in order to facilitate immigration). You are to interview a foreign-born adult (male or female) who was separated from their family due to immigration. Ideally I would like you to interview a person who was left behind when their parent(s) came to the U.S. If you cannot identify such a person you can interview someone who still has children in their country of origin. You may not interview your own parent for this assignment; however other family members are appropriate. Inform your interviewee that names will not be used. If you are having trouble identifying someone, please let me know.

Please address the following questions in your paper. They are written to interview an adult who was left behind as a child but you can adjust the questions so that they address your interviewee's situation. Your paper is to be written as a narrative; do not just simply answer the questions. Feel free to ask any additional questions as you see fit.

1. **Biographical Information:** Gender, current age. What was their life like prior to the parent's immigration (were parent's married? divorced?) Number of siblings? What was their birth order? Was their life happy? Sad? Financially secure? What was their relationship like with their parents before their parents left? In other words, have them paint a picture of their life situation prior to separation.
2. **Separation Experiences:** How old were they when parents left? Were all siblings left behind? Were they given a reason as to why the parents were leaving? Who cared for them? What were they told by their caretaker during their parent's absence? Do they remember saying goodbye? How long were they separated from parents? Did parents stay in contact (phone calls, letters) and/or come to visit them during the time they were left behind? How did they feel during the separation?
3. **Reunification Experiences:** What was it like having to say goodbye to their caretaker, other family members, friends? How did they feel about coming to the U.S. (Were they excited? Scared? Did they not want to leave)? How did it affect their relationship with their parents once they were reunited (was there trouble relating to them as parents/authority figures)? Were they able to build a bond of attachment with their parents?
4. **Today:** Does the interviewee think the separation was worth it? Do they think it affects their relationships today (do they have a hard time getting close with people; do they fear abandonment)? Have their feelings changed over time? Do they experience conflicting feelings about it (i.e. appreciate the sacrifice but harbor feelings of resentment)? Would they do the same thing if they were put in a similar situation?

Lesson #1: Interview (*continued*)

Option B: Interview Guidelines

~ created by Karleen Curlee, Rio Hondo College

Interview someone who has immigrated to the United States. Use the following questions to guide your interview. Type your notes up into a two- to three-page summary. No handwritten papers will be accepted. Use 12-point font and double space between lines. You may change your interviewee's name to protect his/her privacy.

Personal background

1. What was your life like before you came to the United States?
2. From which country did you come? How many years did you live there?
3. What did you do for a living in your native country?

The process of coming to the United States

4. Why did you decide to come to the U.S.? How long did you think about coming here?
5. How did you choose California or the Southwestern U.S. as your destination?
6. How did you prepare to come here – emotionally, physically, and financially?
7. How difficult was it to get here once you started your journey? Did you have any obstacles along the way?

Afterwards

8. How did your life change after you arrived?
9. Are you happy you came here? Why or why not?
10. What is the biggest challenge about being “new” in the U.S.?