



10 Conversation Tips for Your StoryCorps App Interview

Using the StoryCorps app to record a conversation is a great way to learn more about someone in your life. Here are some tips to help you get the most out of the experience.



1. PLAN YOUR QUESTIONS

Before recording anything, use the app's question generator to **plan your questions (or write your own)**. If you can, share them with your partner in advance. This simple preparation will help you get the most out of your time together.



2. ASK WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Click the record button and begin by introducing yourself and your partner. Then **ask a few warm-up questions** like "Where were you born?" or "Can you describe the first time we met?" The app contains several warm-up questions to help you get into the flow of your conversation.



3. ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Notice that the question generator generally provides **open-ended questions** that don't assume the answers. This lets the storyteller steer you toward what is most important to him or her. Use language like "Tell me about..." or "What was it like when..."



4. ASK FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

While the app will prompt you with new questions, **be prepared to ask follow-ups** or divert from your planned question list if you're curious about something. A memory about work can be followed up with "What are you most proud of in your career?"



5. THINK OF IT AS A CONVERSATION

Speak normally and address the person you are interviewing. There is no right or wrong thing to talk about, as long as it's meaningful to you.



6. TELL A STORY

Don't hesitate to **tell a story** about your partner, and try to bring up your favorite shared memories. This can be a time to tell your partner how much he or she means to you or discuss something you've always wanted to talk about.



7. SET UP CONTEXT

Keep in mind that future listeners may not be familiar with specific people and places you mention. **Set up context** where needed with questions like "Who was Uncle Steve?" and "Why was he such an influence on you?"



8. ENCOURAGE VIVID DETAILS

Questions that **encourage vivid details** can make the story special. Some examples are: "What did your kitchen smell like when you were growing up?" or "What images stand out when you think about Granddad?"



9. PLAN SOME REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Keep an eye on the app's timer so that you are aware of when there are 10 and 5 minutes left. **Plan some reflective questions** as the interview wraps up, such as "Looking back, what were the happiest times?" or "What advice would you give me about being a parent?"



10. RELAX AND HAVE FUN

Most of all, **relax and have fun**. Enjoy the opportunity to share the stories, thoughts, and emotional closeness that come with this experience.

Selected Questions from the StoryCorps 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?