

# A2. Oral History



## Introduction

Often the most powerful learning comes from talking to other people about their experiences. Throughout the *Believing the College Dream* curriculum, students are asked to talk to trusted adults in their lives to share and learn from this valuable resource.

## Learning Goals

- Students will be introduced to the concept and value of oral history and how they can learn from the adults in their lives.
- Students will practice how to do an oral history by interviewing and being interviewed.

## Materials Needed

- Lesson Handout: *Oral History Interview*

## Activities

### PART 1: DEFINITION OF ORAL HISTORY ON THE BOARD (10 MINUTES)

1. Write the definition of oral history on the board: “An oral history is evidence taken from the spoken words of people who have knowledge of past events and traditions. This oral history is often recorded on tape and then put in writing. It is sometimes used in history books.”
2. Discuss with students the definition and ask them to give you examples of an oral history they have either experienced or given themselves.

### PART 2: ORAL HISTORY (35 MINUTES)

1. Discuss with students that they may face setbacks or detours along their pathway to college.
  - During such challenges students may feel lost or defeated and will need to rely on their peers and/or trusted adults for support and encouragement.
  - Share that setbacks and detours are experienced by everyone, and that facing these challenges allows us to learn and grow.

2. Explain that one way to overcome challenges is to learn how other people have handled those situations in their own lives. To do this, we can record oral histories by interviewing people and learning from their experiences.
3. Have students read the definition of oral history on the board. Tell them that every person in their family and all the adults in their lives have interesting and valuable stories to tell.
4. Pair students with partners to practice interviewing skills.
5. Distribute the *Oral History Interview* handout. Give students time to interview each other and record their answers.
6. Once students have completed their interviews, allow a few pairs to share with the class what they learned about each other.
7. Distribute a second copy of the *Oral History Interview* handout.
8. Inform students that their assignment is to interview an adult they trust about the challenges they faced growing up and how they handled them.
9. Remind students to consider interviewing one of the adults they identified in their *Who Are the Copilots in My Life?* handout.

## References and Resources

·[http://dohistory.org/on\\_your\\_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html](http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html)

## Curriculum Standards

- Standards for the English/Language Arts: 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12
- National Standards for Social Studies Teachers:
  - Time, Continuity and Change
  - People, Places and Environments
  - Individual Development and Identity
  - Individuals, Groups and Institutions

See Appendix 3 for complete curriculum standards descriptions.