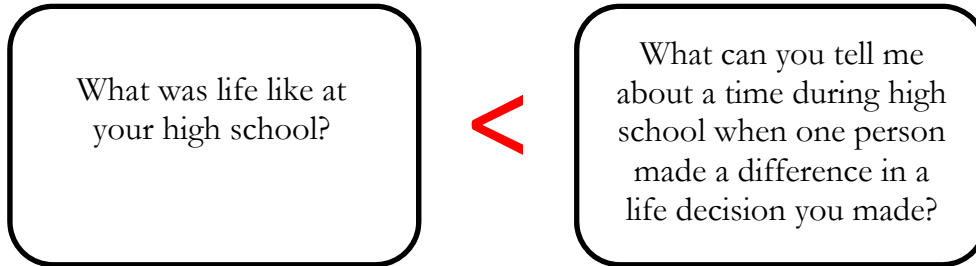


CAPTURING HISTORY: Asking Good Questions

Good questions are at the very heart of oral history. What makes one question better than another?



Good questions are **specific but leave room for a variety of answers**. They usually can't be answered with a simple yes or no. The best answers come when your participant begins to remember details that may seem small (specific people, the color of the house they lived in, music on the radio during the summer, etc.) but which become the bridge that helps people connect their past, present, and future selves. Your good questions can help them in that process and will help you capture a very interesting interview.

MAKING AVERAGE QUESTIONS INTO GOOD QUESTIONS

Practice changing these general questions into more specific questions that will help your participant recall details about what you're asking. Write a good question version in the table.

Average Question	Good Question
What is your earliest memory?	
What did you dis/like about school?	
What do you do for a living?	
What successes have you had?	
What challenges have you had?	
Who are your family members?	
What is your favorite movie?	