



CANADIAN WAR
MUSEUM
MUSÉE CANADIEN
DE LA GUERRE

In Their Own Voices

An Online Oral History Exhibition

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Analyze Oral History Interviews



Photo credit: AnnaStills

Overview

In this activity, you'll explore oral history interviews from the online exhibition *In Their Own Voices* and discover how people's stories bring history to life.

What is Oral History and why does it matter?

Oral history is about capturing personal memories and thoughts through recorded interviews instead of written documents like letters or diaries. This way, we get to hear real voices and unique perspectives, allowing us to learn about history through first-hand accounts. It's a great way to gather insights from a variety of people including those who might prefer sharing memories through conversation rather than writing. Oral history continues the tradition of sharing knowledge across generations. Sharing stories is part of being human.

What is *In Their Own Voices*?

The oral history interviews from the *In Their Own Voices* online exhibition help us understand how war and military service continue to affect Canadian veterans, their loved ones, and our country even after their service ends. These interviews show the deep, personal, and lasting impact of their experiences.

Encountering Difficult History

Difficult history covers sensitive events that are emotional and complex, like trauma, conflict, or injustice. Even though these topics can be tough, they also highlight resilience, importance, and human connection.

If you ever feel overwhelmed or need a break, don't hesitate to take one, and reach out to your teacher for support!

Approach the Activity

Start with the entry point below that matches your needs.

1. [Select a Clip](#)
2. [Analyze Clip Context](#)
3. [Watch & Explore Clip](#)
4. [Investigate the Interviewee](#)
5. [Situate in History](#)

Part 1: Select a Clip

On the **Search Stories** page use the search function or the filters to choose an interview clip, based on your teacher's guidelines. Make sure the clip has an accompanying Historical Overview (see **History** tab for each clip).

Take notes below:

- What is the name of the Interviewee you selected to watch? Are they a Veteran or a Loved One?
- What theme (or filter) did you pick?
- How long is the interview?
- What questions *do you* have before you begin?

Part 2: Analyze Clip Context

When answering, focus on the clip context (see **About Clip** tab) of one Veteran or Loved One.

Take notes below:

- **Notice:** Identify key details. What words stand out?
- **Note:** Reflect on the significance of these details and what they reveal about the clip you're about to watch.
- **Questions:**
 - What information stands out to you?
 - What details are important to their story?
 - What does this reveal about the memory of this event?
 - What is the perspective of the interviewee?

Part 3: Watch & Explore Clip

When answering, focus on the interview clip you selected. If you haven't already, please read the **About Clip** section for interview context.

Take notes below:

- **I See**
 - Watch the interview clip. What do you see? What important words do you hear? What stands out?

- **I Think**
 - How was the Veteran affected by their experience in the military? How has this experience effected the people (family, friends, community, country, etc.) around them? What makes you think that?

- **I Wonder**
 - What questions would you like to ask this person?

Part 4: Investigate the Interviewee

When answering, focus on the interviewee's **Profile Page**. If you haven't already, listen to the interview and read clip context (see **About Clip**).

Take notes below:

- This person's Oral History interview is part of the collection at the Canadian War Museum. Why do you think that is?
- What does this interview tell you about military history? About how military history effects Canada?

Part 5: Situate in History

When answering, consider the **Historical Overview** and the interviewee's **Profile Page**.

Sometimes Oral History interviews support our understanding of history by providing evidence that aligns with what we expect. Other times, Oral History interviews cause us to reexamine our understanding of history by providing evidence that goes against our expectations or opens our eyes to new perspectives.

Take notes below:

- Does the Oral History clip support the Historical Overview, or does it raise new questions not covered in the Historical Overview?
- How does Oral History clip help complement other types of historical research and tools?
- How does the Oral History clip help you understand the veteran's experience, in general, in Canada?