



Projects to Develop Career-Ready Skills



UNBOXED PREPARED
PARENTS



What is *Learn*?

Learn is a monthly project modeled on a research-based approach to learning called Project-Based Learning (PBL). PBL offers real-world, personally meaningful activities to challenge our thinking and inspire action. We believe that when kids pursue their passions, practice the Habits of Success, and develop strong cognitive skills they will be successful and fulfilled.

Each month, **Learn** offers a new project that marries kids' desire to change the world with the best research-based practices and the most important Habits of Success.

The **Appendix** provides additional guidance about how the project relates to skills and additional learning resources.



Better yet, we believe kids want to have a positive impact in the world and that these learning experiences can help make our world a better place.



How does it work?

Each month, we provide about 20–25 days of learning activities to help kids develop an **Impact Project**. Through the project, they'll strengthen their college-ready skills and deepen their knowledge across subjects.

Projects are broken up into *challenges* to help kids think, read, write, experiment, and even build solutions to real problems.

- To start, there is one **essential question** for kids to explore. (Don't worry, we'll explain that term in a moment.)
- Next, we ask kids to **"find their why"**—this allows kids to make projects more personal and meaningful.
- And then kids dive into the **project** where they research, experiment, solve problems, and ultimately produce a final project they can proudly share.

You are not alone!

Unboxed Learning Support Tools" and "Coaching Moments" provide additional support along the way.

Make sure you check out the **Learning Support Tool**, which has extra resources for kids and parents. We all learn differently!





This month's project is...

The Book of Time





Project Overview

This is the question we'll think about this month:

How can each of our individual stories impact our collective understanding of history, our world, and ourselves?

Essential questions are questions with no one, right answer. These are questions that never get old. And the answers you find will evolve over your lifetime. Each month we'll share an essential question that ties the skills you are learning to the impact you are making in the world. This will help you reflect in meaningful ways on your academic work, but also on your strengths and capabilities as a global citizen.

Exploring
the Essential
Question





Your project culminates in a final product you create and share.

In this project, you will collect and share an **oral history** through a podcast. An oral history is a recording that captures the individual experience of a person in their own words.

You'll complete 3 challenges.

- 1 Identify a person** you know who you believe has an interesting story to tell and prepare for the interview.
- 2 Conduct the oral history.** The term **oral history** refers to both the process of gathering the history orally and the product—usually a recording or a transcription of a recording.
- 3 Edit and publish** the oral history in an archive, which will allow future generations to benefit from this unique story.

In the process of creating the oral history you will:

- **Research** the historical time period you're focusing on in the oral history.
- **Interview** your subject, creating a digital recording of your subject's unique story in their own words.
- **Discover** Audacity, a free tool for editing digital audio, and StoryCorps, a non-profit organization collecting and archiving stories of Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs.

*Don't worry,
we will teach
you how to
do this!*



What if I don't know who to interview or how to do a podcast?

Oral histories capture the stories of everyday people, and podcasts are digital recordings, something you can make with your smartphone or computer:

Every person you know has an important story to tell, including yourself, so don't worry you won't find a subject.



Recording and editing an interview can be done with technology you probably already have. Free tools, like the sound-editing software [Audacity](#) or the [StoryCorps app](#), make it easy.



Oral history archives are designed for simplicity. StoryCorps, the archive we'll recommend, makes posting simple, with just a few clicks. We'll walk you through it!

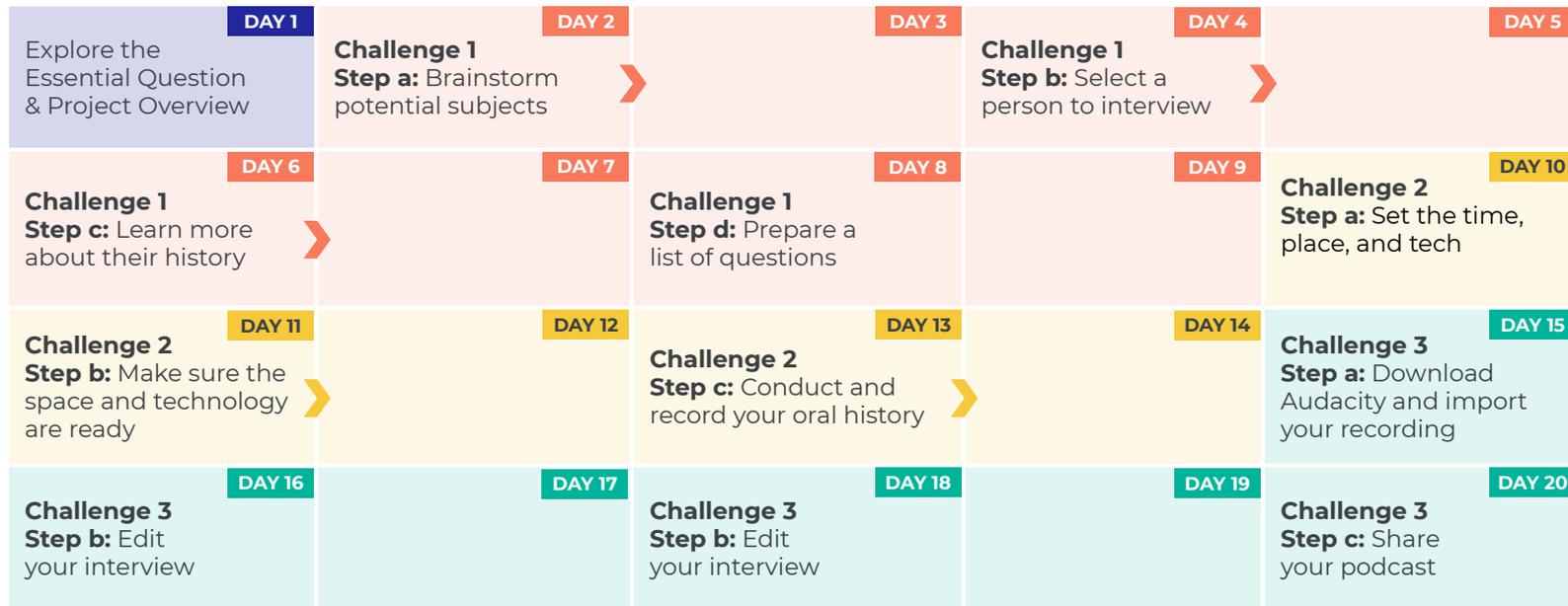


This project is broken into 3 challenges to complete over the month.





This calendar shows you how the steps fit into a month of learning and exploration.





INSPIRATION

Discovering Oral History



Oral history is a process of collecting individual stories of people whose experiences we might not read about in history books, but whose stories are critical to our understanding of history.

Let's see what an oral history looks like:

Meet Emilio Aguayo

[Watch this video](#) with **Emilio Aguayo**, a muralist who shares his experiences of growing up as a first-generation American, whose parents emphasized education and doing one's best. His multipart interview tells of his family's rise to leadership roles in nursing, education, and politics, as well as his activism as a student at the University of Washington in the 1970s.



CHALLENGE **1**

Identify Your Subject

40% to complete

CHALLENGE 1:

Identify Your Subject

1

- 4 hours -

The first challenge is to **identify a story you would like to honor with an oral history**. You will identify a person whose personal story interests you and holds unique memories, insights, or lessons from which others can learn.

In this challenge, you'll identify the subject of your oral history and prepare for the interview by familiarizing yourself with a particular period in this person's life.

KEY TERM



A **subject** is the person who is being interviewed, also called the interviewee.





How do these steps help you?

Objectives: To prepare in order to make the most of the opportunity to honor a special person.

a

Brainstorm potential subjects

You'll consider people who have stories that you are curious about.

What will you have at the end of this step?

A list of potential interviewees.

- 30–60 minutes -



b

Select a person to interview

You'll choose a person from your list and secure their agreement to be interviewed.

What will you have at the end of this step?

Your subject's permission to record their story.

- 20–40 minutes -



c

Learn more about their history

You'll learn more about key events that have happened in your subject's lifetime.

What will you have at the end of this step?

Deeper understanding and new questions.

- 60 minutes -



d

Prepare a list of questions

You'll generate a list of questions you'll use as a starting point for the interview.

What will you have at the end of this step?

A list of questions for your interview.

- 20–40 minutes -



Of all the people you know, whose story makes you most curious?

Every person is shaped by the time and place in which they live. Though individual experiences and perspectives are unique, individual stories often can teach us about the experiences of others who lived in that same place and time. Each story contributes to our overall understanding of history.



Are there people in your family whose stories you are curious about? **Make a list of a few people** you might want to interview. Consider their life experiences. Do you wonder how they shaped or were shaped by history? **Does one person rise to the top?**

Are there stories to explore?

- Immigration and family moves
- Travel
- Family businesses
- Educational experiences
- Natural disasters
- Military service
- Technological innovations
- Historical events (elections, economic turmoil, political movements)
- Brushes with fame
- Bridging racial or cultural differences

**Brainstorm
Potential
Subjects**



Let's reach out to the person at the top of your list!



You will need to secure the participation and permission of the person you want to interview.

Include a salutation

Dear Aunt Ana,

I am conducting an oral history, which is a personal story that is recorded and shared so others can learn about the experiences of a person in a particular place and time. I would love to learn more about your life story, because you have had so many interesting experiences.

Would you be available for a recorded interview where you share a little about your life story? I'd like to share it with others but will be sure you review the final piece beforehand.

Please let me know if you are interested in doing this with me, and thank you in advance.

Sincerely,
Your name

Close and sign your letter

Explain your project

Ask for their assistance

Let's learn more about their history.

To prepare to conduct the best interview you can, you'll need some context for the person's story in advance. This requires research and some communication with your subject in advance of your interview.

Do research to learn more about significant events in their life.

- Look at when and where your interviewer was born and raised; research key events in the history of that place around that time.
- Understand key national and international events that occurred in your subject's lifetime.
- Research the customs and traditions within the person's heritage associated with life events—such as births, deaths, marriages, coming of age, education, and the like.

Explore personal artifacts to learn more about this person's life.

- Ask permission to see photos and scrapbooks.
- Ask your interviewee to share, if they are comfortable, letters, diaries, and other documents that are important reminders of their past.
- Ask your interviewee to share stories related to specific **artifacts** that might be important to them, such as souvenirs, trophies, mementos, or objects from their past.

KEY TERM



An **artifact** is an object associated with an earlier time.



Be sure you use valid and reliable sources.

It's important that your research uses reliable resources to gather valid information. The tips below help you understand what to look for.

Research Tips

Look for...



Be sure sources are reliable and valid.



...web addresses ending in .org, .edu, and .gov. Universities, government archives, and non-for-profits such as museums dedicated to preserving history are good sources of historical research.

In addition to digital research, visit the library.



...additional sources that may not be freely available online. For example, newspapers are often archived and only available online for a fee. Your local library may provide free access to these archives or special collections or historical information.

Look for primary sources, historical documents from a particular period of time.



...newspapers, pamphlets, posters, signs, and other documents. These primary sources can provide great information. Look for them at your library and online.



It's important to ask great questions!



As you write your questions, consider your phrasing:
the way you word things will affect the answers you get.

- Ask questions that require more than a one-word answer. Instead of "Did you enjoy school?" ask "**Can you tell me about** what school was like for you?"
- Ask questions that will bring out longer answers. Sometimes asking "**how**" something happened, rather than "why" will get someone talking. For example, "How did you end up joining the army?" might get more interesting details than asking just "Why did you join the army?"
- Questions should be **simple** and ask one thing at a time.

Follow-up questions can help you dig deeper into your subject's story. We'll talk more about those soon.



Try to start questions with, "What did you...," "How did you...," "Tell me about...," or "Can you describe...?"

Let's make a list of potential questions.

First, use what you know to make an outline for your interview.

Think about what story you're **most interested in** learning about and let that guide your questions. For example:

- If you were interested in your subject's family story, first, you might ask questions about their childhood and siblings, then their mother's family, and then their father's family.
- If you were interested in their experiences of a historic event in the person's life, you might start with questions about the time before the event, then the event itself, and then the time after the event.



Then, plan your questions.

In each part of your outline, create a list of questions you will use to conduct your interview. During the interview, be prepared to ask follow-up questions if something your interviewee says makes you curious to know more.

The learning support tool provides detailed instructions and an outline sheet you can fill in!



TIP

Use your outline of interview topics and questions as a guide to keep you focused during the interview.



Make a List of Potential Questions

LEARNING SUPPORT *tools*



CHALLENGE 1:

**You just finished
your first challenge!**

Great prepping!



CHALLENGE **2**

Conduct Your Oral History

65% to complete

CHALLENGE 2:

Conduct Your Oral History

2

- 3 hours -

As you complete this challenge, you will be **conducting your oral history**. That means you will set the time and place for the interview and get ready to hear some really interesting stories!

KEY TERM

A **podcast** is a digital audio recording that is posted on the Internet.





How do these steps help you?

Objectives: To capture an important story so others can enjoy it and learn something about history.

a

Set the time, place, and tech

You'll ask your interviewee to commit to a particular time and place that they can reserve just for their oral history.

What will you have at the end of this step?

The time and location for your oral history

- 40–60 minutes -



b

Make sure the space and tech are ready

You will want to make sure the conditions for making this recording are perfect for capturing this important story.

What will you have at the end of this step?

Confidence in your method of recording

- 20–40 minutes -



c

Conduct and record your oral history

You will kick off the interview with your prepared questions and listen as your interviewee shares personal recollections.

What will you have at the end of this step?

A recorded oral history

- 60+ minutes -



Let's finalize the meeting details!

Now that you know who you will interview, you can set up the time and place—or virtual place—for the interview.

A few things to keep in mind:



- Select a time and date that works for you, your interviewee, and anyone else you need to assist you. Be sure to consider the safety and comfort of all participants.
- Select a technology to use to record the interview. If your interviewee needs assistance with technology you've chosen for a virtual interview, be sure someone is available to assist them. We'll discuss this more in the next few slides.
- Confirm the details with your interviewee 24 hours in advance, as a reminder. Include all of the details they need in order to join you, especially if it's a virtual meeting.
- After setting the details, be sure to secure their permission to record the interview and to post it in an online archive. (See StoryCorps' terms [here.](#))



TIP

Asking for a meeting is a career-ready skill. In your life, you will ask many people for many meetings. Knowing how to make a request, set the details, and confirm 24 hours in advance will help you communicate with teachers, counselors, employers, and colleagues throughout your career.

Setting up a virtual oral history!

If your interviewee is not in your own household, and a virtual meeting is preferred, here are some tips for setting up the interview.

- Before you decide on a particular application and share details with your interviewee, download and test the application on your device.
- Choose a technology you are comfortable using, so you are able to assist your interviewee if needed.
- Ask your interviewee whether they need assistance with technology, and whether someone in their household is able to provide needed support. Confirm the date and time you've scheduled works for that other person.
- Encourage your interviewee to select a quiet, comfortable place where they can remain comfortably seated for the entire scheduled interview.



Take precautions to improve sound quality.

Both parties should wear headphones to reduce the chance of echoes, where a computer's microphone picks up sound from its speakers.

Headphones or earbuds with a built-in microphone are an ideal choice.

Picking your recording device

Regardless of your physical location, you'll need to choose a recording device and application to capture the interview. The table on the next slide provides a number of different options.

Select a device you are comfortable using, such as your cell phone or computer, and make sure your interviewee has access to necessary technology on their end.

The **application** you should choose will depend on whether you're in the same physical location or in different locations.



TIP

Check out StoryCorps tools to ease tech concerns.

StoryCorps, the nonprofit archive where we suggest you post your finished podcast, offers a mobile app for in-person interviews and an online app for remote interviews. These tools do not allow easy editing of the audio, but they can make the overall process simpler.

Select your recording device

Explore the table below to consider options for recording your interview.



In-person Application	Device	How-To Resource
Voice Memos (iOS) Voice Recorder (Android)	Smartphone or Tablet	Use the Voice Memos App (iOS) How to Record Audio on Your Smartphone (Android)
StoryCorps App	Smartphone or Tablet	A TOOLKIT FOR SUCCESS
Audacity	Computer	Audacity Manual (Windows, Mac)
Remote Application	Device	How-To Resource
Zoom	Computer or Smartphone	Local Recording – Zoom Help Center
StoryCorps Connect	Computer	Getting Started with StoryCorps Connect



Let's get set up for interviewing!

As you sit down to capture this important story, make sure the conditions of success are in place for everyone involved.

There are two key conditions for success to check:

1 Be sure everyone is physically comfortable.

You might be speaking for a long time, if you are lucky!

2 Be sure your recording technology works.

It is especially important to do a couple of quick tests to make sure your phone, computer, or recorder has a working microphone, and you know how to record.



Is everyone comfortable?

- Arrive early to your interview to set up.
- Make sure interviewee is seated in a comfortable place, in case the exchange lasts for an hour or more.
- Be sure each of you has water or other necessary refreshments nearby.

Are you able to record effectively?

- Test the recording technology. If using a video conference for the interview headphones with a microphone are recommended for both interviewer and interviewee.
- Ask others in the location to be quiet during the recording.

There are a few things to keep in mind to conduct a great interview:

Be prepared with your questions, but also ask follow-up questions to dig deeper into your subject's story:

- ✦ To ask them to **elaborate**: “You said... What do you mean by that?” or “Could you say more about...?”
- ✦ To ask them to get **specific**: “What happened then?” or “How did ... react?”
- ✦ To ask them to **reflect** on their experiences: “What did that mean to you?” or “How do you think that has affected you?”



Be sensitive to your interviewee, and show empathy for their experiences:

- ✦ **Listening** is your biggest job during the interview! Listen actively and demonstrate that you are interested in their experiences.
- ✦ **Recognize** their emotions and be sensitive to discomfort. If they say something funny—it's okay to laugh. If they say something that is sad, it's ok to feel those feelings.
- ✦ **Give sufficient time** for your interviewee to think and answer questions completely. Don't be afraid of silence!



Let's honor the stories!

Here are some final tips to keep in mind while capturing the oral history.

- ✦ **Before you begin** ask your interviewee to confirm that they are aware you are recording the interview and that you plan to share it.
- ✦ Ask the interviewee to state their name, birthplace, and age **at the beginning**.
- ✦ **Allow plenty of time** before asking each question, so your interviewee can complete their thoughts.
- ✦ **End the interview in a reasonable amount of time.** If your subject seems tired, it's probably time to stop.
- ✦ Don't turn your recording equipment off until you know you are officially done and packing up! You may miss a little gem you wish was recorded.



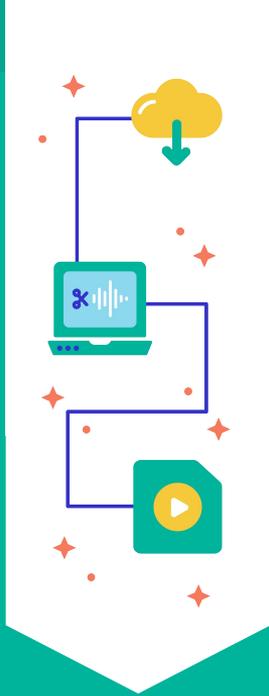
Press Record!

Don't forget to hit the record button and confirm that it is on.



CHALLENGE 2:

**You just finished your
second challenge!**



CHALLENGE **3**

Share Your Podcast

100% to complete

CHALLENGE 3:

Share Your Podcast

3

- 4 hours -

As you complete this challenge, you will be **sharing your podcast**. That means you will edit your audio and post your podcast in a place where it can be shared with others.

KEY TERM



Archive refers to a collection of historical records, or to the act of adding something to an archive.





How do these steps help you?

Objectives: To create, edit, and share a completed podcast using Audacity

a

Download Audacity and import your recording

You'll learn how to use an audio recording application called Audacity.

What will you have at the end of this step?

Your interview imported into Audacity

- 40-60 minutes -



b

Edit your interview

You'll learn how to edit your audio file to make it sound professional and ready for the World to hear.

What will you have at the end of this step?

An edited audio file of the interview

- 2-3 hours -



c

Share your podcast

You'll publish your file into a format that can be shared as a podcast on a website or other hosting service.

What will you have at the end of this step?

A published podcast

- 60+ minutes -





What do I do with my recorded interview?

You have spent a considerable amount of time researching and interviewing your interviewee. Now, let's turn that hard work into a podcast.

- 1 Ask for permission to download** a free audio recording and editing application called [Audacity](#). Use Audacity to edit your audio file to make it sound professional!
- 2 Save your oral history to your computer**, if you used a recording device other than your computer. Ask for help if you have trouble with this.
- 3 Import your audio file to Audacity.** The next slide will tell you how.



TIP

If you have used StoryCorps Connect or the StoryCorps app to record your interview, you can skip editing, or visit the StoryCorps site for instructions on downloading your audio for editing.

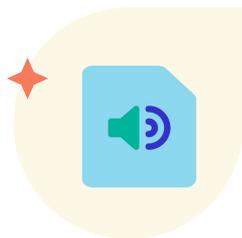
Let's import your audio file into Audacity.

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

- 1 Open Audacity on your computer
- 2 Click File > Import > Audio
- 3 Locate your audio file and click Open

OR

Drag and drop the file into Audacity



You may need to ask an adult for help with this step.

Because you will use Audacity, to edit, your audio file has to be compatible with Audacity. Audacity requires an MP3 or WAV file.

If your recorded audio file does not end in “.mp3” or “.wav,” you need to convert your audio file to one of those types.

[Convertio.co](https://convertio.co) is a safe site you can use to convert your file to either MP3 or WAV. (No account required!) As soon as the file is converted, you can import it easily into Audacity! If you need more help converting, visit [Convertio.co support site](https://convertio.co/support).

Edit to improve your recorded interview

Why do we edit?

Just like editing a written essay, editing your audio will help you polish your final product. [Watch this video](#) to learn the basics and the importance of editing your audio file.



TIP

Editing is fun, but it takes time!
Plan accordingly.



Dig deeper into editing!

[This Audacity user guide](#) will show you the basics of editing an audio file to make it sound just the way you want.

Other online resources can help you dig deeper into using Audacity. The videos listed below may be particularly helpful:

- [Basic Tools](#) to record and edit audio using Audacity
- [Cut, Copy and Paste](#) to move sections of audio around
- [Reduce or remove background noise](#)
- Monitor the sound level to avoid [“audio clipping”](#)



Let's edit your audio.

You are proud of the oral history you recorded. Now, let's make it sound great!

Put on those headphones and start editing!

While editing, remember to take out the long pauses; remove portions of the interview that aren't related to the story you want to convey; and try to make the final recording sound like a conversation others will enjoy.



TIP

Remember you are not changing the story—you're making it clearer!



After editing, export your polished podcast!

When you've finished editing, you need to export your file from Audacity to be able to share it with others.



- To export your file, click **File > Export > Export as MP3**
- Take note of where you've **saved** your exported file. You'll need to find it to post it in the next step
- This **video** will walk you through all the steps: [How to export your file from Audacity](#)

Now, it's time for the world to hear the story!

Share your oral history on the [StoryCorps Archive](#) website. If you're under 13, ask an adult for help with this step. You'll need a photo of your interviewee to complete the process!

To upload your podcast:

- 1 Go to [archive.storycorps.org](#)
- 2 Create a StoryCorps account
- 3 Click on your username
- 4 Click on "Add a New Interview" in the drop-down menu, and follow the prompts.

Click [here](#) for a step-by-step video tutorial.



Remember to share your finished recording with your interviewee before you post it to the archive.



You did it!

All 3 challenges complete.
Time to *Celebrate!*



Identify Your
Subject

1

Conduct Your
Oral History

2

Share Your
Podcast

3



Celebration of Learning Reminder

The Celebration of Learning is a great opportunity to share the story you have recorded! Here are a few preparation reminders for your upcoming Celebration:

- If you haven't done so already, check out this month's **Celebrate** tool, and finalize the date, time, and virtual location.
- Invite friends and family, especially those who might be particularly interested in your subject's story! Be sure to include information about how to join your virtual presentation.

