



The Mini Page

Betty Debnam, Founding Editor and Editor at Large

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‘Tell Me About ...’

Getting to Know You



One of the best things about the holiday season is spending time with family and friends. For some people, it's the only time of year when they see loved ones who live far away.

For 2011, you could make a **resolution**, or promise, to get to know family and friends better. You can do that by becoming an **interviewer**. This is sort of like being a reporter, but instead of *you* building the story, you let loved ones tell their own stories.

The Mini Page talked with some professional interviewers to find out more about this process.

Why ask questions?

When you interview a friend or family member, you are making history. Whether your interview is saved in your own notes, on an audio recorder or a video recorder, the words will be there for others to learn from and enjoy. Maybe your own kids will someday read the stories you collected.

Sometimes we forget that older relatives were once young and went to school and played with friends. Interviewing an older person helps us see that Grandma or Uncle Paul is not just an old person, but a *real* person.



Experts say a good place to start an interview is with questions about old photographs. Ask your family if there is an old scrapbook or box of pictures you can use during your interview.

Whom will I interview?

It doesn't matter whether you are related to your interview subject. You might have a kind neighbor or a special teacher whom you'd like to find out more about.

Older people may have more to say simply because they've had more experiences. And most people love to tell about their lives.



When will I do the interview?

During the holiday break, while you're out of school, is a great time to interview family or friends. Here are a couple of tips to remember:

- Be prepared. Decide if you're going to record the interview and get your equipment charged and ready. Make a list of the questions you plan to ask.
- Schedule your interview for no more than 1½ hours. Otherwise both you and your subject are likely to get tired.

What Can I Ask About?

Asking the right way

Being an interviewer involves more than just asking a few questions. It's important to ask in a way that will lead your subject into longer stories.

For example, if you just ask, "Did you have fun as a kid?" the person can answer "Yes" or "No" and stop there.

But you can get more interesting stories by asking more open questions, such as "Tell me about the kinds of games you played as a kid. What were your favorites? Why? What sports did you play?"

Start with basics

To get your interview started, you will probably want to start with basic questions about your subject, such as:

- 🔪 When and where were you born?
- 🔪 Were you named after anyone?
- 🔪 Where did you live? In a town, a city or on a farm?
- 🔪 How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Growing up

After you've gotten some basic information, you can move on to other areas. Some of these may cause your subject to tell great stories!

- 🔪 Did you tease your brothers and sisters? Did they tease you? How?
- 🔪 What chores did you have to do as a child?
- 🔪 Did you get an allowance? How much was it? Did you save the money or spend it?
- 🔪 Did you share a room or a bed?
- 🔪 What pets did you have?
- 🔪 What were your favorite meals? Who was the cook in your family?



- 🔪 What was your proudest moment as a kid?
- 🔪 What was your most embarrassing moment?

More questions

- 🔪 Did you go to school? If not, how did you learn? What was your school like?
- 🔪 Did you like school? What were your best subjects?
- 🔪 Did you have a favorite teacher? How did that person affect you?
- 🔪 What did you want to be when you grew up?
- 🔪 How did you get to and from school?
- 🔪 Who were your best friends growing up?
- 🔪 How did you celebrate holidays?
- 🔪 What did you do in the summer?
- 🔪 What hobbies do you enjoy?
- 🔪 Where have you traveled? Where would you like to visit?
- 🔪 Is there something you'd like to learn to do?
- 🔪 What world events affected you most during your life?

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Ready Resources



The Mini Page provides ideas for websites, books or other resources that will help you learn more about this week's topics.

On the Web:

- www.storyarts.org/classroom/roots/family.html
- http://bethlamie.com/images/ebooks/keepsake_for_kids__thanksgiving.pdf (can be adapted for different events)
- <https://familyhistory.hhs.gov>

At the library:

- "Granny's Guide to Fun & Fabulous Family Stories" by Beth LaMie

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TM
Basset Brown
The News
Hound's

Interviewing

TRY 'N
FIND

Words that remind us of interviewing are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: ANSWER, AUDIO, EXPERIENCE, FAMILY, FRIEND, GIFT, HISTORY, INTERVIEW, LEGEND, LISTEN, NOTES, PHOTOGRAPHS, PREPARE, QUESTION, RECORD, RESOLUTION, STORY, SUBJECT, VIDEO.



N O I T U L O S E R T F I G W
N O T E S E C N E I R E P X E
Y L I M A F R E C O R D V B I
J E K T R Q C H I S T O R Y V
X G H I S U B J E C T N R I R
H E E P R E P A R E K O D G E
A N S W E R U L I S T E N R T
D D O I D U A Q V S O C W P N
Z L D S H P A R G O T O H P I

Mini Spy . . .



Mini Spy is writing the story of her favorite Aunt Bess.

See if you can find: • question mark • word MINI • bell

- kite
- dragon
- book
- safety pin
- letter D
- olive
- ladder
- arrow
- banana
- number 7
- tin can
- letter Z
- number 4
- carrot
- sailboat
- cherry



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Rookie Cookie's Recipe Easy Pita Chips

These are a healthy and tasty alternative to potato chips.

You'll need:

- half of 12-ounce package whole-wheat pita breads
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon seasoned salt
- butter-flavored cooking spray

What to do:

1. Cut 3 whole pita breads into halves, then quarters, then eighths.
2. Separate triangles into two single pieces. You will have 48 triangular "chips."
3. Mix seasoned salt and other spices in a small bowl.
4. Place chips in a single layer on a large cookie sheet or baking pan. Spray lightly with cooking spray. Sprinkle spice mixture evenly over the chips.
5. Spray chips lightly again to make spices stick.
6. Bake in a 450-degree oven for 7 to 9 minutes until slightly brown and crispy.
7. Cool chips. Serve with salsa, soft cheese spread or other dips.

You will need an adult's help with this recipe.

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Meet the Kratt Brothers



Chris (left), a Lanner falcon (center), Martin

Chris and Martin Kratt have a new show about animals, "Wild Kratts," a mixture of animation and real-life action. It begins on PBS Kids Go! TV on Jan. 3.

The Kratt brothers are best known for their previous shows on animals, "Zoboomafoo," "Kratts' Creatures" and "Kratt Brothers: Be the Creature."

The brothers are scientists as well as creators and co-producers of the new show. They also have written books on animals.

They grew up in New Jersey. Martin said he became interested in animals "from the frogs and raccoons from our back yard and great animal books."

Chris said: "I went to a great nursery school that was full of all sorts of animals. On the weekends, we could take home whichever animals we wanted to and take care of them. From there, the adventures have just gotten bigger and more wild."

Martin and Chris also work on causes helping the environment and animals.

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NEW! The Mini Page® Book of States

The Mini Page's popular series of issues about each state is collected here in a 156-page softcover book. Conveniently spiral-bound for ease of use, this invaluable resource contains A-to-Z facts about each state, along with the District of Columbia. Illustrated with colorful photographs and art, and complete with updated information, The Mini Page Book of States will be a favorite in classrooms and homes for years to come.

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 State: _____ Zip: _____

Especially for kids and their families

The Mini Page

By BETTY DEBNAM

The Beaver State

Oregon From A to Z

Oregon, a Pacific Coast state, is known for its forests, mountains and coast, with tall cliffs, sandy beaches and harbors.

Today, the manufacturing of forest products, food products, metals, plastics, computer parts and software is important. World corporations such as Nike are headquartered there.

Fishing is a big industry.

Native Americans first settled in the area about 13,000 years ago. Spanish, British and Russian explorers all claimed it for their countries.

Fur-trading companies such as the Hudson's Bay Co. were early leaders in settling the area.

Until President Thomas Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the area in 1804, few white people settled there. The Lewis and Clark explorations gave the U.S. the strongest claim to the land. It became a state in 1859.

Oregon is the 27th most populated state, with about 3.7 million people.

Agriculture is very important. Oregon is one of the nation's top growers of hazelnuts, Christmas trees, grass seed, various berries and popovers. Wheat, prunes, plums, onions, cauliflower, peaches, flowers, halibut, tilapia, poultry, dairy products, apples, animal feed, sugar beets and potatoes are also important.

The Beaver is the state animal. It was important in attracting early trappers who wanted to sell beaver skins.

The Coast Range and the Willowa Mountains attract many outdoor-loving visitors, hikers and snowboarders.

Deception Bay is the world's smallest natural harbor in which ships can travel.

The Douglas Fir is the state tree.

Eugene is the second largest city, with about 154,000 people. It is known for its walking and biking trails.

Order Lake in the foreground, and the ocean in the background. It is about 1,000 feet deep. It is named for the opening of the Columbia River, which collapsed more than 5,000 years ago.

MIGHTY FUNNY'S Mini Jokes

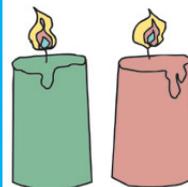
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All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

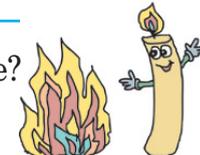
Camilla: When do candles relax?
Corey: On weekends.



Cecilia: Which would burn longer, a red candle or a green candle?
Christopher: Neither — candles burn shorter.



Caesar: What did the candle say to the fire?
Chase: "Are you going out tonight?"



How Can I Be an Interviewer?

Most families have stories that they repeat over and over. Someday you will tell stories about things that are happening to you now, as a child. The most outrageous or interesting ones will become part of your children's and grandchildren's family legends.

Besides being entertaining, experts say an interview can give us clues about health issues that might run in the family.

Get started

If you want to be an interviewer, you have a few decisions to make.



First, decide whom you'd like to talk with. Call or write that person and ask if he or she would like to do an interview with you. Work out a time and place that is easy for you both. Choose a quiet place where there won't be interruptions.

Set aside about one or 1½ hours for the interview.

The Mini Page thanks Beth LaMie, personal historian and author of "Granny's Guide to Fun & Fabulous Family Stories," and Pat McNees, president of the Association of Personal Historians, for help with this issue.



Recording the history

Next, decide how you will record your interview. You can:

- **take notes by hand.** If you don't use a recorder, you'll need to take careful notes. Later, you can gather them together and write a story, using some interesting quotes from your subject. Include a picture you've drawn or a photo of your subject.
- **use an audio recorder.** If you record your subject's voice, you'll want to take a few notes by hand as well to remind yourself of important stories and where they were on the tape.

Later, you'll probably want to **transcribe**, or write or type the interview so that others can read it.

- **use a video camera.** If you have a video recorder, your interview will include your subject's voice and pictures. This can be a real treasure as you get older and have children yourself.

Make sure you practice using the camera a lot before the actual interview. You might want to put the camera on a tripod so that you don't have to hold it during the interview.

Be organized

Show up for your interview with your questions clearly outlined. Set up any recording equipment and find comfortable spots for you and the subject.

Talk to your subject about why you're doing the interview. As you begin questions and answers, try not to interrupt or rush. Listen carefully. If you're not clear about an answer, ask your subject to explain it more.

Pay attention to how your subject is feeling. If he or she gets tired or cranky, it might be time to stop. If you feel that a question has made your subject uncomfortable, you can suggest skipping that answer.

Don't forget to thank your subject for his or her time before you leave.



Save, save, save

If you recorded your interview by hand, try to type or rewrite it in a story form. Do it soon, so you don't forget important details.

You can also start with this "first draft" and then add in details from an audio or video recording.

You may want to make copies of the audio or video recordings for other family members, along with your subject's story. These make great gifts!

The Mini Page Staff

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Read about interviewing



in
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by Betty Debnam

Appearing in your
newspaper on _____.

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(Note to Editor: Above is camera-ready, one column-by-3 1/2-inch ad promoting Issue 52.)

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52-5 (10)

The Mini Page® Standards Spotlight: Getting to Know You

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Mini Page activities meet many state and national educational standards. Each week we identify standards that relate to The Mini Page's content and offer activities that will help your students reach them.

This week's standards:

- Students conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions. (Common Core Standards: Writing)

Activities:

1. Draw a picture of someone you would like to interview. Write three questions you would ask.
2. Choose newspaper stories about three people to interview. Write questions for each person.
3. Find a newspaper story where a person was interviewed. What questions were asked? What questions would you add?
4. Why is it important to (a) agree on a time to meet with the person, (b) take good notes, (c) plan questions, and (d) listen carefully?
5. Use the Mini Page interview questions to learn about your family. Ask an older family member about his/her life as a child.

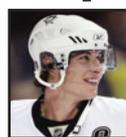
(standards by Dr. Sherrye D. Garrett, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi)

(Note to Editor: Above is the Standards for Issue 52.)



Gus Goodsport's Report Supersport: Sidney Crosby

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Height: 5-11

Birthdate: 8-7-87

Weight: 200

Hometown: Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia, Canada

Sidney Crosby skates swiftly across the ice, zipping and zagging, then slaps the puck into the net.

The Pittsburgh Penguins superstar creates plays and scores goals — lots of them. Since his rookie year in 2005, Crosby has tallied more than 100 points in four different National Hockey League seasons.

Just 23 years old, Crosby has already won an NHL Most Valuable Player Award, a league scoring crown and a most-goals title. In 2009 he became the youngest captain of a Stanley Cup championship team.

Crosby was the “villain” who scored the game-winning goal in the 2010 Winter Olympics, leading Canada past the United States 3-2 for the gold.

Besides playing hockey, watching football and vacationing around the water are on “Sid’s” favorites list. But it’s scoring on the ice that gives him the biggest thrill.

(Note to Editor: Above is copy block for Page 3, Issue 52, to be used in place of ad if desired.)