

# BE A WATER HISTORIAN!

Created for ages 13 and up



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[www.wearewater.colorado.edu](http://www.wearewater.colorado.edu)



# Why are community stories so important?

Everyone has a story to tell. Recording stories from your family, friends, and people in your community is an important part of understanding history in your town. In this activity, **you will learn how to be a good interviewer**, from identifying the person you want to interview to writing effective interview questions. You will be able **to share recorded stories with people in your community and elsewhere in the Four Corners region** through the We are Water project.

The We are Water project values the diverse perspectives that individuals and communities have about water. We hope that you will be a part of helping us highlight voices from your community!

## What you will need to start

- Pen or pencil to write your questions
- “Brainstorm Your Interview” guide
- A family, friend or community member to interview
- A smartphone, tablet, or computer to record the story
- “Sharing Your Personal Reflections with We are Water” Form

## Part 1 - Prepare for the Interview

1. Think about the people that you are close to, such as family or friends, or people in your community that you admire, such as a teachers or local leaders. Would one of them be able to share a story about water with you?
2. When you have a person in mind, talk with them about your interest in interviewing them to learn more about their experiences with and thoughts about water. Show them the ‘Sharing your Personal Reflections with We are Water’ form provided in this kit. This form will describe how their story will be used and what will happen if they allow you to record and upload their story to the We are Water website. If the person agrees to the interview and upload, their story might become a part of the We are Water exhibit or the online library of stories! If the person says “No” to the interview, don’t worry, ask another friend or family member!

**Preparation Tip:** Part of being a water historian is being a good listener and understanding that a person’s story belongs to them. Sometimes stories are private and not meant to be shared. Only record stories that people are comfortable sharing with you and others.

3. Arrange a time to meet and a quiet place to do the interview. You can record the person's water story at home (if you are interviewing a family member), at the library, or even online using Zoom, Facetime, or Skype. If you plan to do the interview in person, decide how you will record it. You can use a phone, computer or any other digital audio recorder to record the interview. If you need help figuring out how or where to record your interview, ask your librarian for resources on how to get start!
4. Use the 'Brainstorm Your Interview' guide and the 'Water Historian' notecards to write down the questions you want to ask. Be sure to include warm-questions on one or more of your notecards—these will help you to get to know the person you're interviewing and help make the other person more comfortable talking to you.
5. Once you are happy with your collection of questions, share them with the person you are interviewing so they can start thinking about their responses.

**Interview Tip:** If the person you are interviewing came prepared to share a specific story, let them jump right in. You can save your list of questions for when they are finished.

## Part 2 - Record the Interview

1. When you are both ready to begin, press the record button.
2. Start by introducing yourself.
3. Then ask the person you are interviewing to introduce themselves.
4. Ask a warm-up question.

### Interview Tips:

After you ask a question, give the person lots of time to answer. If they need time to think, that's okay! Don't worry about silence. Repeat the question only if the person asks.

Ask follow-up questions to get more detail or to help you understand the story being told. You can ask "And then what happened?" or "How did that make you feel?" or "Tell me more about that." or "What were you thinking at that moment?"

5. Ask your questions about water memories.
6. Ask your questions about water reflections and perspectives.
7. When you are done asking questions, stop the recording and save the audio file.
8. Thank the person you interviewed for sharing their stories with you.

## Part 3 - Share the Story

After the interview, don't forget to send the audio file to the person you interviewed. If the person you interviewed wants to share their story with the We are Water project, work together to fill out the online submission form by scanning the QR code using your smartphone's camera or using link: <https://bit.ly/WaWStory>



# Brainstorm your Interview Guide

Use the following tips and the 'Water Historian' notecards to help you brainstorm questions you would like to ask about water. We've provided some examples of different types of questions to help you get started. Be creative and let your curiosity lead you!

## ■ Here are examples of warm-up questions:

*How long have you lived in [city]?  
Describe your favorite place to see water.*

Write your own warm-up question(s) using the **orange notecards**.

## ■ Here are examples of questions that ask a person to share a memory about water:

*When you were a kid....? Tell me about...? What was it like when....?  
What is your favorite memory about water?*

Write some questions that ask a person to remember and share a memory about water using the **green notecards**.

## ■ Here are examples of questions that ask a person to reflect and share their perspective about water:

*What do you think of ....? What is your opinion about...?  
How has water impacted....?  
How has water in your community changed....?*

Write some questions that ask a person to reflect about what they think about water in your community using the **blue notecards**.

For more information, please visit our website:  
**[WeAreWater.colorado.edu/engage/activities](http://WeAreWater.colorado.edu/engage/activities)**

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