

# ‘When you were my age’: creating a family archive

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## Stimulus question

What was your grandmother’s or grandfather’s childhood like?  
Where did your parents spend time when they were young?  
Who would you like to tell your story to?

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## Overview

Creating a family archive is about working with memories and photography using simple tools, such as a mobile phone, smartphone, tablet or laptop. We all use them daily to take photos, record and watch videos and share them online. Can a common everyday device be used to discover family history? Absolutely!

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## No. of participants

Anyone who can operate a mobile phone, smartphone, tablet or computer. The recommended age for participants is 9+. Inter-generational duos will work best. The project can also be carried out as an extracurricular activity.

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## Time

This will depend on how far-reaching and detailed the story is intended to be. It is advisable to set aside one session to process and archive the materials you have collected in the form of audio/video files, photographs, and possibly notes.

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## Location

Sessions can be arranged at home, outdoors, but also by phone or instant messenger (preferably with audio-video capability). A place with access to a computer is needed for the development of the material.

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## Resources and equipment

- phone/smartphone/tablet with voice and/or video recording capability,
  - archival photographs,
  - computer,
  - memory carrier (memory stick/CD/DVD/external HDD),
  - Internet access – optional,
  - printer – optional,
  - scanner – optional.
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## How to go about it?

### Preparation

### Step One: for the young explorer

You are probably savvy with new technologies. Look for a voice recorder on your device or a video recording app. Invite a family member to talk to you. Perhaps you have friends in your neighbourhood who would like to share memories of the bond you have? Or maybe you know someone whose extraordinary story you would like to preserve? Let them know about your plans so that they can do a little preparation, such as finding old photos. Explain that you want to record the interview.

Sit comfortably or go for a stroll and... chat.

Ask your interlocutor about the time when they were your age. Where did they live? How did they spend their free time? What made them happy and what caused them worry? What do they remember from that period? There are many possible topics, so it all depends on what you want to find out. Ask if your interlocutor has photos from that time, and if they would be willing

to tell you more about them. Let your interlocutor ask questions too. They may want to know your point of view and the emotions you are experiencing.

When you have finished talking and stopped recording, copy the file to a computer/external drive together. If possible, archive your conversation on a disc/memory stick, label it and add to family archive. Do not worry if you have no home archive yet. Let your conversation be the beginning of one.

Keep in mind that you can go back to your conversation in order to replay it, but also to take it further. You can include photographs that you have talked about. If they are on your computer, try printing them out, and then caption them and add to your home archive. How about creating a scrapbook?

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### Step Two: for the senior family member

Try to be understanding and patient with the young explorer. Help them keep a relaxed atmosphere during the interview. That way you will soon forget that it is being recorded. Try to look online for archival photographs of the place you come from. If you grew up in Tychy, photographs from the online map-archive 'Bringing Architecture Closer to You' at [www.abc.tychy.pl/en](http://www.abc.tychy.pl/en) may be of help.

Your conversation is an opportunity to ask questions and seek answers. It serves to share experiences and preserve the memory of your family and/or your mutual history and the bond you share.

Remember that the recording will be yours only, and it is up to you to decide whether you want to share it with anyone. Maybe someone close to your heart, who you are unable to meet in person, will enjoy listening to your voices. Imagine what a unique experience it could be to replay your conversation 5, 10 or 15 years later! It will be like opening a time capsule in which your memories and emotions are captured.

Good luck!

Please share with us your experiences and impressions.

We would love to see your family archive, so tag us on social media:

FB @MuzeumMiejskieTychach / Instagram: @mmtychy