The Effect of Service on a Soldier’s Family during War Time:
An Inquiry-based Oral History Activity for a Fourth Grade Lesson Plan on Veteran’s Day

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ACTION PLAN FOR INTERVIEWING (API)
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Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources
Instructors: Nik Roberts, M.S., David Lonich, Ph.D.
§ I. INVESTIGATIVE QUESTION:

“What is the effect of military service on a soldier’s family during war time?”

§ II. OBJECTIVES:

- Successfully proceed through the inquiry-based learning model.
- Complete a KWL Chart.
- Analyze an oral history with a U.S. veteran of the Korean War.
- Compose a letter to a veteran.
- Compare and contrast the various effects of military service upon families over time.
- Share knowledge about military service.
- Successfully pass an assessment quiz from the knowledge gained in the activity.

§ III. PENNSYLVANIA TEACHING STANDARDS

Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening:
1.4.3.B: Write narrative pieces (e.g. letters)
1.4.8.B: Use primary and secondary sources

History:
8.1.3.D: Understand historical research

§ IV. EXPLANATION OF THE INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING MODEL (IBLM) BEING USED

The procedure utilizes an IBLM, which has five steps. Those steps are explained below:

A. Ask- This lesson plan API activity involves a “KWL Chart” that students will use to plot out the following: (1) What they already know; (2) What they want to know; and, (3) What they have learned. The “ask” section of the IBLM will have students begin to fill out a KWL Chart, noting soldiers they may know and how war affects those soldiers’ families (sharing personal experiences).

B. Investigate- The “investigate” section of the IBLM will have students listen to an interview conducted with a retired Marine from the Korean War while analyzing what life was like for his family.

C. Create- The “create” section of the IBLM will consist of students composing a letter to a friend or family member currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

D. Discuss- In the “discuss” section of the IBLM, students will compare and contrast the effects of service on military families of that era (Korea) and the present day.
E. Reflect: The “reflect” section of the IBLM has students share personal experiences of having family members and neighbors serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

§ V. DESCRIPTIVE WALK-THROUGH OF MY ACTIVITY

A. PLANNING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

In conjunction with a lesson planned to celebrate Veterans’ Day, I will initially plan and produce an oral history interview with Wallace List, an 81 year old resident of Whitehall Borough. I will use this oral history as an instructional tool in my 4th grade class. Mr. List is a retired U.S. Marine that served during the years of the Korean War. His story will aide in my 4th graders’ understanding of how patriotism and hardship are a common traits of our nation’s military service-members and families.

Prior to actually creating my oral history, it will be necessary to implement an ample amount of time for planning my interview and collecting research on my topic. The gentleman that I am interviewing is a very close personal friend of my family and would provide a wealth of biographical data. Such information would pertain to his education, family, and career. In addition, secondary research would be carried out to uncover geographical and chronological data related to Mr. List’s service. My students will already have developed a schema for this time period based on our Social Studies’ Unit covering the Korean and Cold Wars.

When considering the logistics for my interview, I would take into account the circumstances that could possibly limit or inhibit Mr. List’s participation. For example, Mr. List’s wife is in a very frail condition and seldom leaves their home. Mr. List spends most of his time away from home as a Sunday school teacher at his church. For this reason, I determined that a suitable location to conduct the interview would be the classroom library at Hamilton Presbyterian Church in Bethel Park, PA. At the conclusion of my lesson, I will be assessing my students on the interview itself. For this reason, I will be recording the oral history with a video camera. I have selected this specific location because it’s very well lit and a very accommodating environment in relation to acoustics.
When carrying out the interview, I will initially ask Mr. List questions that will allow me to collect information and develop a rapport with him. Such questions would focus on his childhood, early years in the service, and post-service experiences. Once I have established a foundation, I will proceed with questions that directly deal with my research angle. Then, I will review and edit the content retrieved from the interview with Mr. List. This would consist of condensing the length of the oral history to meet the time constraints of my lesson. I would also use this time to edit out any of Mr. List’s responses that may be unsuitable for an elementary classroom without putting the truth at risk.

**B. CLASSROOM USE:**

Once the oral history interview has been edited and analyzed, I will apply it to my Social Studies’ lesson for classroom usage. I will utilize an Inquiry-based Learning model (IBLM) to present the oral history to my students and carry out the corresponding activities. As an anticipatory set to my lesson, I will survey my students to see which of them knows someone who is currently serving in any branch of the U.S. military. We will use their responses to start filling in a KWL Chart. First, we will fill in the section for what the students already know. Specifically, I will pose the question “What does it mean to you to know someone who is a soldier?” Also, “How does their service impact your family and community?” Next, the students will identify which questions they would like to have answered over the course of the lesson and through the oral history. At this point, I will explain to my class that today we are going to study history by using a resource known as an oral history. I will explain what oral Histories have to offer and how they can teach us more about the past. I will give them some background on Mr. List and present our class objectives for using this primary source. I will play the oral history for the students on the VCR and have the students analyze what life was like for families who had relatives serving during the time of the Korean War.
C. STUDENT WORK:

After the students have had a chance to listen to Mr. List, I will open up the class to discuss their thoughts on the oral history. I will encourage them to relate it to their personal experiences. We will use their comments and thoughts to complete a Venn Diagram on the dry erase board that will compare and contrast military families of that time period and now. I will also add any other questions that they still have that were left unanswered from the oral history and complete our classes’ KWL Chart. Next I’m going to have my students think about somebody that they know (relative, friend, or neighbor) who is serving in any branch of our armed forces. The students are going to compose a letter to this individual expressing their gratitude for their service and what their dedication to our country means to them personally. Prior to assessing my students on what they had learned from the oral history, I will have some of my students share some of their letters with the rest of the class. In addition, I will encourage the students to share any personal experiences or stories that they have about someone with whom they are close to in the military.

§ VI. MY ASSESSMENT TOOL

I will be assessing my students by way of a quiz. First, I will administer a fifteen point quiz that is broken down into three sections. These sections consist of five multiple choice questions, five true/false questions, and one short answer essay prompt. I will walk my students through the directions so that they understand what is expected of them within each section of the quiz. For the multiple choice section, the class will just need to circle the letter of the choice that they feel best answers each question. Next, for the true/false section, the students will write + for a true statement and 0 for a false statement on the given line next to each number. Finally, the students will respond to one short answer essay prompt in complete sentences. The students can receive five possible points for their response by giving two examples from the oral history (2 points), organization (1 point), mechanics (1 point), and
spelling accuracy (1 point). Below is a lay out of how the quiz that I am giving the students appears:
An Oral History with Wallace List Quiz

Name __________________________________ Date ______________________

Part I: Multiple Choice (5 Points):

Directions: Circle the letter of the best answer choice for each question.

1.) Wallace List attended what University and graduated in 1957?
   A. Carnegie Mellon     C. Pittsburgh
   B. Duquesne           D. Robert Morris

2. List was born in what community in the Pittsburgh area?
   A. Brookline           C. South Park
   B. Carrick             D. Dormont

3. What USMC did List complete his basic training at?
   A. Camp Lejeune, NC.   C. Parris Island, SC.
   B. Camp Pendleton, CA. D. Quantico, VA.

4. How many children did Wallace and his wife Ruth have?
   A. 1                   C. 3
   B. 2                   D. 4

5. What local company did List work for after retiring from the Marine Corp?
   A. Bayer               C. Heinz
   B. U.S. Steel          D. Westinghouse
Part II: True/False (5 Points):

Directions: Write + for a true statement and 0 for a false statement on the given line next to each number.

6. ____ List reached the ranking of Corporal while enlisted with the USMC.

7. ____ List won a Purple Heart while fighting over in Korea.

8. ____ List was an accomplished gymnast and diver in high school.

9. ____ List worked as a wedding photographer after retiring and had a dark room in the basement of his home.

10. ____ List played the clarinet in his Company’s USMC Marching Band.

Part III: Short Answer Essay (5 Points):

Directions: In complete sentences, describe two examples from the oral history in which Wallace List’s family demonstrated their support of his service or a sense of patriotism.

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