

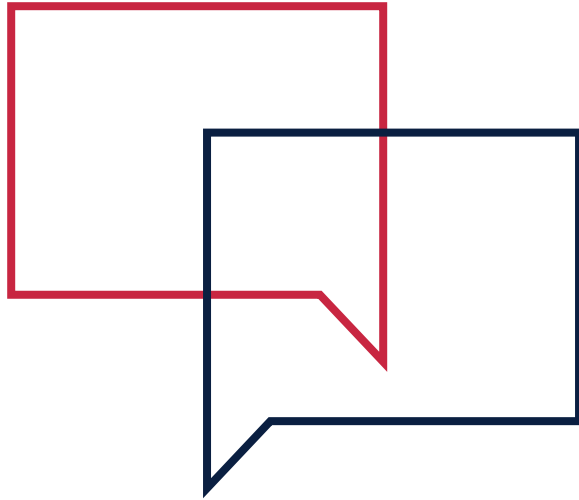
# THE NVMM STORY COLLECTION

Educator Toolkit



NATIONAL  
VETERANS  
MEMORIAL  
AND MUSEUM

Story  
Corps<sup>®</sup>



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# GETTING STARTED

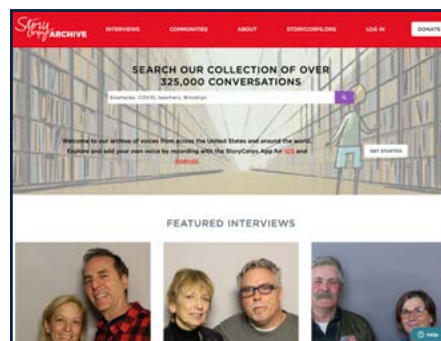
The NVMM Story Collection is a partnership between the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM) and StoryCorps. The following lesson plan will help you bring student-led conversations with Veterans and/or military family members into your classroom.

## 1 Create a StoryCorps Account

Before jumping into the lesson plan, you will need to log in or create a free account at [archive.storycorps.org](https://archive.storycorps.org). This account will be used to prepare, record, save, and share your interviews. You can also use it to browse our collection and listen to stories that others have shared. This step can be done on any device that connects to the internet.

We recommend exploring the archive to get a sense for the type of recordings your students will create. This is also a good time to familiarize yourself with StoryCorps Connect.

Image: [archive.storycorps.com](https://archive.storycorps.com)

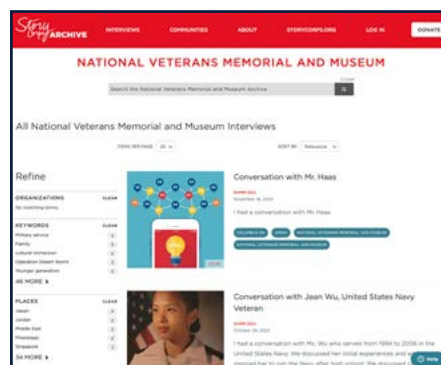


## 2 Log in to your StoryCorps Account

To get started, visit the [NVMM Story Collection](https://www.nvmm.gov/story-collection) page and either log in to an existing account, or create a new account by following the instructions for setting up your account.

As part of this project, all student conversations will be added to this collection.

Image: The NVMM Story Collection page on the StoryCorps website.



### QUESTIONS



#### StoryCorps Help Center

If you have any technical questions, please visit the StoryCorps Help Center at [support.storycorps.org](https://support.storycorps.org). You will find the answers to most of your questions there.

#### NVMM

If you have any trouble or need to contact someone at the NVMM, email us at [education@nationalvmm.org](mailto:education@nationalvmm.org).

# LESSON PLAN

## Contributing to the NVMM Story Collection

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Contributing to the NVMM Story Collection is not an assignment, it's an opportunity for students to:

- Connect with Veterans in their families and communities
- Help Veterans feel that the value of their service resonates with the younger generation
- Participate in an intergenerational learning experience
- Shape history by contributing to the digital collection of a national museum
- Do the work of an archivist and historian
- Become part of the next generation of storytellers
- Develop and sharpen social-emotional learning skills
- Share a conversation that will be accessible nationwide for decades
- Be heard



Through this experience, students will learn about the importance of storytelling, practice real oral history skills, and reflect on the experiences and contributions of our nation's Veterans. Using StoryCorps' tools, students will record a conversation with a Veteran or another individual who has been touched by military service (including a friend or family member) in honor of all those who have served.



Storytelling and listening are critical skills for young people. This project offers the opportunity for young people to recognize, identify and empathize with the feelings and perspectives of others by spending 40 minutes in intentional conversation with a community member.



We invite you to adapt these resources in whatever way best suits the needs of your students. We recommend introducing the project early in the school year to provide time for students to plan their conversations and practice using StoryCorps Connect.

# Learning Standards, Objectives, & Materials

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## Ohio Department of Education Standards Alignment

### Social Studies Learning Standards for grades 7-12 that align with this project:

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#### GRADES 7-8

##### TOPIC: Civic Participation and Skills

- **Content Statement 16 (7<sup>th</sup> Grade):** Analyzing individual and group perspectives is essential to understanding historic and contemporary issues. Opportunities for civic engagement exist for students to connect real-world issues and events to classroom learning.

##### TOPIC: Historical Thinking and Skills

- **Content Statement 1 (7<sup>th</sup> Grade):** Historians and archaeologists describe historical events and issues from the perspectives of people living at the time to avoid evaluating the past in terms of today's norms and values.
- **Content Statement 1 (8<sup>th</sup> Grade):** Primary and secondary sources are used to examine events from multiple perspectives and to present and defend a position.

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#### HIGH SCHOOL AMERICAN HISTORY

##### TOPIC: Historical Thinking and Skills

- **Content Statement 1:** The use of primary and secondary sources of information includes an examination of the credibility of each source.

##### TOPIC: The United States and the Post-War World (1991-Present)

- **Content Statement 32:** The United States faced new political, national security and economic challenges in the post-Cold War world following the attacks on September 11, 2001.
- **Content Statement 33:** Focusing on foreign policy, the United States faces ongoing economic, political, military, and social challenges in the post-Cold War era and following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

## K-12 Social and Emotional Learning Standards that align with this project:

### Competency C: Social Awareness

- Recognize, identify and empathize with the feelings and perspectives of others.

### Competency D: Relationship Skills

- Apply positive verbal and non-verbal communication and social skills to interact effectively with others and in groups.

## Common Core Standards Alignment

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-12.2-4

- Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-12.1-10

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-12.6-9

- Use technology, including the internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamic

## Objectives & Materials

### OBJECTIVES

- Learn about the NVMM, StoryCorps, and StoryCorps' model of conversation.
- Ask questions to develop a story and express a shared experience.
- Create a primary source using technology and have the option to contribute it to the digital collection of a national museum.
- Write archive-quality titles, summaries, and keywords.
- Empathize with the feelings and perspectives of others.

### MATERIALS

- Internet access (at home or in classroom)
- Technology for recording:
  - » To record with someone in the same room: Go to the NVMM Story Collection webpage on your mobile device.
  - » To record with someone in another location: Use StoryCorps Connect on a computer or tablet.
- A free StoryCorps Archive account
- Student worksheets
- Permission slips (recommended)



# Part I: About StoryCorps and the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM)

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**Introduce students to StoryCorps and discuss the importance of sharing and listening to stories.**

Use a selection of the following videos, animations, podcasts, and the StoryCorps mission statement.

*StoryCorps' mission is to help us believe in each other by illuminating the humanity and possibility in us all – one story at a time.*



**Introduce students to the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM) and discuss the importance of collecting, preserving, and sharing stories of our nation's Veterans for future generations.**

*The mission of the NVMM is to positively impact the lives of veterans, their families, and our communities by sharing the veteran experience.*

Share these intergenerational stories from the StoryCorps' Military Voices Initiative with your students as inspiration. Consider using the provided prompts for class discussion or individual reflection.

## Military Voices Initiative



[Reflections from the First Black Marines of Montford Point](#)

(5 min)



["You Are Your Brother's Keeper": A Marine Opens Up To His Son About 9/11](#)

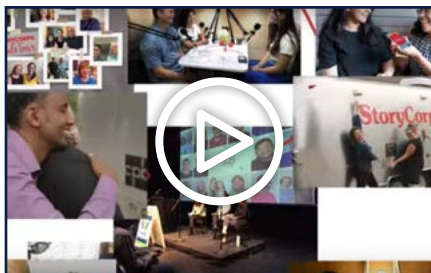
(3 min)



[With Love, From Georgia](#)

(3 min)

## StoryCorps Classics



[An Intro to StoryCorps from the Founder Dave Isay](#)

(3 min)



[The Icing on the Cake](#)

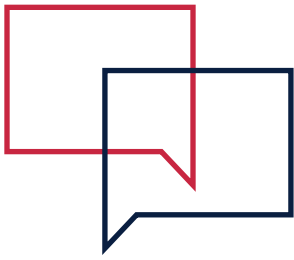
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[No More Questions](#)

(4 min)





## DISCUSSION PROMPTS

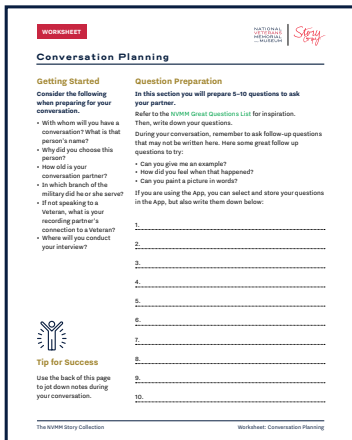


- .....  
① What is the role of stories in our lives?  
Why are stories important?  
.....
- ② What questions elicit compelling stories? Can you share an example from one of these stories?  
.....
- ③ What are some important lessons you have learned from someone in your life who has served or been touched by the military?  
.....
- .....  
④ Why do you think it is important to record conversations with Veterans and/or their family members?

# Part II: Great Conversations / Great Questions

## Planning the Conversations

Prepare students to start a conversation by identifying a recording partner, selecting and asking “Great Questions,” and creating thoughtful titles, summaries, and keywords to aid future historians and researchers.



Students can use the [Conversation Planning](#) worksheet to prepare questions, so they are ready for their conversation.

① Distribute the [Share Your Story with the NVMM](#) handout as an overview of the project for students and as a reference for their recording partners.

② Help students choose an appropriate recording partner. Remind them that this collection is not just for interviewing Veterans, we also want to share stories told by family members and friends of Veterans. Students should think about a Veteran in their family or community who they would like to speak to about their experience in the service. If they don't feel comfortable or are unable to speak to that person, who could they talk to about that person's service? Some helpful questions to ask your students:

- Who in your family has served in the military?
- Who in your family knows someone who served in the military?
- Are there any Veterans at your school or in your community who you would like to learn about?
- Do you have any friends who are in a military family and would be willing to record a conversation about their experience?

③ Prepare students for their conversations by making a plan for conversation day and identifying great questions to ask. We have two different tools to support this:

- [Great Questions from the NVMM](#) handout
- [Conversation Planning](#) worksheet



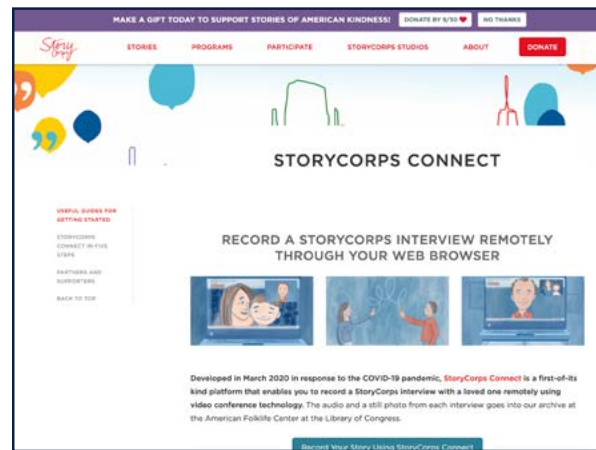
## Tips for Success

Students between 13 and 18 years old should register for their own StoryCorps account, with parent/guardian consent. You can find a sample permission slip at the back of this toolkit.

If you have students under 13 or who may be uncomfortable creating a personal account, you can create an account for your classroom using the teacher's email.

Students recording with someone in another location can record via [StoryCorps Connect](#).

They will need to ensure that their conversation partner also has access to an internet connection and a computer, tablet, or other device.



Students will need to reach out to their recording partner in advance to plan a date and time for their conversation.

When contacting their recording partners, students should describe the purpose of the NVMM Story Collection and provide a few sample questions to let their partners prepare for the upcoming conversation.

Learn how you can use StoryCorps Connect [here](#).

**Keywording 101**

**Title, Summary, and keywords.** After you record your conversation, you will want to give it a great title, summarize it, and add keywords. Use tips to make it easier for your friends and family to find it online.

**Just like using a hashtag on social media, tagging your NVMM conversation connects your story with the stories of other across cities, countries, and cultures. These details will add to the historical archive and serve as guideposts for future scholars who will use keywords to search for and discover your interview in the Library of Congress's digital collections.**

**This is your chance to fill the gaps of our oral histories as you add your conversation to the digital collection of the NVMM.**

**This section provides some tips on writing great titles, summaries, and keywords.**

**TITLE**  
Interview titles are one sentence and refer to the main idea of the interview.

**Example**  
John Gray speaks with John Gray about his experience in the U.S. Army.

**SUMMARY**  
Summaries are 4 to 5-sentence descriptions of the conversation. Include the location and date of the conversation, the names and basic biographical details of the participants, and a general overview of the topics discussed.

**Example**  
In this conversation, conducted in November 2024 in Columbus, Ohio, John Gray (D) speaks with his grandfather John Gray (D) about his experiences serving in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War era. Mr. Gray shares stories about the friends he served with and some difficult memories of combat. He also talks about what it was like leaving the service and how he found a sense of purpose in returning to civilian life. At the end of the conversation, Mr. Gray and Mr. Gray share what it means to them to be part of a military family.

**KEYWORDS**  
Keywords should include basic places, people, organizations, names of events (especially historical events), and any other important themes or concepts mentioned in the interview. For the NVMM Story Collection, it is especially important that you include keywords including the branch of service and location served.

**Example**  
Columbus, OH, U.S. Army, 1st Cavalry Division, Purple Heart, Vietnam War, Vietnam, Friendship, combat, Supporting Veterans, Channing Berlin High School, National Veterans Memorial and Museum

*Continued next page* →

The NVMM Story Collection      Worksheet: Keywording (page 1 of 2)

Emphasize the importance of creating a thoughtful interview title, summary, and set of keywords (after recording) by reviewing the [Keywording 101](#) handout.

## Conversation Practice Activity (In-Person Or Virtual)

- 1 Watch the animated videos below.  
[Q and A](#) (4 min)  
[Four Tips for an Effective Interview](#) (2 min)  
[Tips for Active Listening](#) (4 min)  
[How to Use StoryCorps Connect](#) (1.5 min)  
.....
- 2 Pair students up randomly and designate one as partner A and the other as partner B.  
.....
- 3 Using the [Great Questions from the NVMM](#) handout, instruct each student to select 3–4 questions to ask their partner.  
.....
- 4 Have each pair record a test conversation. If your classroom is meeting remotely, ask students to record in pairs using StoryCorps Connect.  
.....
- 5 Remind students to use the skills they learned in the videos and to ask follow up questions (e.g., Can you tell me more about that? Why do you think that happened? What do you mean by that?).  
.....
- 6 Practice having conversations! Partner A should start by asking questions to partner B. Switch after 3–5 minutes: Partner B asks questions of partner A.



### DEBRIEF

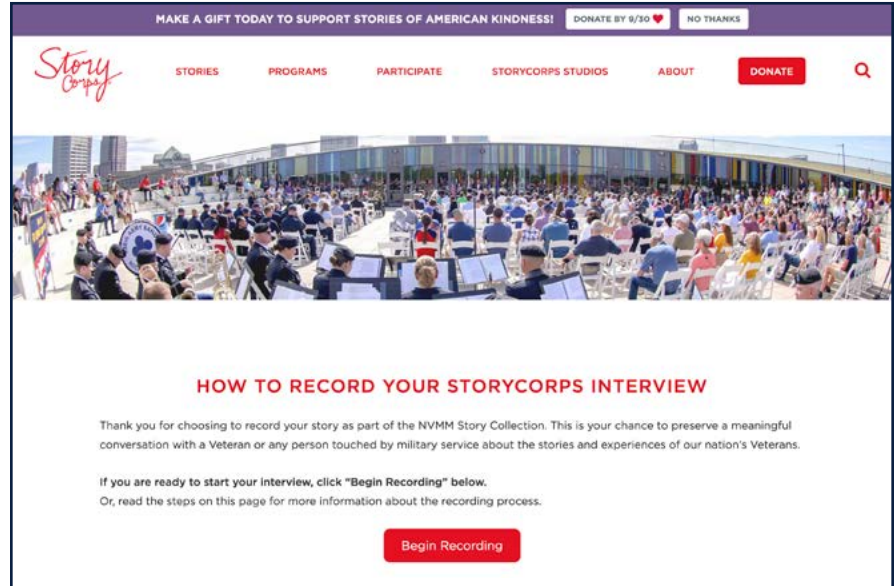
Facilitate a short discussion using the following prompts:

- What is one thing your partner did during the conversation that was effective?
- What challenges or surprises did you encounter during your conversation, and how did you work to address them?
- What is the significance of what you talked about?
- What is one thing from this conversation that you want to remember when you speak with a Veteran or Veteran's friend or family member?
- Do you have any questions about using StoryCorps Connect?

## Part III: Have a Conversation

Now that students are familiar with StoryCorps Connect, and know how to be great interviewers and listeners, they are ready to record!

Students should go to the [NVMM Story Collection](#) Recording Page when they are ready to start their conversation.



### Tips for Success

Remind students to make a plan with their recording partner in advance.

A complete conversation requires the names of the people participating in the conversation, the location where the conversation took place, a photo, a title, a summary, and keywords.

Following the conversation, students should add keywords, an updated title, and an extended summary to their conversation by logging in to their StoryCorps account from a computer, classroom tablet, or other device.

With their recording partner, students should discuss privacy preferences for their conversation before uploading it to the NVMM Story Collection.

Students who publish their conversation should email teachers the link to the recording.

## Part IV: Reflection & Follow-Up

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**After everyone has had a chance to record a conversation, take some time to debrief as a group.**

Facilitate a discussion among students using the questions below. Consider having each student write a brief reflection about the experience using these prompts:

.....  
How did your partner react to the conversation?  
.....

What challenges or surprises did you encounter, and how did you work to address them?  
.....

Did you have the chance to go “off script” and ask a follow-up question? If so, what question did you ask, and how did that change your conversation?  
.....

What question evoked a particularly memorable response?  
.....

What did you learn that changed the way you previously thought about an event, person, or your recording partner?  
.....

.....  
What makes a conversation like this different from a text as a historical reference?  
.....

What could future historians learn from listening to your conversation?  
.....

What would you do differently if you were to have another conversation?  
.....

Why was it important to have this conversation?  
.....



## Here are some ways for students to further reflect on their conversation:



### Write a thank-you letter

If the student had a conversation with a Veteran, write a letter thanking the Veteran for their service and taking the time to share their experience. Personalize the letter by sharing the impact the conversation had on the student.

If the student spoke to someone about a Veteran, consider writing a letter of kindness to a Veteran they do not know. These can be mailed to the NVMM who will ensure it is delivered to a Veteran in our community.

If mailing letters to the NVMM, please send to:

**National Veterans Memorial and Museum**  
**ATTN: Mason Farr**  
**300 West Broad St.**  
**Columbus, OH, 43215**



### Present the conversation takeaways to classmates

Students are the experts on what was discussed. Share what they learned from the conversation as a presentation to their classmates.



### Hold an assembly to highlight favorite stories from your class.

This could be a wonderful addition to Veterans Day programming at your school.



### Refer to these conversations when learning about historic moments or eras in American history.

For example, if a student speaks to a Vietnam War era Veteran, refer to their conversation when covering the Vietnam War.



### Research the historical context of the time period discussed between the student and their recording partner.

## Part V: Privacy and Terms-of-Use Overview

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### Fast Facts & Privacy Settings

The NVMM Story Collection is a technology-based project designed for middle and high school students between the ages of 13-18 (grades 7-12) studying American History, Social Studies, and English Language Arts. We encourage teachers and parents to use this collection as a community-building opportunity wherever individuals are engaging with Veteran stories across the country.

You and your students can follow @nationalvmm and @StoryCorps on Instagram, Facebook, and X, and share conversations and posts about the project using #NVMMStoryCollection.

We invite you to adapt the NVMM Story Collection lesson plan and resources in whatever way best suits your needs.

### Parental Consent & Privacy Settings

Under StoryCorps' terms of use: Children under the age of 13 may not participate in the NVMM Story Collection, and parental consent is required for people under the age of 18 to register for a StoryCorps Archive account. You can review the full terms of use at [archive.storycorps.org/terms-of-use](https://archive.storycorps.org/terms-of-use).

If you choose to require a parental permission slip, we have included a sample one here that you can easily customize to your needs.

**Please note:** *The permission slip is for school/community use only and should not be submitted to StoryCorps.* You should seek further legal advice from your counsel as needed to finalize any terms.

After recording, students will have the option to publish their conversations. If published, the conversations will be entered in the NVMM Story Collection on the StoryCorps Archive and the StoryCorps Archive in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and appear publicly online at StoryCorps.org. Students who do not want to publish their interviews can save the interviews to their devices. **Please note:** *Only interviews recorded via the StoryCorps App can be saved locally to the device.*

Students and other participants should not be required to publish their conversations publicly to receive credit. This is to preserve participant privacy. Please the StoryCorps' privacy setting recommendations for those who prefer to keep their recordings private.

### User-Generated Content


The StoryCorps App and StoryCorps Archive contain user-generated content that is not reviewed before it is posted online.

While StoryCorps adheres to a strict set of Community Guidelines and works to maintain a culture of tolerance and acceptance, not all published content will be appropriate for all individuals. StoryCorps also has a flagging mechanism in place to help further identify content that violates the Community Guidelines. We ask teachers, educators, and caregivers to familiarize themselves with the StoryCorps Archive, to review the Community Guidelines listed at [archive.storycrops.org](https://archive.storycrops.org), and to use discretion in adopting the project.

# HANDOUTS FOR STUDENTS

## Printable Worksheets

These printable worksheets are included on the next page.



**RECOMMEND TIP SHEET**

### Share Your Story with the NVMM

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM) is preparing to collect, preserve, and amplify the stories and experiences of our nation's veterans. All those touched by military service, including active service members, veterans, spouses, children, friends, and community members are invited to participate.

By adding your conversation to the [NVMM Story Collection](#), you become part of the NVMM and broaden the stories we share for generations to come. Contributing to the NVMM Story Collection is not an assignment, it's an opportunity for you to:

- Connect with veterans in their families and communities
- Help veterans find the value of their service resonates with the younger generation
- Participate in an intergenerational learning experience
- Share history by contributing to the digital collection of a national museum
- Do the work of an archivist and historian
- Discover and share important historical skills
- Develop and sharpen important research skills
- Gain a perspective that will be accessible to future generations
- No cost

**Getting Started**

Create a StoryCorp Account  
To get started, you will need to create a free account at [storycorp.com](#). This account will be used to prepare, record, edit, and share your interview. You can also use it to browse our collection and follow us across all our social media. This step can be done on any device that connects to the Internet. Once you go to [storycorp.com](#), click on the "Sign Up" button at the top of the page. Select "Log In" and follow the instructions for creating your account.

Download the StoryCorp App  
For the best in-person recording experience, use the StoryCorp App. It's available. The StoryCorp app is now available for iOS and Android.

The NVMM Story Collection Worksheet: Recording Sheet: Share Your Story with the NVMM (page 1 of 2)

Share Your Story with the NVMM



**WORKSHEET**

### Conversation Planning

**Getting Started**

Consider the following when preparing for your conversation:

- with whom will you have a conversation? What is that person's name?
- why did you choose them?
- how did you plan your conversation?
- in which branch of the military did he or she serve?
- what was your relationship with your interviewee, which your recording partner?
- how do you feel about it?
- where will you conduct your interview?

**Question Preparation**

In this section you will prepare 8-10 questions to ask your partner. Refer to the [Interview Questions List](#) for inspiration. Then, write down your questions.

During your conversation, remember to ask follow-up questions that may not be written here. Have some good follow-up questions in mind.

• How do you feel about that happened?

• Can you give me an example?

• How do you feel about that happened?

• Can you point to a place in service?

If you are using the app, you can select and store your questions in the app, but also write them down below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Tip for Success**

Use the back of this page to draw notes during your conversation.

The NVMM Story Collection Worksheet: Conversation Planning

Conversation Planning Sheet



**WORKSHEET**

### Great Questions from the NVMM

**Great Questions List**

Many of the military service questions are based on themes explored in the exhibits at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM) and from the StoryCorp Military Topics Initiative.

**Military Service**

- When were you in the military? Which branch did you serve in?
- What motivated you to join the military?
- How did your friends and family react when you told them your plans to serve?
- What was it like when you left home to begin your journey in the military?
- Tell me about basic training. Where you prepared for military? What were your assignments for?
- Where were you stationed during your time in service? What was your favorite or least favorite place to be?
- What jobs did you have in the military?
- Describe your daily life while in the service. If you served in combat and are comfortable sharing, what was that experience like? When and where were you in combat?
- Do you remember your favorite place you lived? What was special about it?
- How did being a military child shape your life?
- Describe your transition from military to civilian life. Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- What did you do after leaving the military?

**Military & Veteran Family Members**

These questions are great when speaking to a family member about someone who served in the military.

- What reasons did your service teach you that you still carry with you?
- What does your service mean to you?
- How do you see our family's legacy? How does military service influence that legacy?
- In which branches of the military have our family members served?
- What was it like growing up with a family member in the military?
- How do you feel about when your family member entered the service?
- Can you tell me about other military family members?
- Do you have anything you wish service members and civilians understood about being the family member of a service member?
- Do you remember your favorite place you lived? What was special about it?
- How did being a military child shape your life?
- Can you tell me about a person that you felt understood by the child of a service member?

Continued next page →

The NVMM Story Collection Worksheet: Great Questions from the NVMM (page 1 of 2)

NVMM Great Questions List



**WORKSHEET**

### Keywording 101

**TITLE, Summary, and Keywords**

After you record your conversation, you will need to give it a great title, summary, and add keywords. It's important to do this right to make it easier for you, friends, and family to find it.

Start by using a #writing an excellent title. Highlight your interview conversation. Interview your interviewee about the interview of others across other countries, and abroad. These details will add to the historical context and add an edge to the story. Interviewees who will use keywords to search for and discover your interview in the NVMM Story Collection.

This is your chance to tell the other side of the story and to share your own perspective on the digital collection of the NVMM.

The action produces some tips on writing great titles, summaries, and keywords.

The NVMM Story Collection Worksheet: Recording Sheet: Keywording 101 (page 1 of 2)

Keywording 101



**Sample Permission Slip**

Dear Parents,

During this school year, your class will contribute to the digital collection of the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM) by recording conversations with StoryCorp.

Using cameras or smartphones technology, students will record an interview with a veteran, or with someone who can speak about their experience of a veteran, in person or remotely using the StoryCorp App or StoryCorp Connect platform. These interviews are meant to foster meaningful connections between U.S. veterans, their families and communities, and the classroom, and create a record of our nation's history and values.

In order for your child to contribute to the [NVMM Story Collection](#), you must authorize that they are not under the age of 18. If your child is between the ages of 18 to 21, they will need your consent to register for an account on the StoryCorp App or StoryCorp Connect platform in accordance with the terms of use.

I understand that this project will include video recording an interview with someone in their family or community and potentially taking a picture with that individual. I understand that with the consent of all interview participants, my child will have the option to publish the interview and photograph online to a public website if an interview is selected for the [NVMM Story Collection](#).

I understand that the publication of the interview and photograph will result in their being archived in the National Archives Center at the Library of Congress and on the NVMM Story Collection page.

I also understand that publishing an interview online is not a requirement for enrollment in this project and that my child will have the option to have the interview and photograph private if their interview partner does. This family give permission for my child to contribute to the NVMM Story Collection.

Parent/guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

The NVMM Story Collection Worksheet: Recording Sheet: Sample Permission Slip (page 1 of 2)

Sample Permission Slip

## Share Your Story with the NVMM

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The National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM) is partnering with StoryCorps to collect, preserve, and amplify the stories and experiences of our nation's Veterans.

All those touched by military service, including active service members, Veterans, spouses, children, friends, and community members are invited to participate.

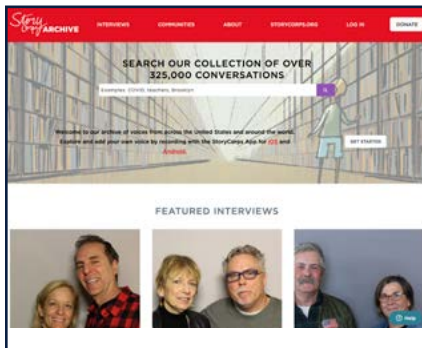
By adding your conversation to the [NVMM Story Collection Archive](#), it becomes part of the NVMM and broadens the stories we share for generations to come.

Contributing to the NVMM Story Collection is not an assignment, it's an opportunity for you to:

- Connect with Veterans in your family and community
- Help Veterans feel that the value of their service resonates with the younger generation
- Participate in an intergenerational learning experience
- Shape history by contributing to the digital collection of a national museum
- Do the work of an archivist and historian
- Become part of the next generation of storytellers
- Develop and sharpen social-emotional learning skills
- Share a conversation that will be accessible nationwide for decades
- Be heard

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### Getting Started



#### Create a StoryCorps Account

To get started, you will need to create a free account at [archive.storycorps.org](https://archive.storycorps.org). This account will be used to prepare, record, save, and share your interviews. You can also use it to browse our collection and listen to stories that others have shared. This step can be done on any device that connects to the internet.

Once you go to [archive.storycorps.org](https://archive.storycorps.org), click on the tab at the top of the page labeled, "Log In," and follow the instructions to create your account.

### Preparing for Your Conversation



#### 1 Choose Your Conversation Partner

The NVMM Story Collection is not just for interviewing Veterans, we also want to share stories told by family members and friends of Veterans. Students should think about a Veteran in their family or community who they would like to speak to about their experience in the service. They can also speak to someone in their family or community about a Veteran.

**Some Helpful Questions to Consider:**

- Who in your family has served in the military?
- Who in your family knows someone who served in the military?
- Are there any Veterans at your school or in your community who you would like to learn more about?
- Do you have any friends who are in a military family and would be willing to record a conversation about their experience?



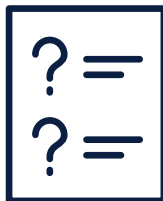
#### 2 Decide How You Want to Record

You can record in the same room as your conversation partner, or you can connect from different locations. If you are connecting from different locations, you will find a link in the Virtual Recording Booth to send to your partner to “meet you” there.



#### 3 Schedule the Date and Time

Determine the best date and time to record your conversation (set aside about 1 hour).

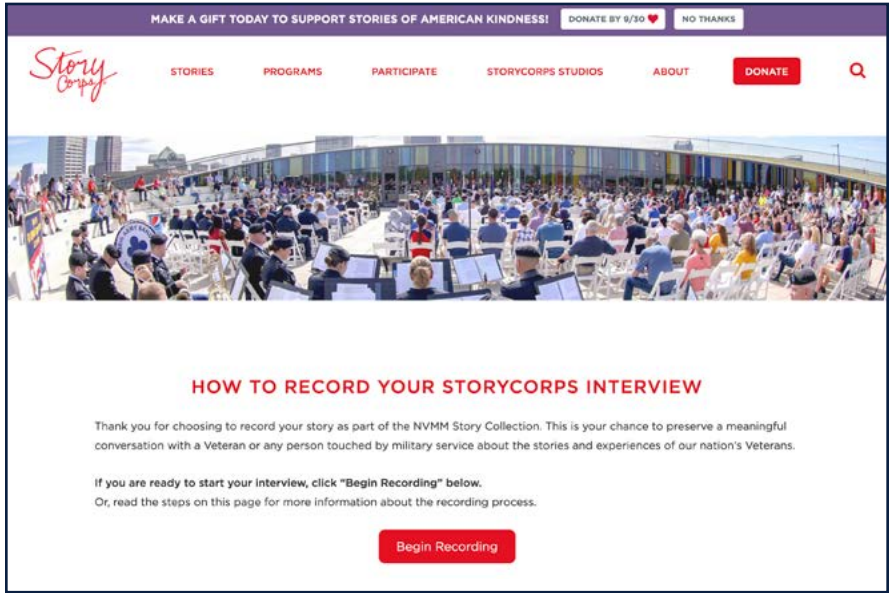


#### 4 Prepare Your Questions

Use the [Great Questions from the NVMM](#) handout and the [Conversation Planning](#) worksheet to generate a plan for your conversation.

# Recording Day

Go to the [NVMM Story Collection](#) page and ensure you are logged in to your account. When you and your partner are ready, click on the button labeled "Begin Recording." Follow the instructions to start, record, and preserve your conversation.



# After Your Conversation



With your recording partner, discuss privacy preferences for the conversation before uploading it to the NVMM Story Collection.

After you record your conversation, you will want to give it a great title, summarize it, and add keywords (like tags) to make it easier for your friends and family to find it online.

- Refer to the Keywording 101 for the NVMM handout at the end of this document for tips.
- Make sure you include the branch of service of the Veteran with whom you spoke or spoke about.

Students who publish their conversation should email teachers the link to the recording.



# Conversation Planning

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## Getting Started

Consider the following when preparing for your conversation.

- With whom will you have a conversation? What is that person’s name?
- Why did you choose this person?
- How old is your conversation partner?
- In which branch of the military did he or she serve?
- If not speaking to a Veteran, what is your recording partner’s connection to a Veteran?
- Where will you conduct your interview?



## Tip for Success

Use the back of this page to jot down notes during your conversation.

## Question Preparation

In this section you will prepare 5–10 questions to ask your partner.

Refer to the [Great Questions from the NVMM](#) worksheet for inspiration. Then, write down your questions.

During your conversation, remember to ask follow-up questions that may not be written here. Here some great follow up questions to try:

- Can you give me an example?
- How did you feel when that happened?
- Can you paint a picture in words?

Write down your questions below.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....
9. ....
10. ....

## Great Questions from the NVMM

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### Great Questions List

Many of the military service questions are based on themes explored in the exhibits at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM) and from the StoryCorps Military Voices Initiative.

### Military Service

- When were you in the military? Which branch did you serve in?
- What motivated you to join the military?
- How did your friends and family react when you told them your plans to serve?
- What was it like when you left home to begin your journey in the military?
- Tell me about basic training. Were you prepared for military life? What were you unprepared for?
- Where were you stationed during your time in service? What was your favorite or least favorite place to be?
- What jobs did you have in the military?
- Describe your daily life while in the service.
- If you served in combat and are comfortable sharing, what was that experience like? When and where were you in combat?
- How did you stay in touch with friends and family while in the service?
- Describe your transition from military to civilian life. Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- What did you do after leaving the military?

- What lessons did your service teach you that you still carry with you?
- What does your service mean to you?

### Military & Veteran Family Members

These questions are great when speaking to a family member about someone who served in the military.

- What do you see as our family's legacy? How does military service influence that legacy?
- In which branches of the military have our family members served?
- What was it like growing up with a family member in the military?
- What lessons did you learn from the service of a family member?
- Can you tell me about when you became a military family member?
- How did your life change when your family member entered the service?
- Do you have advice for other military family members?
- Is there anything you wish service members and civilians understood about being the family member of a service member?
- Do you remember your favorite place you lived? What was special about it?
- How did being a military child shape your life?
- Can you tell me about a person that you felt understood by as the child of a service member?

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- How would you like to honor or remember your parent that served?
- Is there anything you wish your parent knew about your experience as the child of a service member?

### **Great Questions for Anyone**

- Can you tell me about where you grew up and what it was like? What are some memories that stand out from your childhood?
- Who are some of the most important people in your life? Can you tell me about them?
- What are some of the important lessons you've learned? Can you describe something you are proud of in your life? Do you have any regrets?
- How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?

## Keywording 101

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### Title, Summary, and Keywords

After you record your conversation, you will want to give it a great title, summarize it, and add keywords (like tags) to make it easier for your friends and family to find it online.

Just like using a #hashtag on social media, tagging your NVMM conversation connects your story with the stories of others across cities, countries, and cultures. These details will add to the historical archive and serve as guideposts for future scholars who will use keywords to search for and discover your interview in the Library of Congress's digital collections.

This is your chance to fill the role of an oral historian as you add your conversation to the digital collection of the NVMM.

This section provides some tips on writing great titles, summaries, and keywords.

#### TITLE

Interview titles are one sentence and refer to the main idea of the interview.

#### Example

Jane Grey speaks with John Grey about his experience in the U.S. Army.

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#### SUMMARY

Summaries are 4 to 5-sentence descriptions of the conversation. Include the location and date of the conversation, the names and basic autobiographical details of the participants, and a general overview of the topics discussed.

#### Example

In this conversation, conducted in November 2024 in Columbus, Ohio, Jane Grey (15) speaks with her grandfather John Grey (75) about his experience serving in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War era. Mr. Grey shares stories about the friends he served with and some difficult memories of combat. He also talks about what it was like leaving the service and how he found a sense of purpose in returning to civilian life. At the end of the conversation, Ms. Grey and Mr. Grey share what it means to them to be part of a military family.

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#### KEYWORDS

Keywords should include basic places, people, occupations, names of events (especially historical events), and any other important themes or concepts mentioned in the interview. For the NVMM Story Collection, it is especially important that you include keywords including the branch of service and locations served.

#### Example

Columbus, OH, U.S. Army, 1st Cavalry Division, Purple Heart, Vietnam War, Vietnam, friendship, combat, Supporting Veterans, Olentangy Berlin High School, National Veterans Memorial and Museum

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## Editing Your Interview

To edit your title, summary, image and keywords from a desktop computer, log in to your account at [archive.storycorps.org](https://archive.storycorps.org), and click on the edit icon in the upper right-hand corner of the interview.



## Tips for Success

- Try to provide 5–15 keywords.
- If you record in a language other than English, enter that language as a keyword (e.g., Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic).
- Enter your keywords in the “general” keywords field.
- Add your state abbreviation (e.g., AK, CA, TX) in the “places” field.

# Sample Permission Slip

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Dear Parents,

During this school year, our class will contribute to the digital collection of the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM) by recording conversations using StoryCorps.

Using computer or smartphone technology, students will record an interview with a Veteran, or with someone who can speak about their memories of a Veteran, in person or remotely using the free StoryCorps Connect platform.

These interviews are meant to foster meaningful connections between U.S. Veterans, their families and communities, and the classroom, and create a firsthand archive of American history and wisdom.

In order for your child to contribute to the [NVMM Story Collection Archive](#), you must acknowledge that they are not under the age of 13. If your child is between the ages of 13 and 18, they will need your consent to register for an account on the StoryCorps Archive platform in accordance with the terms of use.

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I understand that this project will include my child recording an interview with someone in their family or community and potentially taking a picture with that individual. I understand that with the consent of all interview participants, my child will have the option to publish the interview and photograph online to a public website at [archive.storycorps.org/client/national-veterans-memorial-and-museum/](https://archive.storycorps.org/client/national-veterans-memorial-and-museum/).

I understand that the publication of the interview and photograph will result in them both being archived in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and on the NVMM Story Collection page.

I also understand that publishing an interview online is not a requirement for credit in this project and that my child will have the option to keep the interview and/or photograph private if they or their interview partner desire. I hereby give permission for my child to contribute to the NVMM Story Collection.

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Student's name

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Parent/guardian signature

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Date



# CONNECT WITH THE NVMM

## Field Trips

**An in-person or virtual visit to the NVMM can significantly enhance your students' engagement with the NVMM Story Collection. Your class is welcome to visit before or after conversations are scheduled.**

Visiting the NVMM before your students record their conversations will allow them to draw inspiration from the Veteran stories highlighted in the museum. This is a great way for students to start generating engaging questions for their recording partners and better understand the mission of the NVMM.

Visiting the NVMM after your students record their conversations will allow them to see firsthand how their conversations will contribute to the museum's mission of preserving and sharing the Veteran experience. Learn more about NVMM Field Trips [here](#).



## NVMM Education Team in Your Classroom

**To help explain the impact and purpose of your students' opportunity to contribute to the NVMM Story Collection, we are pleased to send one of the museum's Education Team members to speak to your students and staff members about the project.**

The NVMM Educator can visit in-person or virtually depending on availability.

Image: Mason Farr, Education and Outreach Manager



**CONTACT  
NVMM**

To learn more about either of these options, please email Mason Farr at [mfarr@nationalvmm.org](mailto:mfarr@nationalvmm.org).