**Touching Spirit Bear Village Journal – Grade 8**

**My Village Journal**  
**Myself and Others: All Stories to be Told**

**OVERVIEW:**  
Everyone has a story to tell. These stories vary throughout history, throughout cultures, and across all ages. The purpose of recording someone’s story is to discover how an individual’s past experiences shape and mold the present and future. Recording someone’s history gives us a personal perspective on the individual’s life. The stories shape people’s character, personality, belief and value systems. As citizens of a global community, it is our responsibility to understand those who live with us and why their lives evolved the way they did.

In *Touching Spirit Bear*, we read the story of Cole Matthews, a juvenile delinquent whose anger erupts into violence and in order to avoid going to prison, agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on the Native American Circle Justice. Cole, however, has other plans. He isn't about to change his angry ways—he plans to escape from the island as soon as possible. Like his father, who beats him, Cole loves to have people fear him and claims to be afraid of nothing, even death. He is sent to a remote Alaskan Island where an encounter with a huge Spirit Bear changes his life. He discovers much about himself and about trying to find his place in a home, community, and world. Our parents, grandparents, and members of our community are also trying to find their place in the world. The *My Village Journal* project encourages you to spend some time with individuals who are close to you and with whom you interact on a daily or weekly basis. This project requires that you ask a lot of questions and dig deep into the hearts and minds of those around you.

**TASK:**
Find three people whose oral history you would like to record. These individuals should be over the age of 40 or have such a compelling story to tell that their age doesn't matter. For example you may think of your 35 year old neighbor who now is the leader of your church as having a compelling story that should be explored. Even though he is young, his immigrant experience has been so fascinating that his story offers you insights into his country, culture, and belief system. Or you may want to interview your 65 year old grandmother who has experienced 65 years of joy, grief, births, and deaths and will certainly have much to say, as well.

**PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:**
1. Choose three individuals from your community, 40 years or older (please see the examples in the Task section above) who will share with you his/her story. You want to choose individuals whose personal account of their life experiences have led them to become who they are today. Who is he/she? Who were the persons, places, things, and events in his/her life which made the person who he/she is today? Who is his/her family?
2. Write down the questions you will ask. This is called your “interview instrument.” A sample of what these questions are has been provided.
3. Document your findings in your Village Journal. Follow the Village Journal requirements but also be creative and demonstrate your individuality, artistry, and imagination.

**VILLAGE JOURNAL REQUIREMENTS:**
1. Dedication page (may include a picture with dedication)
2. Interview instrument – you may use the same one for all 3 interviews
3. Results of interviews (3)
4. Timeline of events in person’s life (3)
5. Timeline of historical events which occurred during his/her lifetime (3)
6. Map of geographical locations where individual was born and has lived (3)
7. Historical data on country of origin of interviewee (3)
8. Picture of interviewee (3)
**SUGGESTED INTERVIEW FOCUS:**
When people begin to tell their stories it is often difficult to keep them focused. Sometimes their stories will take them into areas beyond your focus. Prepare your interview instrument in advance and be familiar with it. You will need to let the individual speak freely and keep the conversation friendly and relaxed. Remember, however, that you want to maintain the focus of your interview. A list of questions is suggested below:

**The 5 W’s: Who, What, When, Where, and Why**

**INTERVIEWEE’S PERSONAL INFORMATION: BIO**
- Date and place of birth:
- Age:
- Education:
- Occupation-past/present:
- Hobbies:
- Family:
- Political Affiliation:
- Religious Affiliation:
- Historical events during lifetime:
- Memories of childhood, adolescence, adulthood:

**INQUIRE ABOUT YOUR INTERVIEWEE’S GRANDPARENTS:**
- Who were your grandparents? From where did they come?
- If immigrants, what caused them to immigrate?
- What are/were their occupations?
- Did they receive a formal education?
- What is their religious affiliation? Did religion play a great role in making them who they are/were?
- How many children did they have? Where were these children born?
- What life experiences did they have? What did it feel like to them to live through those experiences?
- How is the world different now from when they were growing up?

**INTERVIEWEE’S PARENTS:**
Refer to above.

**PRIMARY SOURCE: (Individual being interviewed)**
- What family stories were handed down to you? How do these stories define who you are? Shape you?
- Mold you? Influence you?
- Did you know your grandparents personally?
- How is the world different now from when you were growing up?
- Who, what, where, when, why, etc., etc., etc.

**STEPS TO COMPLETING THE PROJECT:**
- Introduction of project and investigation
- Choice of individuals whose story you will tell
- Creation of interview instrument
- Preliminary interview (possibly over the phone)
- Interviewing chosen individuals
- Typing rough draft of results of interview
- Proofreading and finalization of interview document
• Organization of Village Journal
• Design of Village Journal
• About the Author of the Village Journal

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR – A checklist is provided to help organize this information.**

- Name
- Picture
- Grade
- Where do you go to school?
- How do you play, learn, etc.
- What do you least like to do?
- What are your hopes for the future?
- What do you fear most?
- Other important information about yourself.

**REFLECTION ON PROJECT EXPERIENCE – A separate page is provided to be turned in**

- What did you most enjoy about completing this project?
- What did you like least about this project?
- What was particularly important to you while you completed this project?
- If you had more time, what would you have done differently?
- What did you learn from the people you interviewed?
- If you could live through any time in the life of any of the three people you interviewed, what time would you choose and why?
- What experience did you hear described by your interviewees you would NOT want to live through?

**INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS:**

Students will:

1. increase their understanding of people’s journey through life.
2. increase their understanding of specific historical events and make these events relevant to their lives.
3. comprehend how time effects and changes differing age groups.
4. learn how to develop an instrument for conducting interviews.
5. understand the various questions which may elicit unanticipated, unexpected, and unintended answers.
6. improve questioning skills as they ask the various questions and follow-up questions of the “what” variety, and the probing questions of “how” and “why.”
7. improve their writing skills as they become cognizant of how people use their language.
8. enhance their listening skills by accurately listening to what was said and how, and why the interviewee chose to describe an event.
9. gain organizational skills pertaining to their use of time, energy, and information.
10. improve proofreading skills as they read and re-read their final product to insure accuracy.

**Instructors should keep the following in mind:**

- Remind students of timelines and deadlines.
- Monitor student progress toward completion as the weeks pass.
- During Centers time, allow students to use the technology available in the classroom and/or media center to help complete the various parts of The Village Journal.
- Encourage students to be creative in their layout and design.
- Remind students to use the rubric and checklist to be sure they are fulfilling the requirements to the best of their ability.

1. This interview instrument serves as a guide for you when conducting your Oral History interviews. These three people may be a parent, a grandparent, a guardian, a community member, a
2. You should begin by first establishing contact with the interviewee (person being interviewed) and inform him/her of the *My Village Journal* project. This initial communication may be face-to-face or by telephone.

3. The results of your interview, in other words, the answers to your questions, will be presented in your *Village Journal*.

4. You have different options for how to include these interviews in your journal. These are:

- **Typed on a computer in a question/answer format** – You type the question and then directly underneath, you type the answer provided;
- **Handwritten directly on the *Village Journal* pages** (if you have clear, legible handwriting) in a question/answer format.
- **You may also wish to write or type this information in paragraph form rather than in a question/answer format. In other words, you would narrate this person’s story directly on the computer or directly on the journal pages.**
- **It is very important that you prepare thoroughly for your interviews before the actual day. The more familiar you are with what you will ask, the easier your interview will be.**

**Beginning your interview:**

1. When you begin the interview, you should state your name clearly and once again remind the interviewee of the purpose of your interview. You should include the following information:

2. The following questions must be included in your journal for every interview:

- **Date of interview:**
- **Time of interview:**
- **Place of interview:**
- **Mood of the person being interviewed:** (Did the person seem relaxed, nervous, hurried, excited, etc…)?
- **Weather of interview:** (Was it a cloudy, rainy, or sunny day)?

The following questions are basic to all of your interviews. They are referred to as biographical information:

- **Bio:**
- **Date and place of birth:**
- **Age:**
- **Education:**
- **Occupation-past/present:**
- **Hobbies:**
- **Family:**
- **Political Affiliation:** (If the interviewee wishes to not answer, move on to another question.)
- **Religious Affiliation:** (If the interviewee wishes to not answer, move on to another question.)
- **Major personal milestones during lifetime:** (For example, high-school graduation, college graduation, marriage, birth of children, death of a parent, etc… What did it feel like to live through each of these experiences?) All of these personal events will help you develop your interviewee's personal history timeline and will generate additional conversation between you and your interviewee.

**Historical events during lifetime:**

Historical events can have a tremendous impact on a person’s life. Determine if the person being interviewed experienced any life-changing events. What did it feel like to live through these experiences?

For example, think about:
- the assassination of President John F. Kennedy
- the assassination Martin Luther King, Jr., the Civil Rights era
- the Bay of Pigs, the Mariel boatlift
- Revolutions in Latin America (Mexican Revolution, Bolivian Revolution, Guatemalan Revolution, Cuban Revolution, Chilean Road to Socialism, Sandinista Revolution, Zapatistas)
- Neil Armstrong’s walk on the moon, the explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger, Space Shuttle Columbia explosion
- Vietnam War, invasion of Afghanistan, Iraqi Freedom, Gulf War
- 9/11 terrorist attacks
- Hurricane Andrew, Hurricane Katrina
- election of Barak Obama
- information technology era, Internet, cell phones, social media sites such as Facebook launched

All of these historic events will help you develop your timeline and will generate additional conversation between you and your interviewee.

**Memories of childhood, adolescence, adulthood:**

**II. Other possible Questions about family:**
The questions listed in this section will continue your conversation and will provide additional information for you to present in your Village Journal. You really want to get to the bottom of who this person is and what they are all about.

1. Who were your grandparents? From where did they come?
2. If immigrants, what caused them to immigrate? What did it feel like as a man/woman to come to America or a different city in America at the time they arrived?
3. What are/were their occupations?
4. Did they receive a formal education?
5. How many children did they have? Where were these children born?
6. What are your fears, hopes, dreams?
7. What family stories were handed down to you? How do these stories define who you are? Shape you? Mold you? Influence you?
8. Did you know your grandparents personally?
9. How is the world different now from when you were growing up?

**III. Questions that connect to the characters in Flipped:**

1. Did you have a favorite hiding place when you were growing, a favorite place that you liked to go to when you wanted to get away from everybody and everything?
2. Was it a secret or did others know about it? Did you go there alone or with friends?
3. Did you ever do something that you really regretted doing, something you felt really sorry about doing? What was it? When did it happen? What were the consequences of your actions? How did you resolve the problem?
4. When you were growing up, did you have a circle of friends with whom you hung out? Did you feel connected to these friends?
5. Did you ever exclude kids from your circle of friends? How did you do that and why?
6. When you were a teenager, did you ever have a girl or boy cling to you and desperately want to be your friend and you wanted nothing do with them? How did you deal with this kid?
7. Were you ever the clinger? Did you ever make a pest of yourself in order to become a friend?

**IV. Statements to complete:** (Ask your interviewee to complete the following statements.)

1. I hope I will never…
2. I am at my best when…
3. I am terrible at…
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I really don't like to…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I hope I will never…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I wish people wouldn't …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I'm afraid…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The future looks…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Reflection Page**  
*(Include this sheet with your final project)*

**Name:**

*Please answer the questions below as completely as possible.*

1. What did you enjoy most about this project?
2. What did you like least about this project?
3. What was particularly important to you while you completed this project?
4. If you had more time, what would you have done differently?
5. What did you learn from the people you interviewed?
6. If you could live through any time in the life of any of the three people you interviewed, what time would you chose and why?
7. What experience did you hear described by your interviewees you would **NOT** want to live through?

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*ESE/ESOL strategies are embedded throughout project*
Rubric Template
(This rubric is intended to be used with The Village Journal.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning 1</th>
<th>Developing 2</th>
<th>Accomplished 3</th>
<th>Exemplary 4</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Design**    | • Design & layout lack attractiveness &/or creativity.  
                • Organization appears lacking or only apparent in some sections.  
                • The focus of the project varies from section to section.  
                • Design & layout are attractive.  
                • The project presents information in an accurate & organized manner that can be understood by the intended audience.  
                • There is a focus in individual sections of the project.  
                • Design & layout are attractive, and show creativity.  
                • The project presents information in an accurate & organized manner that can be understood by the intended audience.  
                • There is a focus that is maintained throughout the project. |
| **Content**   | • Many of the required elements are missing.  
                • There is no attempt to connect the journal to the texts read or to the student’s life experiences.  
                • Most of the required components are included (1 or 2 may be missing).  
                • There is no attempt to connect the journal to the text read or the student’s experiences.  
                • All required components are included.  
                • There is an attempt to connect the journal to the text read as well as the student’s life experiences.  
                • All required components are included.  
                • There are additional elements added that strengthen the connections between the journal and the text read and the student’s life experiences. |
| **Organization** | • Organization is haphazard.  
                    • There is little or no attempt at creating a flow from section to section.  
                    • Organization has been attempted but the journal does not flow from section to section.  
                    • The project is organized in a logical order.  
                    • The pages flow from section to section.  
                    • The project is organized in a logical order.  
                    • A table of contents is included to aid the reader in finding information. The pages are ordered and numbered correctly. |
| **Mechanics** | • The project shows a lack of understanding of the mechanics of writing including: spelling, grammar, and form.  
                • Errors hinder the readers’ understanding.  
                • The project shows understanding of the mechanics of writing including: spelling, grammar, and form.  
                • However, some of the errors hinder the readers’ understanding.  
                • The project shows understanding of the mechanics of writing including: spelling, grammar, and form.  
                • Errors do not hinder the readers’ understanding.  
                • The project shows complete understanding of the mechanics of writing including: spelling, grammar, and form. |

**Letter Grade Equivalent Chart / Letter Grade Total Rubric Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade Total Rubric Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>15 - 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>13 - 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Division of Language Arts/Reading  
Grade 7  
Revised June 2011
F = 10 or below