

Tell Your Story

"The World Language Department supports and guides its students along their language acquisition journey and instill in them a passion for learning, living, and loving their chosen languages and the cultures associated with them. Through the teaching and learning of world languages, students develop life-long skills to communicate effectively, and empower them to make real world connections as global citizens."

-World Language Department Vision

As global citizens and as members of the CRLS community, we all have our unique personal stories of culture and heritage. The CRLS World Language Department agrees with the **StoryCorps'** statement that,

"We do this to remind one another of our shared humanity, to strengthen and build the connections between people, to teach the value of listening, and to weave into the fabric of our culture the understanding that everyone's story matters. "

In the spirit of NPR's **StoryCorps**, the World Language Department invites you to record and share your family's heritage story, cultural traditions, etc. Our hope is to start a World Language Cultural audio archive.

So....what story should you tell? It can be the story of your family's journey to the U.S. or share a favorite cultural tradition. It can be a story you've heard about your family name, for instance, was it changed when your ancestors arrived in the U.S.?

It's up to you! **Tell your story.**

Below are some questions and ideas to get you started.

FAMILY HERITAGE

- What is your ethnic background?
- Were you born here? If not, where were you born?
- Where is your mom's family from? Where is your dad's family from?
- Have you ever been there? What was that experience like?
- What traditions have been passed down in your family?
- Who were your favorite relatives?
- Do you remember any of the stories they used to tell you?
- What are the classic family stories? Jokes? Songs?

FOLKLIFE

<https://folklife.si.edu/the-smithsonian-folklife-and-oral-history-interviewing-guide/some-possible-questions/smithsonian>

Q: What do you know about your family name? Are there stories about its history or origins? Has it undergone any changes? Are there any stories about those changes? Are there any traditional first names or nicknames in your family? What are they? How did they come about? Are there any naming traditions? What are they?

Q: Do you know any stories about how your family first came to the United States? Where did they first settle? Why? How did they make a living? Did your family stay in one place or move around? How did they come to live in this area?

Q: If your tradition-bearer is a first-generation immigrant, you might ask him or her: Why did you leave to come to the United States? What possessions did you bring with you and why? What was the journey like? Which family members came along or stayed behind? What were some of your first impressions and early experiences in this country? What traditions or customs have you made an effort to preserve? Why? Are there traditions that you have given up or changed? Why?

Q: What languages do you speak? Do you speak a different language in different settings, such as home, school, or work? Are there any expressions, jokes, stories, celebrations where a certain language is always used? Can you give some examples?

Q: What stories have come down to you about your parents and grandparents? More distant ancestors? **Q:** Do you know any courtship stories? How did your parents, grandparents, and other relatives come to meet and marry?

Q: What are some of your childhood memories? What games did you play when you were a child? Did you sing verses when you played games? What were they? What kinds of toys did you play with? Who made them? Did you make any yourself? How did you make them? What kinds of materials did you use? What kind of home entertainment was there? Was there storytelling? Music? Were there craft traditions? Describe these traditions.

Q: Does your family have any special sayings or expressions? What are they? How did they come about?

Q: How are holidays traditionally celebrated in your family? What holidays are the most important? Are there special family traditions, customs, songs, foods? Has your family created its own traditions and celebrations? What are they? How did they come about?

Q: What special foodways traditions does your family have? Have any recipes been preserved and passed down in your family from generation to generation? What are they? What are their origins? Have they changed over the years? How? Have any of the ingredients been adapted or changed? Why? Are there certain foods that are

traditionally prepared for holidays and celebrations? Who makes them? Are there family stories connected to the preparation of special foods?

Q: What family heirlooms or keepsakes and mementos do you possess? Why are they valuable to you? What is their history? How were they handed down? Are there any memories or stories connected with them?

How to begin your story

- Read over the questions and suggestion prompts to get an idea of what you would like to think about
- Take a few minutes to think about what you want to say; write some notes
- Take a breath and begin!

Please begin the recording by stating your name and what you will be talking about.

Press record and...

My name is.....and my story is about.....