



Voices and Choices

<p>THE BASICS</p>	<p>THE TOOLBOX</p>	<p>EDUCATION STANDARDS</p>	<p>Writing English/Language Arts Performance Standard</p> <p>Students produce narratives that create an organizing structure to analyze a subject and provide supporting details and facts.</p>
<p> Grade Level: 3-12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Crayons • Markers • Pencils • Tape recorder (optional) 	<p>SAFETY CONCERNS</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p> Estimated Time: 40 min.</p>		<p>FOR KIDS WITH DISABILITIES</p>	<p>Students with dexterity impairment may work with a partner. Students with vision impairments may participate orally.</p>



Educational Objective:

To develop reading and creative writing skills by having students explore situations that analyze individual choice in response to personal circumstances. To develop interviewing skills and a timeline for themselves and individuals at the other end of life’s spectrum.

What to Do:

- Have students read the paragraph on the activity sheet and answer the questions at the end.
- Discuss the answers to the questions and start discussions that will aid students in their interviews.
- Students should develop questions and practice with a partner before going out.
- After interviews students can write stories and draw illustrations about particular aspects of the interviews.
- Finally students should create timelines for themselves and for the individuals they interviewed.

Questions to Ask Students As They Do This Activity:

- Do you know any elderly people (such as grandparents, elderly neighbors or people older than their parents)? Note: If there is a home for the elderly near your program, you might want to organize a field trip to allow students to have contact with seniors.
- What age do you consider old? (Students may have negative stereotypes about growing old. Help them move beyond their images and think about growing old as a natural process)
- Have students list their responsibilities and look at the role they play in their families.

Extensions:

Have each student interview an elderly person about how technology has changed in his/her lifetime and compare it to the student's own personal story.

WEB SITES

- **Poetry.com**
<http://www.Poetry.com> (Grades 3-12)

SOFTWARE

- **Amazing Writing Machine**
Broderbund Software, Inc., 1994
(Grades 1-6)
- **EasyBook Deluxe**
Sunburst, 1998
(Grades PreK-8)

READING ROOM

- Hesse, Karen. **Out of the Dust.** Scholastic, 1997. (Grades 6 and up)
- Lowry, Lois. **The Giver.** Houghton Mifflin, 1993. (Grades 4-7)
- Creech, Sharon. **Walk Two Moons.** HarperCollins, 1994. (Grades 4-7)

Career Connections

A science writer has the ability to write about complex scientific processes in everyday, layperson's terms. Science writers increase the public understanding of science, math, and technology by writing for newspapers, magazines, and even major television shows.

VOICES AND CHOICES ACTIVITY SHEET

Esther Hunn is an 83-year-old woman who has spent most of her life in Springfield. She has lived at home and taken care of various members of her family. Only her sister Pauline is left and Esther is considering moving them out of “the big house” to a smaller, more-manageable living space.

What do you think?

1. Where has Esther lived her whole life? Why is she considering moving and where might she go?
2. Do you know anyone as old as Esther? Who is the older person you know? What is that person’s relationship to you? Where does he or she live?
3. How do you feel about growing old? Would you like to be as old as Esther? What do you think it feels like to be 83 years old?
4. What has been Esther’s role in her family? What kind of responsibilities has Esther had?
5. What kinds of family responsibilities do you have? What is your role in your family?
6. Esther decides to stay in her house. Why do you think Esther decides to stay instead of moving?
7. What would you have done?

Oral Interview

The theme of this interview is to learn about life from the point of view of someone older than your parents. Have you ever wondered what it’s like to grow old? Interview a grandparent, elderly aunt or uncle, or someone in your neighborhood and find out about his or her life experiences and what it’s like to grow old. You will need to write questions beforehand. Use the one’s below to get you started.

1. When were you born?
2. Where did you grow up?
3. What are your happiest childhood memories?
4. Where have you lived throughout your life?
5. What is the hardest thing about growing old? What is the easiest or best thing?

6. If you could live your life over again, would you do anything differently?
7. What advice can you give to me about living my life and growing old?

Make sure you take notes during your interview. You may even want to record the interview using a tape recorder. Notes or a recording will give you a “record” of your subject’s memories and thoughts.

Create a Timeline

1. Create a timeline for your subject, depicting their life from their birth to present. You may also include major historical events.
2. Create a timeline for your life from when you were born to the present.
3. Compare the two. What do you notice?
4. Imagine the path your life might take as you grow older. Add these “perspective” events to your timeline and try to take it all the way to age 83

