

The Media: Then and Now: Project & Report
(updated 20260127)

Overview

At most points in our lives, we tend to take for granted the world around us. What you and I experience in ordinary life seems generally to be obvious: this or that is what I am supposed to do and these are the ways in which I will carry out the tasks I face. Frequently, the tools and physical materials as well as the methods we use tend to fade into the background. These observations are particularly true for the different kinds of media which are part of our lives. To get sense of where we are today, this project will help you learn about a time when life was at least somewhat different and used forms of media that are no longer part of today's world.

To complete this project, you will interview either in person or via FaceTime (or similar means) an older person to discuss with them how they did things when they were younger, that is, in elementary and high school and/or in college. The person you interview should have completed high school by 1981 and, if they attended college, by 1984. That would mean that the person you interview would be 62 years of age or older. The person can be a parent, a grandparent or other relative, a family friend, a teacher, or anyone else who is willing to be interviewed.

Interview Instructions

At the beginning of the interview, explain to the person you are talking with that you want to ask them questions about how they lived different aspects of their lives back when they were still going to school, particularly in elementary or high school. Tell the person that the interview should take about 15-30 minutes and you will record their answers in some way (e.g., taking notes). After the interview you will summarize what they said and, as part of your class project, you will reflect on how their life and your life may be both different and the same. Also, tell them that you keep their name confidential and refer to them in more general terms.

The three areas for the interview will involve: (1) *schooling and education*, (2) *relationships with family and friends*, and (3) *entertainment, relaxation, and the use of free time*.

Here are questions to ask regarding each of these areas of concern

I. Schooling and Education

- Where did you go to school (elementary, secondary, and college)?
- At the different stages of your education, how did teachers teach and students learn? That is, what were the tools that were used to help students learn?
- If your teachers distributed class notes, what form did they take?
- In high school or college, you probably had to do some sorts of research papers or projects. Describe how you would go about completing a paper or project, that is, how would research the topic and how would you write up your results or otherwise present your conclusions to the instructor?

II. Relationships with Family and Friends

- Did you grow up with your family living nearby or, were there also family members who lived some distance away? How did the members of your family – both living nearby and/or farther away—keep in touch? How did you know about what was going on with the other members of your family?
- If you did have family members living at a distance, how often and in what ways did you get together in person?
- When you think of the people who were your friends in junior and senior high school, how did you maintain your friendship(s)? How did you communicate with friends? If you were in any clubs or other activities, how did you know what you and they had to do or where you'd meet, etc.?

III. Entertainment, Relaxation, and the Use of Free Time

- What were the different things you did for fun or enjoyment as a young person?
- What were the main ways in which you entertained yourself? What were the most important forms of entertainment available to you as an elementary school, a high school, and a college student?
- What did you spend your money on to be entertained?
- Were there any specific kinds of equipment or devices that took up a lot of your free time when you were younger?

Reporting and Reflecting on What You Learned in Your Interview

What do I expect you will do in the report and reflection on The Media Then and Now?

- A summary of the responses of your interviewee to the three general areas of inquiry. Also, tell me something about the person you interviewed, e.g., age, etc. without using their name.
- A comparison of their and your experiences in the three areas above where you note
 - How they and you had/have different experiences or expectations
 - How they and you are similar in your experiences or expectations
- A reflection about anything that surprised you or that you hadn't thought about before or any insights into how your world and their world as younger people might be different.
- These themes should be written up in the form of a typed paper, double-spaced, or at least 5 but no more than 10 pages.
 - Each page should be paginated, that is, have a page number
 - All pages in the paper version should be stapled.
 - A separate copy of the paper in electronic form should be sent to my email address <hevern@lemyne.edu>. DO NOT SIMPLY SEND ME A LINK TO GOOGLE DOCS. You need to download the paper in either pdf, doc, or docx form and attach it to the mail.
- **The deadline for this report and reflection is Friday, February 13.**