

Activity 5, Student Worksheet 3: Interview Question Development

Student Name _____ Date _____

Dr. Barry Lanman of the Martha Ross Center for Oral History at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, has developed the FOUR Cs to guide us through our development of interview questions. An interview with questions in each of these four areas will provide a thorough investigation into a historical figure's past.

Content: subject material questions (who and what)

Chronology: questions relating to the relevant time period (when)

Causation: why did it happen and what happened because of it (how and why)?

Context: from what viewpoint is this event being studied?

The key to a good interview is to get the interviewee talking. Try to avoid simple “yes” and “no” questions by asking open-ended questions that require a more substantial answer. (For example: What did you see, smell, hear, feel when you stepped off the plane in Vietnam?) A question like this will require time to give the veteran a chance to remember and share that memory with you.

1. Discuss possible **Content** questions with your group and write down your group's top five.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. Discuss possible **Chronology** questions and write down your group's top five.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

Doing Oral History with Vietnam War Veterans

3. Discuss possible **Causation** questions and write down your group's top five.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

4. Discuss your **Context** questions and write down your group's top five. Some examples include: When did you serve in Vietnam? Where were you located while there? These questions will give insight into the perspective of your veteran on the war.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.