

ORAL HISTORY ETHICS AND BEST PRACTICES QUIZ

1. What is the primary purpose of obtaining informed consent before starting an oral history interview?
 - A) To legally transfer copyright ownership of the interview to the interviewer.
 - B) To ensure the narrator understands the project's goals, how the interview will be archived, and who will have access to it.
 - C) To protect the interviewer from any future legal action.
 - D) To guarantee that the interview will be published exactly as recorded.
2. According to the OHA guidelines, which of the following best describes the narrator's rights regarding the interview?
 - A) The narrator has no rights to the material once it is recorded.
 - B) The narrator has the right to request anonymity, restrict access to the interview, or edit portions of the transcript.
 - C) The narrator is required to transfer copyright to the interviewer.
 - D) The narrator can only request changes if they are legally represented.
3. If an interviewee becomes defensive or emotional during a sensitive topic, what is the best ethical practice?
 - A) Press the interviewee to answer to ensure historical accuracy.
 - B) Respect the interviewee's well-being and offer to change the subject, take a break, or delete the segment.
 - C) Turn off the recorder but continue questioning them.
 - D) Continue asking about the topic, as it is crucial information.
4. When interviewing marginalized or underrepresented communities, what is a modern best practice regarding interview questions?
 - A) Keep questions a secret to preserve the raw, spontaneous nature of the interview.
 - B) Send questions in advance to give the narrator time to prepare, recall events, and communicate any discomfort.
 - C) Ask leading questions to help the narrator share your specific perspective.
 - D) Focus only on standardized questionnaires to avoid treating narrators differently.
5. What should an oral historian do during the preparation phase of a project?
 - A) Secure an appropriate repository (archive) to safely house and preserve the completed interviews.
 - B) Promise the narrator that the recording will remain private forever.
 - C) Avoid selecting a specific archive until the interviews are finished.
 - D) Assume that all oral history requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) review.

ORAL HISTORY ETHICS AND BEST PRACTICES ANSWER KEY

1. What is the primary purpose of obtaining informed consent before starting an oral history interview?

- **B) To ensure the narrator understands the project's goals, how the interview will be archived, and who will have access to it.**

Explanation: Informed consent is about transparency. It guarantees the narrator knows who is sponsoring the project, where the recording will be preserved, and how it may be used in the future.

2. According to the OHA guidelines, which of the following best describes the narrator's rights regarding the interview?

- **B) The narrator has the right to request anonymity, restrict access to the interview, or edit portions of the transcript.**

Explanation: Respecting the narrator is a core ethical principle. Interviewees always have the right to request restricted access, anonymity, or the redaction of sensitive information.

3. If an interviewee becomes defensive or emotional during a sensitive topic, what is the best ethical practice?

- **B) Respect the interviewee's well-being and offer to change the subject, take a break, or delete the segment.**

Explanation: Protecting the narrator's well-being and reputation is paramount. Aggressively pursuing a sensitive topic when a narrator shows distress causes harm and violates ethical boundaries.

4. When interviewing marginalized or underrepresented communities, what is a modern best practice regarding interview questions?

- **B) Send questions in advance to give the narrator time to prepare, recall events, and communicate any discomfort.**

Explanation: While traditional oral history often avoided sharing questions to maintain spontaneity, best practices now emphasize sending questions in advance. This prioritizes the interviewee's comfort and emotional safety, especially when dealing with trauma.

5. What should an oral historian do during the preparation phase of a project?

- **A) Secure an appropriate repository (archive) to safely house and preserve the completed interviews.**

Explanation: Oral historians must locate a repository/archive that aligns with the project's goals, has the capacity for long-term preservation, and can legally enforce signed agreements.