

From Age to Age



**English
& Media
Centre**

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Foundation

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The Organisations

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Age Exchange
The Beth Johnson Foundation
Anne Turvey, The Institute of Education

Lambeth

London Nautical School
Waterloo Action Centre
Dunraven School
The Woodlawns Centre
Age UK (Lambeth)
Lambeth CLC
The British Film Institute

Essex

The Boswells School
Volunteers from the school governing body and the local community.

From Age to Age

A project which aims to bring young and old together in a spirit of co-operation, communication and creativity.

Running an Intergenerational Speaking and Listening Project

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Introduction

From Age to Age arose from the desire to raise the profile of speaking and listening in the secondary English classroom and from the conviction that opportunities for students to use speaking and listening skills in meaningful, 'real life' situations could be rich, inspiring and transformative.

From Age to Age is an intergenerational speaking and listening project aiming to:

- Give young people a chance to improve their communication skills, in particular giving them opportunities to use these skills in a 'real-life' situation.
- Break down barriers between young and old, creating greater understanding and closer links between school and community.

The project was designed by The English and Media Centre and the pilot phases were funded by The Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Pilot projects took place in London and in Essex and we have learned a lot from these about what works.

This guide offers a toolkit for teachers who are thinking about setting up a *From Age to Age* project in their own school. It includes tips from the pilot projects and a bank of worksheets and resources.

Running the project does require a bit of a leap of faith. You will probably worry that not enough elders will volunteer, or you may be concerned with how your students will handle themselves. However, the experience of the pilot projects is that, if you follow the advice in this guide, your leap of faith will be rewarded. You will see students rise to the occasion, speaking and listening at a level that may surprise you. You will be heartened by the generosity of those elders who give up their time to be involved and, at it's best, strengthen the bonds between your school and the local community. You may even learn something new yourself. We certainly did!

Should you decide to run a *From Age to Age* project, we wish you all the very best,



Anna Sarchet



Kate Oliver

1. The Shape of the Project

The essential shape of the project is quite simple:

- Stage 1: Workshops to prepare the groups of younger and older people, held separately.
- Stage 2: Three to five interview sessions, interspersed with students doing follow up work in class towards the required outcomes.
- Stage 3: A celebration event.



Within this basic structure the project will be shaped by factors at school level, in particular by the outcomes the teacher wants for their students. These outcomes could be purely around speaking and listening, or could include reading and writing, or could be focussed on outcomes related to PSHE, enrichment, or community participation.

For a more detailed breakdown of how the project works and lesson ideas, see 'The Project in Stages' on page 11.

Tips from the pilot projects: examples of student outcomes

Year 7 produced 'Memory books' on a topic that interested participants. These took the form of scrapbooks with short pieces of writing, illustrations and photographs.

Year 8 produced biographical and autobiographical writing. Students did work on anecdotes using the 18-page unit from The English and Media Centre publication *Language Works: Unit 2 'Telling a Story – from Talk to Text'* (<http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/index.html>). The older and younger people then told each other anecdotes. Students chose which one to write up.

Year 9 wrote persuasive letters to David Cameron about cuts to care for older people and made short documentaries based on the interviews.

Year 10 (English) did a language study on idiolect.

Media and Diploma students produced short documentaries about an aspect of life 'then' and 'now', such as fashion or music.

Some examples of student work can be found on the website ('Student work': <http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/age2toage/student.html>).

2. Which Students Would Benefit?

Years 7, 8 and 9

Students of any age, from Year 7 up, would benefit from the project.

You could run the project with a whole class, or with a small group as an extra-curricular project, or as an extension activity for gifted and talented students.

GCSE

The project can provide interesting material for GCSE Language Study, but working within the constraints of an exam specification and a GCSE timescale is very challenging when working with volunteers. If this is your preferred outcome, it might be better to do the project in the summer term with a Year 9 class and have them come back to their data in the autumn term of Year 10 to write up the study.

Post-16

The pilot project did not involve KS5, but this would make a valuable enrichment activity.

Tips from the pilot projects: which students would benefit?

In a few cases there were concerns about whether students' behaviour would be appropriate and in one of these cases the student did not take part directly in any interviews. Especially if you are working in a residential home or day centre, you do need to bear in mind that your students may be working with vulnerable people. The idea is to break down barriers and stereotypical assumptions, not reinforce them! However, in the experience of the pilot projects, students generally rose to the occasion when they had been well prepared in advance, and the elders they worked with were impressed with the way they conducted themselves.



3. Working with Volunteers

With a class of 25-30, you would hope to have around 6 volunteers for each session. For this kind of project over 55 years of age is usually considered to be 'the older generation'. You could work with a day centre or residential home, or you could set up a group of volunteers at your school.

Working with a day centre or residential home

In residential homes and day centres, the people you will come into contact with will probably be older than those who are likely to respond to a call for volunteers to come to the school. The advantage of this is that the world of childhood that they recall may be starkly different to that of your students and therefore of particular interest. Also, the people you are working with may particularly welcome the stimulation and contact with young people and have time to spare.

Things you will need to take into account:

- In the pilot projects we were lucky enough to find day centres in walking distance of two of the schools. However, if more travel is involved you may find this option would work best with a small group of students, for example as a gifted and talented, extra-curricular project, or enrichment day activity.
- The fact that you may well be working with people who are frail and possibly vulnerable – make sure that you are well briefed by staff at the home or day centre.
- Students will almost certainly have to travel to the older people.
- The need for young people to be very well prepared in advance, particularly if you are working with a residential home. For example, both you and your students need to be aware that people may be, or become, ill during the project and may have good days and bad days.

Tips from the pilot projects: working with a day centre/residential home

When working with day centres/residential homes, ensure you have a clear idea of the scope of the project (possible dates, times, the kind of activity you want to do) before you approach the centre.

Remember to factor in travel time to and from the centre/home when planning each session.

If recording/filming your work with the centre, ensure there is sufficient quiet space for recording to take place. Whilst using film/audio creates a wonderful record of the work, it can also become a barrier between the interviewer and interviewee, especially if students are inexperienced with media equipment. Consider carefully what you want your students to get out of the experience.

Though working at day centres/residential homes can make the project more complex and the logistics more challenging, it also brings rewards and opportunities for those involved:

'Leaving the school site and talking to 'real' people in 'real' contexts allows the students to 'perform' in a way they may not always do in the classroom.' Morlette Lindsay, London Nautical School

Setting up a group of volunteers at your school

In the pilot phases we found this to be a very successful way to work. It meant that the volunteers already had some investment in the school and, as they came to the school, the teachers did not have to consider the logistics of taking students out. Many of the volunteers said they would be prepared to be involved again. Some school governors got involved and they particularly enjoyed the project and felt that it informed their role.

Here are some ways to find elders to work with:

- Advertise in the school newsletter (example on page 22).
- Send letters home with the students who will be involved.
- Talk to your school governors (some of whom may themselves be older and interested in having more contact with students).
- Ask colleagues about family, friends or neighbours who might be willing to be involved.
- Look on the website for Age UK in your local area, or local authority websites to find groups that meet locally. Some local authorities have programmes for older people that run throughout the authority. Often they are targeted at over 55s but in practice the participants tend to be older.
- Approach organisations likely to have active older members such as local drama, music and history societies, charities, churches, residents' associations and organisations such as the Lions Club, or the Women's Institute.
- Ask whether your local theatre, library or museum does outreach work with older people and has a group that would be interested in working with young people.
- Talk to the person with responsibility for community cohesion in your school to find out whether there are already links with older people in the area.
- Make contact with any suitable community groups that may use the school in the evenings or at weekends.

What are the benefits for volunteers?

Make sure you have thought about both sides of the project. Older people are not simply a resource to make use of. What will they gain from your project? How might the way you are thinking of working look from their point of view?

Schools often have contact in some way with a residential home or day centre, especially around Christmas. However, this may be through one-off activities such as a visit from the school choir to sing carols at Christmas. For residents, or regulars at a day centre, these visits are not always as welcome as you might expect. Imagine a group of children suddenly appearing in your living room uninvited by you, singing some carols and then disappearing! You will probably find that the idea of working in a more sustained way, as a two-way process, with a chance to get to know each other and have a proper conversation, is well received.

Tips from the pilot projects: the benefits for volunteers

In our pilot projects many of the participants both young and old said they would like to have spent more time with each other. You might want to use the films on the *From Age to Age* website ('From Age to Age in Essex': <http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/agetoage/index.html> and 'Celebration Event at the BFI': <http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/agetoage/lambeth.html>) to show what some of the volunteers in the pilot project said they got from the work.

Timings

Allow for a fairly relaxed timescale. Allow plenty of lead-in time but don't expect to be able to pin people down too far in advance.

It sounds obvious, but don't expect people to think in terms and school years!

If you are working with a day centre or community group, remember that your liaison person will probably work part-time and may not be paid, so allow some extra time for communication and building relationships.

Your project is a small part of your volunteers' week. Don't expect your project to take priority over fixed points in the life of a day centre or residential home and be aware of what activities you might be competing with. The kind of older person who volunteers to come into school may still be working and/or very active and busy.



Tips from the pilot projects: timings

Start making contact with potential volunteers at least 5-6 weeks before you want the project to begin.

The project itself fits well into half a term.

The number of volunteers will be affected by weather – we discovered that summer was a much better time than winter to be organising a project.

Suggest that people may want to come only once, or may want to come for the whole project. The more flexible you are about the commitment you are asking for, the more likely you are to get enough volunteers.

Health and safety

If you are working with a day centre or residential home, remember that you may be dealing with physically frail people: get advice from staff about health and safety issues and be aware that you will probably need to travel to them, rather than expecting them to be able to come to the school.

If volunteers are coming to you, they are likely to be more physically robust but you will still need to consider whether the interview setting is easily accessible and appropriate.

Tips from the pilot projects: health and safety

The school-based group of volunteers in our pilot project enjoyed the sessions based in the carpeted library, but went away with a headache after a session in a noisy classroom! Some said they would have dropped out if all the sessions were in a classroom. A quieter space, such as the library, is an ideal setting. Running your project after study leave has started may mean you can find a spare classroom.

Retaining your volunteers

You will probably end up with a small core of people you come to rely on with others coming and going. The more valued you and your students make them feel, the more likely they are to keep coming.

Make sure your communication is clear: give everyone a list of dates and times of all the interview sessions at the start and re-iterate this each session. Give everyone a card with your name, the dates, and how to get in touch. At a day centre or residential home, ask if you can leave a poster or cards.

Tips from the pilot projects: making your volunteers feel valued

Have someone meet the volunteers at reception.

Train your young people to welcome their visitor, find out their name and make sure they have a seat. Students should introduce themselves and, at the end of the interview, thank the volunteer. (As you can tell your students, these 'real world' skills are an important part of what they are learning from the project.)

Make the interviewing a two way process – communicate to everyone that the questions should go both ways.

Provide tea, coffee and biscuits at the end of the session. Your volunteers will appreciate this after a long session of talking and it will also help them to gel as a group. We found that the informal chat over tea often sparked more memories, which could then be fed into the next interview session. If you are recording, you could keep recording in these informal sessions.

Have a celebration evening (see 'The Project in Stages' page 17).



4. The Project in Stages

1. Preparing the groups to meet: older people's reminiscence workshop.

A reminiscence workshop prepares the older people for the first meeting, stimulating memories and allowing them to get to know each other. You will need a comfortable room and plenty of tea and coffee. Have a memory box of items, tailored to the ages of participants to prompt discussion. If you can't source historical items (try asking members of staff), modern items related to childhood will still spark memories. Ideas from Age Exchange include a teddy bear or rag doll, a skipping rope or marbles, board games, football programmes, music album covers or film posters. Resource books are suggested at the end of this section on page 12.



Ideas for facilitating discussion

- Have a free-ranging discussion. Let people go off at tangents and give plenty of space for them to talk.
- A good question to start the discussion can be to ask how people came to have the name they do, as well as how long they've lived in the local area, and so on. You can then pull out items from the memory box and ask open, general questions such as 'Did anyone have one of these?' If the answer is no, ask 'What did you have?'
- You could ask people to bring in a photo of themselves as a child and any memorabilia or objects they have from the past.
- On the website you will find film of Age Exchange running a workshop with students and this will give ideas for helpful (and unhelpful) questions to prompt discussion. ('Age Exchange Workshop': <http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/age-to-age/teacher.html>)

Towards the end of the session:

- Ask what the volunteers hope to get from the project and what they hope the young people will get from the project. You can use the film on the website to show what previous participants had to say. ('From Age to Age in Essex': <http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/agetoage/index.html> and 'Vox Pops' <http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/agetoage/lambeth.html>)
- Ask for any questions they may have. Be prepared to answer questions about student behaviour as well as logistics.

You could use a more formal questionnaire if you want to see how things change over the course of the project and/or do an evaluation. (See examples in the Resources section on page 25.)

These books may be useful for prompting reminiscences in your older volunteers, or for helping your students to visualize the era being described.

<p>The Wartime Scrapbook: On the Home front 1939 to 1945 The 1950s Scrapbook Compiled by Robert Opie</p>	<p>These scrapbooks illustrate each era with an eclectic collection of images: products, posters, song sheets and so on.</p>
<p>World War II (I can remember) 1950s (I can remember) Publisher: Franklin Watts</p>	<p>Recent history brought to life through six real people's experiences and memories. A wealth of memorabilia, ephemera and archive photography. Each book is broken up into thematic spreads: school, at home, work, entertainment etc and different voices recall their experiences relating to them.</p>
<p>The 50s & 60s. The Best of Times: Growing Up and Being Young in Britain By Alison Pressley</p>	<p>Alison Pressley has collected personal reminiscences from all over the country and from widely different backgrounds. From 1950s childhood innocence to the swinging sixties.</p>

Tips from the pilot projects

Age Exchange, who are expert at this kind of thing, ran our reminiscence workshops. They also run occasional training courses for people interested in intergenerational work. If you don't want to run the workshop yourself you could contact them:

The Reminiscence Centre
 11 Blackheath Village
 London SE3 9LA
 Telephone: 020 8318 9105
 Email: administrator@age-exchange.org.uk
<http://www.age-exchange.org.uk/>

2. Preparing the groups to meet: the first few lessons with students

We started the session with the students by asking them to fill in a questionnaire asking about their attitudes to older people, what they thought older people would say about them, and their opinions about the speaking and listening work they did in English.

This led to a discussion about their contact with older people, and, apart from direct contact, what influences their views of older people. We also discussed what they thought older people might think about young people and what might inform their ideas and opinions.

The students then took part in a role-play, taking it in turns to be the interviewer, an older interviewee and an observer. The observers fed back any helpful interview behaviour they noticed and anything that could be improved. A note was also made of any particularly fruitful questions. The 'Interview Role Play' worksheets for this lesson can be found in the Resources section on pages 24 and 25.

After the role-play, students drew up a list of 'Golden Rules' for a successful interview. We shared these as a class. The teacher collated the class rules into the 5-6 key points and typed these up as a reminder for the following lesson. An example from a Year 8 class can be found in the Resources section on page 26.

For homework, students could be asked to interview an older person: relative, friend, neighbour, or even teacher. They can present the interview to the class and reflect on their developing interview skills. (An example task can be found in the Resources section on page 29.)

3. The first meeting

Students were reminded of the 'Golden Rules' they had formulated in the previous session and of some of the interview topics they had discussed.

An older volunteer joined each group of 4-5 students. In one pilot project, groups were given the icebreaker question: what would you save if your house were burning down? (The fire brigade will save people or pets. Things like televisions and games consoles are covered on insurance so they can leave these to burn!) In another pilot project we used a 'People Search' as an icebreaker – see page 23 for an example.

After about 20 minutes of discussion, the teacher gave each group some suggested questions and the students took it in turns to ask the elder a question and follow-up question. They also rotated the job of note-taker so that there was a record of the interview. With permission from the volunteers, the interviews could be recorded or filmed.

Tips from the pilot projects: the first meeting

Teachers tend to like things tightly structured, as they know this often gets the best out of students and keeps them on task. However, in this project it is important to keep things a little looser and allow things to emerge as you go. You can't predict what people will remember, or what students will find interesting. For example, one group were fascinated by a man's story of being present for the opening of the M1, an anecdote that might not have seemed very promising in the abstract.

4. Follow-up work with students

Between each interview session, students did follow up work relevant to the outcomes and planned for the next interview session.



Tips from the pilot projects: follow-up work

Examples of follow-up work include:

- Researching the period of history in which the older people grew up
- Narrowing the focus to a particular topic or aspect they wanted to investigate further
- Students working on memory books looked at examples of memory book pages, planned the content and layout of their own pages and then created the content (see examples on pages 34-37)
- Students working on biography and autobiography completed the unit on anecdotes from *Language Works*, published by The English and Media Centre (<http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/index.html>)
- Reading articles in the media about older people and doing work on stereotyping
- Writing to David Cameron about cuts to care for the elderly
- Work on idiolect from *Investigating Spoken Language* published by the English and Media Centre <http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/index.html>
- Storyboarding and planning the filming of a short documentary.

5. Subsequent interview sessions

The first session can be very open to give everyone a sense of the topics that are most fruitful, with subsequent sessions gradually tailored more closely to the outcomes. It is a good idea to give different prompts in different sessions to keep discussions fresh. Examples of these can be found in the resources section on page 32.

If you have one elder to a group of 4-5 students, it's helpful to rotate the volunteers after 20-25 minutes to refresh the discussions and allow students to ask the same question of several people. The older volunteers often find this rather quick and would like more time with each group, but the students' concentration spans will not always cope with longer sessions of listening.

Your volunteers will have useful suggestions so remember to consult them and get feedback about how the sessions are organised.

Explicitly ask your volunteers to talk to students about why it's important to have good speaking and listening skills – encourage them to use personal experience and anecdotes from their personal and working lives rather than telling them teacher-style. You can also explicitly ask them to feed back to students about how well they are doing but you will need to do a little bit of training on this.



6. Possible outcomes

Tips from the pilot projects: outcomes from pilot projects

- Examples of student work can be found on the website (<http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/agetoage/student.html>).
- Memory books: scrapbooks containing pairs of pages for ‘then’ and ‘now’. Groups can work on a particular topic of interest and may find that particular volunteers share that interest. Fruitful topics in the pilot projects included: music; dancing; fashion; food; Saturday night; games, hobbies and pastimes; school; travel. The idea is to find topics where there can be two-way communication, rather than something like ‘World War Two’ where the information is only going one way.
- Biography and autobiography. Young and old tell each other anecdotes. Useful prompts include ‘a big surprise’; ‘the day I grew up’; ‘a day to remember’; ‘my family tradition’; ‘the accident’; ‘my best birthday’; ‘a day that changed me’; ‘my first memory’; ‘starting school’; ‘my best friend and me’. Students do follow up work on the difference between spoken and written stories. They then choose the most interesting story they have told and the most interesting one they have heard to write up. For more ideas, see *Language Works*, published by the English and Media Centre (<http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/index.html>)
- Non-fiction work on a campaign around an issue relating to older people.
- Short documentaries about an aspect of life ‘then’ and ‘now’, such as fashion or music.
- GCSE English Language: Spoken Language Study. Students write about their idiolect. Their language studies can be enriched by a sense of how the language of teenagers changes very quickly, but also how it tends to revolve around similar topics (music, dancing, who you fancy, and so on). They were also able to ask elders about their attitudes to the ways teenagers speak these days, as well as their own parents’ attitudes to the language they used when they were young.

Other possible outcomes:

- Creative writing, fictionalising one of the stories they have heard and developing it with material of their own.
- Work around a text. See suggestions in the Resources section on page 20.
- Non-fiction or media work around the representation of older people. For example: how are older people represented in soaps? In the news?

7. Celebration event

Having a celebration at the end of the project may seem like an optional extra. In fact it is an integral part of the project for all those involved. A celebration event:

- Gives your students a chance to develop their ‘real world’ speaking and listening skills, for example to practise the art of ‘mingling’ and chatting in an unstructured, informal way with people they don’t know very well. Many of your students will have very little opportunity to learn and practice this skill, and yet it is so useful in life
- Provides a real audience for students’ presentations
- Gives the older volunteers a chance to see and hear the work students have produced
- Allows you to offer a public thank you to your volunteers
- Showcases the project for others.

Tips from the pilot projects: a celebration event

- An example of a programme of a celebration event in a pilot project is on the website, along with achievement certificates for the students who took part (<http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/agetoage/teacher.html>)
- The parents of the students we worked with were very positive about their children being involved – remember to invite them.
- Why not ask the headteacher to speak, or to present certificates?
- We invited the local press and found that they were keen to cover the story: it makes for an uplifting local story and the celebration event provides a photo opportunity.
- Make sure all the volunteers are represented in some way or other, or you risk upsetting or offending those who generously gave their time.



5. Project Checklist

✓	Action
	Plan when you want to do the project and how long it will take.
	Plan the student outcomes.
	Plan how you will make a record of the project: photographs, audio recordings, film.
	Decide how to find volunteers and start to communicate with potential participants.
	Find dates and a venue for the reminiscence session, interview sessions and end of project celebration. Do a health and safety check.
	Let volunteers know when and where the reminiscence session, interview sessions and end of project celebration will take place. Give them a contact card so that they know how to get in touch with you.
	Let parents know that their child is involved in the project, get permission for them to go out of school if necessary and let them know when the celebration event will be.
	Organise refreshments for the end of each interview session.
	Plan and deliver a reminiscence session for volunteers.
	Plan and deliver an interview preparation workshop for pupils.
	Set up further interview sessions and plan follow up work for the time between. Think about how to give a fresh twist to each interview session.
	Plan the celebration event: venue; invitations; refreshments; order of events; programme for the event; organise a display, for example photos from the project or a selection of students' work.

6. Resource Bank

1. Fiction Texts
2. Article in school newsletter
3. Worksheets:
 1. Interview Role Play
 2. Interviews: Peer Observation
 3. Interview Techniques – Year 8's Golden Rules
 4. Interview Technique: How well did you do?
 5. Age to Age Project Homework Task
 6. First Interview
 7. Further Interview Topics
 8. Creating a Memory Book

Fiction texts: intergenerational relationships

***The Memory Cage* by Ruth Eastman**

Alex's (adoptive) grandad keeps forgetting things. Desperate to help him remember, Alex starts collecting old photographs. But as he digs into the past he has no idea of the shocking secrets he will uncover.

***Breaking the Rules* by Sandra Glover**

Suzy is rude and disruptive, so her teacher is horrified to learn that she is about to spend some time at a home for the elderly to do work experience, but Suzy proves to be a breath of fresh air for the residents, who are encouraged to challenge some of the home's petty rules and regulations.

***Feather Boy* by Nicky Singer**

The story of what happens when Robert meets aloof and mysterious Mrs Sorrel, as part of his class's community elders project at a local rest home.

***Farm Boy* by Michael Morpurgo (author) and Michael Foreman (illustrator)**

Sequel to *War Horse*. A grandson helps his grandfather to read and write and in return the old man retells stories of his youth on a rural Devon farm between the wars. Beautiful illustrations. Morpurgo also wrote *Friend or Foe* about evacuees David and Tucky.

***Ruby Holler* by Sharon Creech**

Older couple Tiller and Sairy live a quiet life in Ruby Holler, USA. However, when they each decide to undertake a big adventure, they also decide to adopt two children from the local orphanage to accompany them. This decision proves to be life changing for all members of the unlikely foursome.

***The House with a Clock in Its Walls* and *The Figure in the Shadows* by John Bellairs**

Set in America in the late 1940s and 50s and first published in the 1970s, these gothic mysteries feature a friendship between the children, who are the main protagonists, and elderly witch, Mrs Zimmerman. These are the first two of a series. *The House with a Clock in Its Walls* introduces the young hero, Lewis Barnavelt. *The Figure in the Shadows* gives more limelight to Rosa Rita, the tomboy heroine and she and Mrs Zimmerman get their own book, later in the series, *The Letter, the Witch and the Ring*.

***Now* by Maurice Gleitzman**

In this sequel to *Once & Then* (see page 21), the elderly Felix is helped by granddaughter, Zelda, to confront the demons of his past (as a Jewish child escaping the Nazis in wartime Poland).

***Granny Was a Buffer Girl* by Berlie Doherty**

Jess is 18 and about to leave for a year's adventure in France. She has a secret she desperately wants to share before she goes. In building up courage to share her own secret she listens to the stories relatives from different generations tell her and starts to see her own story as woven into the fabric of the whole family. Won the Carnegie medal in 1986.

Fiction texts: historical context

WW2

***Blitzed* by Robert Swindells**

George is fascinated by World War Two: bombers, Nazis, doodlebugs. But he discovers the reality is very different from how he had imagined it when a school trip to a World War Two museum leads to a time slip – and George is transported to London at the time of the Blitz!

***Once & Then* by Maurice Gleitzman**

Brings together Gleitzman's two moving Holocaust novels about Felix, a Jewish child escaping the Nazis in wartime Poland. The story of protagonist Felix is brought up to the present day in the sequel *Now* (see *Intergenerational Relationships*, above.)

***Blitzcat* by Robert Westall**

The Blitz seen through episodes in the journey of a cat searching for her owner. The journey takes her through wartime Britain, to the hell of bombed Coventry and even to Germany and Portugal. Westall is also the author of children's classic *The Machine Gunners*, also set in World War Two.

***One Small Suitcase* (The true story of how 10,000 children escaped the Nazi Holocaust) by Barry Turner**

Moving stories of the Kindertransport, based on interviews with people involved with all aspects – the organizers, foster families and the children.

Fiction texts: post-war Britain

***A Spoonful of Jam* by Michelle Magorian**

Elsie's family is adjusting to family life after the war. Meanwhile, she also has to deal with a vicious bully and cope with being a scholarship girl at the local grammar school. Through her involvement with the local repertory theatre, she slowly gains the confidence to confront her demons.

***Just Henry* by Michelle Magorian**

A gripping mystery-thriller and an interesting snapshot of a particular time, set in post-war Britain.

***The Silver Sword* by Ian Serraillier**

This children's classic was first published in 1956. It tells the story of four Polish children, three from one family, who are searching for their parents in the chaos of post-war Europe.

Article in the school newsletter

From Age to Age: Bridging the Generation Gap

Are you just who we need in the English Department's new initiative to 'bridge the generation gap'? Do you have childhood memories to share? What games did you like to play? What food did you like to eat? How much pocket money did you get, and what did you spend it on? What did you get up to on a Saturday night? What were the fashions you wore? Our year 7 and 8 (11-13 year old) students would like to know!

The English Department is looking for volunteers to participate in a successful, new initiative 'From Age to Age' pioneered by the English and Media Centre. We need people aged 50+, so if this isn't you but you know someone who might be interested, please pass on this information to them.

We aim to break down barriers between the generations, including some of the stereotypes younger people may have of older people. We hope that the project will develop and refine the speaking and listening skills of the students involved, skills which are so important for success in life.

Your role would be, quite simply, to take a trip down memory lane, sharing your experiences of life when you were a child with the students. This would take place in a relaxed atmosphere with the students taking the lead as interviewers and with teachers to supervise them.

The sessions will take place during the school day and will last about an hour. The project will take place over two separate three week blocks. We'd love it if you would be involved for all six weeks, but you could also volunteer for just a session or two. Exact dates have yet to be decided but the project will run during June and July.

We are planning to have a celebration evening at the end of the initiative.

Anyone who is interested or would like more information please contact XX, in the English Department.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Icebreaker: Find Someone Who ...

- Give students and elders a copy each of the grid below (you will need to fill in the square that says ...was born in... with an appropriate place).
- Elders remain seated and young people move around the room. The goal is to 'Find somebody who...' and fill your grid with names. You might want to give participants an example of the conversation they might have as follows:

Hello, my name's Anna and I'm looking for somebody who watches Eastenders.

Hello. I'm Joyce and I don't watch Eastenders but I do like dancing.

- You could offer a small prize to everyone who completes their grid.
- The activity encourages everybody to introduce themselves and share some personal information in an informal way.

<p>Find someone who... was in the military</p>	<p>Find someone who... was born in ...</p>	<p>Find someone who... has always lived in the same house</p>	<p>Find someone who... plays a musical instrument or has sung in a choir</p>
<p>Find someone who... remembers the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II</p>	<p>Find someone who... watches <i>EastEnders</i></p>	<p>Find someone who... whose favourite colour is blue</p>	<p>Find someone who... can recite a piece of poetry by heart</p>
<p>Find someone who... likes dancing</p>	<p>Find someone who... was born outside of the UK</p>	<p>Find someone who... can bake a cake</p>	<p>Find someone who... has played in a school sports' team</p>
<p>Find someone who... speaks more than one language</p>	<p>Find someone who... supports a football team</p>	<p>Find someone who... owns a mobile phone</p>	<p>Find someone who... can tell you the reason they were given their name</p>

Interview Role Play

The task

- You are going to role play an interview between a pupil and an older person about their childhood.

There are three roles to take:

- The interviewer
 - The interviewee
 - The observer
- Do three interviews so that each person has a turn in each role. The observer will focus on different interview skills each time.

Before you start:

The interviewer:

- Think about some good questions to ask about this person's childhood. Some ideas:
 - Childhood games
 - Favourite foods
 - Music, dancing, entertainment
 - Pocket money
 - How long have you lived in the area and how has it changed
 - How have young people changed since you were young yourself?

The interviewee:

- Think about the person you are going to be: happy to be interviewed, or a bit shy, for example?

The observer

- Look at the prompts on the card you have been given. Use these to make notes as you watch the interviewer.

After each interview:

- The observer should feed back to the interviewer.

How to feedback:

- mention 3 things you think the person did well.
- suggest one improvement – the one you think would make the most difference.

Interviews: Peer Observation

- Take it in turns to observe and feedback, using the prompts below. Remember to be positive and constructive – say what you thought was good.

1st observer

1. How does the interviewer make the person feel comfortable?
2. Does the interviewer mostly use words and phrases that an older person would understand?
3. How does the interviewer show they are really listening?

2nd observer

1. How clear are the questions?
2. Are the questions mainly open (allowing for long, detailed answers), or closed (suggesting a 'yes', 'no' or short answer)?
3. How does the interviewer show they are really listening?

3rd observer

1. Does the interviewer use follow-up questions? In other words did they follow up what the person said by asking for more details?
2. How does the interviewer show they are really listening?

Interview Technique

Year 8's Golden Rules

1. Make your visitor feel welcome

Some ways to do this:

- make sure your visitor has a seat and some space
- introduce yourself
- find out your visitor's name (and remember it)
- shake hands
- ask 'how are you?', or 'how has your day been so far?'.

2. Show you are really listening

Some ways to do this:

- comment on the answer you get
- share your own experience on the same theme (although don't go on about yourself and forget to interview your visitor)
- make and keep eye contact while the other person is talking.

3. Respond appropriately when your visitor is talking

Some ways to do this:

- use your facial expression or body language such as nodding, smiling or laughing. Give feedback which shows you are listening while they are talking, such as saying 'mmm' 'yes' or 'I see'
- make a relevant comment such as 'that's interesting', 'that must have been difficult' or 'wow!'.

4. Speak formally

Some ways to do this:

- be polite, such as saying 'would you mind if I asked?'
- avoid using teenage slang.

5. Help your interviewee to give interesting answers

Some ways to do this:

- ask open questions
- ask for more details, for example by asking a follow up questions such as 'how..?', 'why..?', 'when..?'
- ask a follow up question to find out more about an aspect of the answer that interested you
- avoid closed questions, which require a short 'yes' or 'no' type of answer.

Interview Technique: How well did you do?

- Tick the things you remembered to do.
- Give yourself a number for each golden rule. 1=poor, 5=excellent.

1. Make your visitor feel welcome	✓ I remembered to do this
• Make sure your visitor has a seat and some space	
• Introduce yourself	
• Find out your visitor's name (and remember it)	
• Shake hands	
• Ask 'how are you?' or 'how was your day so far?'	
• Anything else you did to make your visitor feel welcome?	
My self-assessment rating	1=poor, 5=excellent
	1 2 3 4 5

2. Show you are really listening	✓ I remembered to do this
• Comment on the answer you get	
• Share your own experience on the same theme	
• Don't go on about yourself and forget to interview your visitor	
• Make and keep eye contact while the other person is talking	
• Anything else you did to show you were listening?	
My self-assessment rating	1=poor, 5=excellent
	1 2 3 4 5

3. Respond appropriately when your visitor is talking	✓ I remembered to do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your facial expression or body language such as nodding, smiling or laughing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give feedback which shows you are listening while they are talking, such as saying 'mmm' 'yes' or 'I see' 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a relevant comment such as 'that's interesting', 'that must have been difficult' or 'wow!'. 	
My self-assessment rating	1=poor, 5=excellent
	1 2 3 4 5

4. Speak formally	✓ I remembered to do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be polite 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid using teenage slang 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other ways in which you spoke formally? 	
My self-assessment rating	1=poor, 5=excellent
	1 2 3 4 5

5. Help your interviewee to give interesting answers	✓ I remembered to do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask open questions 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for more details, for example by asking a follow up question such as 'how..?', 'why..?', 'when..?' 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid closed questions, which require a short 'yes' or 'no' type of answer. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask a follow up question to find out more about an aspect of the answer that interested you 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other ways in which you helped your interviewee to give interesting answers? 	
My self-assessment rating	1=poor, 5=excellent
	1 2 3 4 5

Age to Age Project Homework Task

Due date:

You have now built up a range of interviewing skills. You need to choose somebody of a different generation to you (for example, a grandparent, parent, uncle or aunt, an elderly neighbour, a friend of your parents) and ask if you can interview them. Make it clear to them that it is for a school project and that you will record the interview in some way and share it with members of your class and teachers. You must have their permission – any researcher or media person who interviews anybody has to be clear what it will be used for.

You need to prepare questions for the interview – it is best perhaps to choose topics that we have touched on in the workshops and in class. You may want to ask the person which topics they feel comfortable talking about. The topics we have looked at are: childhood games; what leisure activities or entertainment they enjoyed or when they were young; what sport they were interested in; hobbies; holidays and day trips; where they lived and how things have changed where they live.

We would like you to record the interview in some way that is easy for you to manage. This could be video, audio, or written notes. You can be as creative and inventive as you want; use what is accessible to you, whether a camera or a phone.

Bring your interview to class in a format you can show and share with the others, for example on a CD or a memory stick. You are the experts at how you to use technology – come and show off! If you do not have access to recording equipment a PowerPoint presentation or just a written document of the interview would be fine.

You will be assessed on:

- The questions you choose to ask.
- How well you managed to ask follow up questions depending on what the interviewee said.
- Your representation of the conversation or discussion with the person you interviewed.
- Your presentation to the class – how you make eye contact with us, what you say to introduce your work, how you respond to questions we ask you at the end.
- How responsive and respectful you are to the person you interviewed.
- Your attitude and effort in doing this task.
- Any comments you make at the end of the presentation about what else you feel you have learnt about interviewing people.

First Interview

Here are some topics to get the conversation going. Different groups have different topics so that you can get several elders' opinions and stories on the same topic area and so that the volunteers don't have the same conversation with every group. Remember to share your own opinions and stories on these topics.

Interview Group 1

Some possible topics:

- How long have you lived in the area and how has it changed? What was different about houses, streets and neighbours?
- Childhood games
- Favourite toys or a special childhood possession?
- What is your earliest memory?

Interview Group 2

Some possible topics:

- Music, dancing, entertainment
- Television – did your family always have one? What did you watch? What was children's TV like?
- Technology – how have things changed? Did you always have a phone? Do you remember when you first used a computer?

Interview Group 3

Some possible topics:

- Holidays, travel and days out – where did you go? What did you do? Did you always have a car? How did you get around?
- What were family celebrations like when you were a child, for example birthdays and Christmas
- Any family traditions?
- Tell us about a place that was special to you when you were a child?

Interview Group 4

Some possible topics:

- Favourite foods or meals when you were young?
- Did you help to cook, shop or do chores for your parents?
- Did you go out to eat much, or have take-aways as a child? Were there a lot of foreign foods available then?
- Favourite books or magazines when you were a child?

Interview Group 5

Some possible topics:

- Pocket money – did you get any? If so how much and what did you spend it on?
- Fashion – what was ‘cool’, what were the trends? Did it matter much whether you were cool, or in with certain groups?
- Are shops the same, or different now?
- Independence – how old were you when you were allowed out on your own, or walked to school on your own? What time did you have to get back home after you’d been out?
- Did you have a job? What did you do?

Interview Group 6

Some possible topics:

- Transport – how have things changed?
- Childhood hobbies or sport – did you play or follow a particular sport or team? Do you still? Did you have any hobbies or belong to any clubs?
- School – favourite subjects or teachers? Was school the same or different?
- Tell us about a person that was special to you when you were a child.

Further interview topics

- What were your favourite books as a child?
- Hobbies and interests
- Festivals: what did you celebrate, and how?
- Where you lived – what was different about houses, streets and neighbours, then and now?
- Speaking and listening: how and when in your life experience has it been important to be able to speak and listen well?
- A special place when you were a child
- A special childhood possession
- A favourite game
- Who was your best friend?
- Brothers and sisters, or other relatives
- When were you happiest?
- What did you worry about when you were my age?
- What is your earliest memory?
- Which phrase sums you up better: 'live for now', or 'everything in moderation'? Have you always been like that?
- What pets have you had in your life?
- What was your favourite place to visit as a child?
- What was your favorite meal as a child? Do you still like it now?
- Did you have a nickname as a child?
- As a child what did you do on a rainy day? On a sunny day?
- What would you most like to change in your past?
- What is the best present anyone's ever given you?
- What is the best piece of advice you've been given?
- What was your first job? What was it like?

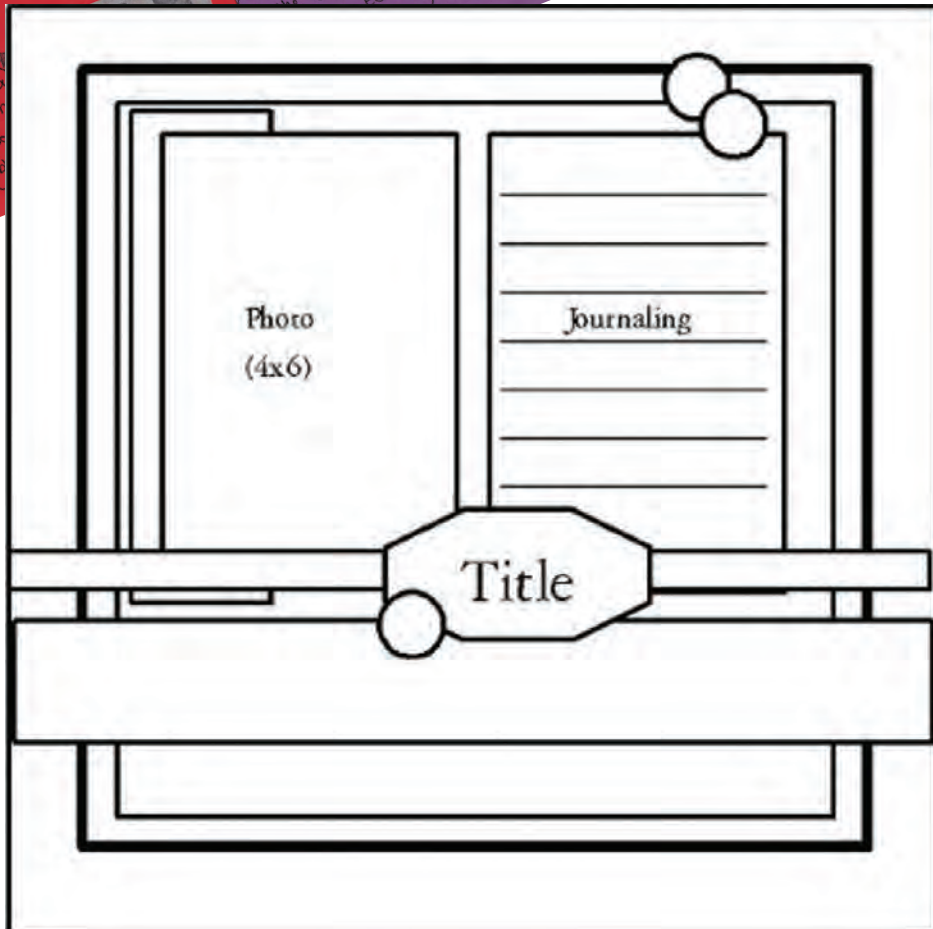
Creating a Memory Book

Ingredients for each memory book page:

- Photographs or pictures, memorabilia (such as tickets or programmes for an event).
 - Ask permission for anything you want to use. Take a photocopy to avoid damaging an original.
 - If you don't have anything visual, how about looking on the internet for an image to go with your topic? Use Google images to find something of the right date.
- 'Journalling'
 - Some writing, telling a little story or giving information on the topic.
- Captions or headlines
 - These explain pictures or introduce the topic.
- You could make your 'book' on PowerPoint, or as an actual book. You could use patterned papers and other decoration to make your page look attractive. Find ideas and patterned papers to download for free at:
 - www.printableheaven.com - click on 'free downloads' on the left hand menu
 - www.thekhans.me.uk/origami/paper.php
 - www.activityvillage.co.uk/scrapbook%20paper.htm
 - <http://freedigitalscrapbooking.com>

Some possible layouts for your page

Have a look at the example pages on pages 34-36 to give you some ideas.





<p>TITLE</p> <p>Journaling journaling journaling journaling journaling journaling</p>	<p>4x6" Photo</p>
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<p>Photo</p>	<p>Photo</p>	<p>Photo</p>
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