

WHAT TO ASK A VETERAN

It is important that you let your guest veteran tell the story in his or her own way (let them know how much time they have). Also, work with your students on preparing some questions to ask your veteran. Below are a series of suggested topics.

*** It is important for students to remember that some questions might be sensitive, so they should be thoughtful and considerate when writing a list of questions for veteran visitors. It is inappropriate for a veteran to be asked if he or she ever killed someone. Don't go there! Students also should not ask veterans about their political views or whether they support or oppose going to war or any specific conflicts.**

1. A Few Biographical Details.

- Where and when veteran was born.
- Family details: parents' occupations, number and gender of siblings.
- What veteran was doing before entering the service.
- Other family members who served in the military.

2. Early Days of Service.

- How veteran entered service-draft or enlistment.
- If enlistment, why and the reason for choosing a specific branch of service.
- Departure for training camp, early days of training.
- Specialized training, if applicable.
- Adapting to military life: physical regimen, barracks, food, social life.

3. Wartime Service.

- Where veteran served.
- Details of the trip abroad, if applicable.
- Action witnessed, or duties away from the front line.
- Friendships formed and camaraderie of service.
- How veteran stayed in touch with family and friends back home; communication from home.
- Recreation or off-duty pursuits.

4. War's End, Coming Home.

- Where veteran was when war ended.
- How he or she returned home.
- Reception by family and community.
- Readjustment to civilian life.
- Contact with fellow veterans over the years; membership in veterans' organizations.

5. Reflections.

- How wartime experiences affected veteran's life.
- Life lessons learned from military service.