

Fourth Annual Okanogan Oral History Project, 2010

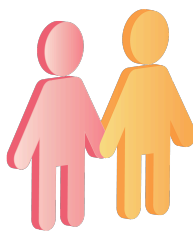
Student Information Packet

Historical Local Food Sources in the Okanogan

Grades 6 & 8 Ms. Edwards



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Introduction



The Okanogan Valley Land Council (OVLC) is a local, non-profit land trust serving the Okanogan. They work with landowners, community members and local organizations to help protect land conservation values, to promote long-term stewardship, to educate the public about conservation opportunities, and to help maintain the unique qualities of the area. The Okanogan Valley Land Council sponsors this project:

We are excited about this year's theme, focusing on historic local food sources in the Okanogan. Food is an engaging topic, and we want to increase students' awareness of the land. We encourage students to focus on how the land historically supported various food products and markets.

Research and rewriting can produce a focused essay, with detail and depth which demonstrate that students understand and can clearly convey historical information uncovered during the project. This year we're hoping to encourage students to take just one of the topics they uncover in their interviews or in their research and dig deeper into it, using resources from the Okanogan County Historical Society, libraries, Internet, or other related information.

Okanogan Oral History Project, 2010

What is the project?

- Interview and Essay Topic: Historic Food Sources in the Okanogan
- Interview a community elder (age 60+) who's been a long-time Okanogan resident (40+ years)
- Share the elder's story through an essay (2-4 pages double-spaced or the handwritten equivalent)

Who can participate?

- Students in grades 6-8

Why is this project important?

- Students have the opportunity to investigate the historic practices associated with local food production—growing, harvesting, processing, distributing—and to connect with individuals who experienced and/or participated in these practices.

Timeline:

- January 2010: Teachers submit 3 best essays from their class to OVLC by January 31, 2010.
- February 2010: Winning essays are selected, 1 from each school district. (All private schools together will be considered one "district.")
- March 2010: OVLC hosts a presentation night in which the winning essays will be read. Authors of the winning essays will receive a \$25 award from OVLC.

Project Sponsor:
Okanogan Valley Land Council
(OVLC)
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Enjoy!



Overview:

Interview a community elder (age 60+) who's been a long-time Okanogan resident (40+ years)

Focus your interview on the questions: "What are the historical, local food sources in Okanogan County?"

Share the elder's story through an essay (2 - 4 pages double-spaced or the handwritten equivalent)

Timeline:

Practice Interview and Information 1/5-1/8/2010

Interview— Week of January 9-14, 2010

(extra credit if you have your interview notes on January 12th)

Draft, Research, & Revise--- Week of January 18-22, 2010

Final draft due -- January 26, 2010

March, 2010 Presentation Ceremony



Evaluation Criteria:

The Okanogan Valley Land Council has coordinated the criteria with the Washington State EALRs (Essential Academic Learning Requirements). Student essays will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The author has selected a manageable, focused topic and has elaborated, using specific, relevant details to add depth.
- The writing is well-organized.
- The author does a good job of conveying oral information in a written essay format and allows the voice of the elder to come through the writing.
- Standard writing conventions are strong and appropriate for the grade level.



The above criteria will be equally weighted in evaluating student work.

Starter Questions



1. What foods did you eat that came from the Okanogan, i.e. garden, farm, ranch, orchard, wild foods?
2. Where specifically did the food come from?
3. How was the food harvested, processed, and prepared?
4. Who helped in growing, harvesting or processing the food?
5. How was local food distributed?
6. How did the local food that was eaten change with the seasons?
7. What is your favorite memory of gathering and preparing food?

The essay might be written with a narrower focus, perhaps on a topic or thread followed from just one of these questions that is of interest to the students.

Class Preparation

To prepare for your interview, we will interview partners, practice taking notes, and practice writing from notes. Then you will practice interviewing a relative or friend, taking notes, and writing an essay for them. You will receive tips on how to interview and how to interview elders.

Finally, you will interview an elder (60+ years) who lived in the Okanogan Valley for forty or more years.

Once you have your interview notes, we will also research an aspect of their knowledge to add more depth to your story. For instance, you may want a picture of equipment or machines that the elder mentions as well as how the machine worked or was used. You will draft, revise, and edit your essay in class. See the timeline.

The rest of this packet provides you with a letter to give to your elder to introduce the topic to them, your Think Sheet for taking notes, and other resources.



Elder Letter Invitation

Dear _____,

I am involved in a school project, and you can help me. I need to interview an elder who has lived in the Okanogan area for forty years to learn about the how the land has historically provided us with food. These are some questions that you may be able to help me with:

1. What foods did you eat that came from the Okanogan, i.e. garden, farm, ranch, orchard, wild foods?
2. Where specifically did the food come from?
3. How was the food harvested, processed, and prepared?
4. Who helped in growing, harvesting or processing the food?
5. How was local food distributed?
6. How did the local food that was eaten change with the seasons?
7. What is your favorite memory of gathering and preparing food?

We really want to know your ideas -- the stories, incidents, tools, techniques, and traditions.

Would you allow me to interview you about these questions? When would be the best time and day?

I will be taking notes and asking you questions about your ideas. I will tell you what I learned from you before I leave, so you can correct me. Then I will write an essay for the Okanogan Valley Land Council. I will give you a copy of my essay.

On the back is a copy of my think sheet to help me with my ideas. I will fill it out as we talk.

Thanks for helping me,

Elder Page 1



_____’s Think Sheet

1. What is your full name? How long have you and your family lived in this area?
2. What foods did you eat that came from the Okanogan, i.e. garden, farm, ranch, orchard, wild foods?
3. Where specifically did the food come from?
4. How was the food harvested, processed, and prepared?
5. Who helped in growing, harvesting or processing the food?
6. How was local food distributed?
7. How did the local food that was eaten change with the seasons?
8. What is your favorite memory of gathering and preparing food?

Elder Page 2

Student Think Sheet (for notes)



_____’s Think Sheet



Introduce yourself and the project again. Thank the elder for their time.

Remember to put ?s to come back to, **circle** spellings to check, and **WAIT** time.

1. What is your full name? How long have you and your family lived in this area?

What foods did you eat that came from the Okanogan, i.e. garden, farm, ranch, orchard, wild foods?

Where specifically did the food come from? How did you get there?

How was the food harvested, processed, and prepared?

Who helped in growing, harvesting or processing the food?

How was local food distributed? How did the local food that was eaten change with the seasons?

What is your favorite memory of gathering and preparing food?

Other information from elder:

Ask any questions or spelling checks now. Thank the elder again for their time and information. **Immediately go and write a draft from your notes before you forget something. This is key to reporting ---- write out what you heard now because your notes won't be enough later.** You can then re-contact your person if you need to clarify and verify information or spelling. Do it now, so you can finish your project and honor your elder.



Tips for Interviewing Elders

The following are some ideas from teachers who have previously participated in this project:

- Encourage students to introduce themselves, the project, and the topic. This may be done in a variety of ways, depending on how and where the interviews will be conducted. Some introduction of the project and topic before the actual interview, if possible, may help those who need additional time to gather their thoughts.
- Prepare students for working with individuals with hearing, sight, and memory loss. Share with students the following tips: 1) Speak slowly and clearly. 2) Allow time for elders to respond without interruptions. 3) Allow silence to happen while elders think. 4) Listen carefully so that you can help an elder remember what was being talked about if they lose track. 5) Do a little research beforehand if possible so that you can prompt an elder about a specific topic and ask questions that will spark more memories related to the topic.
- If students are to visit an assisted living center or other senior center, prepare them ahead of time for the setting. Clarify misconceptions, i.e. how an assisted living center is different from a nursing home. Be available to help if students feel discomfort and need additional guidance in the setting. If students have relatives or friends at the place of interview, this may help to break the ice for the group.
- Explain to students that elders may talk about things in the past that are no longer experienced in today's world. Encourage students to ask questions about unfamiliar things so that the elder's story or information is thoroughly understood and can later be retold clearly.
- Remind students to notice when an elder begins to feel tired or seems weary and then to thank them for their time and for sharing their stories.



Ms. Edwards's Tips: Finding Treasure

Note: If a partner (a good listener and note-taker) can attend the interview with you, they can take notes while you interview. Be sure to ask the elder if it is OK for your partner to attend and help you.



1. Ask permission and give elder a copy of the questions and your think sheet before the interview; explain the project.
2. Decide a place and time – choose a quiet place.
3. Take notes during the interview.
4. Listen carefully. Smile. Be interested, courteous, and curious!
5. Ask questions like, “Tell me more about _____. What else? What do you mean by ____? Can you give me an example?”
6. Circle words you don’t know how to spell and ask at the end of the interview
7. Put questions in margin as you take notes for ideas you need more information.
8. Be patient; they may forget parts, and that’s OK. Wait if they cry — memories are emotional.
9. Ask your questions from margins and spelling information at the end.
10. Review the main ideas for accuracy before you leave
11. Thank your elder, and let them know you will give them a copy of your essay
- 12. Immediately go somewhere to write up a draft from your notes so you do not forget what you heard and what you wrote.**

Essay Tips:

While interviewing, ✓ quotes, verbs, and stories from your elder for intro, body, and conclusion. Find strong verbs. Bring all notes to class. Use the Prewriting Essay sheet AFTER your interview draft.



Essay Prewriting Sheet

(after first draft from interview)

Thesis: What is the main ideas from the information from your elder? Write it in a sentence here:

Body:

Explain your thesis--

Write in paragraphs on each topic provided by your elder. List ideas here:

First Paragraph: Who is your elder? Name? Description. (Looks like; description; frequent says; a good quote)

Second Paragraph: Foods from the Okanogan.

Third Paragraph: Details about one food (where, grow, harvest, prepare, distribute)

Fourth Paragraph: Memory

Fifth Paragraph: More information –another food (where, grow, harvest, prepare, distribute)

Continue writing in paragraphs according to the topics provided by your elder. Remember to use strong verbs and topic sentences.

Introduction:

Ask a question. Use a quote from your elder, or a fact from your research. Write your thesis statement about the main ideas from your elder. Write a statement that explains to the reader what you will explain about historical, local foods from the Okanogan Valley.

Conclusion:

Include a thank you to your elder and another quote or fact that links back to your introduction. Restate your main idea. End with a question or idea that leaves your reader thinking about your elder and your historical facts.

Resources



Tips for Conducting Oral History Interviews

Richard Ries, of the Okanogan County Historical Society, offers the following tip

Do some pre-interview organization and research. One possibility would be to prepare an outline of the final product. Then do enough research to know possible answers to key parts of the outline. This would lead to an interview that would have the purpose of verifying or refuting the research. Either way it would lead to gathering of more personal details to supplement the research, and this would better let the voice of the person interviewed come through

There are many sources online with ideas for conducting oral history research and interviews. Here are just a couple of links that may be helpful:

Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html

Using Oral History: Tips for Classroom Projects <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/oralhist/ohguide.html>

Tell Me Your Stories

<http://www.tellmeyourstories.org>

<http://www.tellmeyourstories.org/supporting/handouts.htm>

Historical Resources Available for Okanogan County

The Okanogan County Historical Society (OCHS) maintains the following types of records at their research library which may be of interest in conducting background research for the interviews:

- 🕒 Newspapers from the area (Okanogan Record, 1890-1910; Omak Chronicle, 1910--; Okanogan Independent and Tonasket Times—a few editions)
- 🕒 Historic photos
- 🕒 Audio cassettes
- 🕒 Diaries
- 🕒 Documents and records