

Interview Questions

1. What is your full name? Why did your parents select this name for you? Did you have a nickname?
2. When and where were you born?
3. What are the names of your parents? When and where were they born?
4. Where were your parents married? On what date?
5. When did your parents die, and where are they buried? (if applicable)
6. Where did your family live? How did your family come to live there?
7. Were there other family members in the area? Who?
8. What did the house (apartment, farm etc.) you grew up in look like? How many rooms? Bathrooms? Did it have electricity? Indoor plumbing? Telephones?
9. Were there any special items in the house that you remember?
10. What is your earliest childhood memory?
11. What are the places and dates of birth of your siblings?
12. Describe the personalities of your family members.
13. What kind of games did you play growing up?
14. What was your favorite toy and why?
15. What was your favorite thing to do for fun (movies, go to the beach, etc.)?
16. Did you have family chores? What were they? Which was your least favorite?
17. Did you receive an allowance? How much? Did you save your money or spend it?
18. What was school like for you as a child? What were your best and worst subjects? Where did you attend grade school? High school? College?
19. What school activities and sports did you participate in?
20. Do you remember any fads from your youth? Popular hairstyles? Clothing styles?
21. Who were your childhood heroes?
22. What were your favorite songs and music genres?
23. Did you have any pets? If so, what kind and what were their names?
24. What was your religion growing up? What church, if any, did you attend?
25. Were you ever mentioned in a newspaper?

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26. Who were your friends when you were growing up?
27. What world events had the most impact on you when you were a child? Did any of them personally affect your family?
28. Did you or your family experience any prejudice because you were Italian?
29. Describe a typical family dinner. Did you all eat together as a family? Who did the cooking? What were your favorite foods?
30. How were holidays (birthdays, Christmas, etc.) celebrated in your family? Did your family have special traditions?
31. In what sense is the world today different from what it was like when you were a child?
32. Who was the oldest relative you remember as a child? What do you remember about him/her?
33. What are the names of your grandparents? Where were they born?
34. What languages did they speak?
35. What do you know about your family surname?
36. Is there a naming tradition in your family, such as always giving the firstborn son the name of his paternal grandfather?
37. What stories have come down to you about your parents? Grandparents? More distant ancestors?
38. If your ancestor was born in Italy, did you ever visit the ancestral locale?
39. Are there any stories about famous or infamous relatives in your family?
40. Have any recipes been passed down to you from family members?
41. Were there special events – picnics/ excursions – celebrated with paisani?
42. What physical characteristics run in your family?
43. Are there any special heirlooms, photos, bibles, or other memorabilia that have been passed down in your family?
44. What was the full name of your spouse? His/Her Siblings? Parents?
45. When and how did you meet your spouse? Where did you go on dates?
46. What was it like when you proposed (or were proposed to)? Where and when did it happen? How did you feel?

Interview Questions

47. Where and when did you get married?
48. What memory stands out the most from your wedding day?
49. How would you describe your spouse? What do (did) you admire most about them?
50. What do you believe is the key to a successful marriage?
51. How did you choose your children's names?
52. What was your proudest moment as a parent?
53. What did your family enjoy doing together?
54. If your spouse or children have died, when did they die and where are they buried?
55. If there have been divorces, when were they finalized?
56. What was your profession, and how did you choose it?
57. If you could have entered another profession, what would it have been? Why wasn't this your first choice?
58. Of all the things you learned from your parents, what do you feel was the most valuable?
59. What accomplishments are you most proud of?
60. What is the one thing you most want people to remember about you?