



Your Story Our Story Frequently Asked Questions

This resource contains answers to some common questions about how to participate, what stories to share on Your Story, Our Story, and what happens when you submit a story. Each answer includes example stories that highlight a variety of ways to participate.

Please write to us at yourstory@tenement.org with other questions or concerns.

[What if I don't have anything important to write about?](#)

[What if I don't know anything about my family's history?](#)

[I have a complicated and multi-heritage family, how can I tell a family story in 250 words?](#)

[What if I don't have a physical object to write about?](#)

[What if my family doesn't have a connection to immigration?](#)

[I'm adopted, how can I participate?](#)

[How can I support my group participants when difficulty and trauma arise?](#)

[I'm not in contact with my biological family, how can I participate?](#)

[What if I don't have the object I'm writing about?](#)

[How can I submit a story in a language other than English?](#)

[What will happen to my story when it's published?](#)

[How will my story be contextualized?](#)

[If in the future I decide I do not want my story to be published, can it be removed?](#)

What if I don't have anything to write about that's important?

Your Story Our Story considers the stories of everyday people important for understanding our country's past and present. We seek out stories of everyday objects, and stories that carry emotional value rather than monetary value. We hope everyone can find something that represents a part of their story.

See these stories for creative interpretations:

[Challah Bread](#)

[Rice Cooker](#)

[Blue 18-Wheeler Truck](#)

What if I don't know anything about my family's history?

Whatever the reason for the unknown, unknown history is part of American history. Your Story Our Story welcomes entries that explore the questions we have about our family's lost heritage, that share the difficulty of finding out more about family history, and that highlight the process of exploring our own identity when we don't have connections to the past.

See these stories for ideas:

[Pasta in Ascoli](#)

[Brigid's Cross](#)

[The Metal Cup](#)

I have a complicated and multi-heritage family, how can I tell a family story in 250 words?

Your Story Our Story hopes to hear from people who have complex stories! We think it's best to share *a* family story, rather than *the* family story. Consider selecting one facet of your identity to share in your entry, but also incorporating some of those complexities into your entry.

See these stories for ideas:

[Po Tat](#)

[Photo](#)

[Dining Room Buffet](#)

What if I don't have a physical object to write about?

There are many reasons why someone might not have a physical object to write about, and Your Story Our Story invites participants to share whether or not they have an object. Consider writing about a recipe, meal, holiday tradition, song, a name, or anything else that carries meaning—be creative!

See these stories for ideas:

[The Music of the Beatles](#)

[Pita](#)

What if my family doesn't have a connection to immigration?

Your Story Our Story recognizes that not all Americans are the descendants of immigrants, and aims to explore the fullness of American identity and its evolution. Stories about cultural identity, family identity, and community identity are necessary in this exploration, whether or not that identity connects to immigration or migration.

See these stories for ideas:

[Cup for Carrying Water](#)

[Bear Claw Necklace](#)

I'm adopted, how can I participate?

We welcome stories about adoptive family!

See these stories for ideas:

[Mother Lion](#)

[Baby Bib](#)

I'm not in contact with my biological family, how can I participate?

Your Story Our Story defines family broadly, and we invite stories about a person's individual story and identity, or about chosen family identity.

What if I don't have the object I'm writing about?

Many of us know about objects in our family story that were lost over time, taken, or broken, or objects that a relative far away might still have. We encourage you to draw or paint a picture of the object, take a picture of something that represents the object, or create another kind of visual artwork to tell the story.

See these stories for ideas:

[Porcelain Clock](#)

[Bathtub](#)

How can I submit a story in a language other than English?

You can record and submit audio in any language using a mobile phone, or you can upload a picture of a translation in another language. You could also share a written story in both English and another language.

See these stories for ideas:

[Dolls \(Las Muñecas\) from Home](#)

[Phone](#)

What will happen when I submit my story?

When you submit a story, it will be approved and then published on the Your Story, Our Story website. This website is a project of the Tenement Museum with national partners, and your story can be viewed by any visitor to the website. The Tenement Museum may ask for your permission to feature your story in a collection, or permission to share your story on a Museum program or on social media, but your story will never be shared without your permission.

How will my story be contextualized?

Your Story Our Story hopes to connect stories to each other and to broader history, and we use two methods for connection: tagging and feature stories. Our tagging system links stories of similar objects, themes, and backgrounds. Our feature stories are collections of stories that answer a question through personal experiences and pair stories with related videos from scholars, story authors, and artists.

If in the future I decide I do not want my story to be published, can it be removed?

Absolutely. At any time, you can write to yourstory@tenement.org with a question or request. We can edit a story, remove a name or photo from a story, or unpublish a story within minutes.