

REMINISCENCE QUESTIONS

School days

- Tell me about the first school you went to.
- What was the walk or ride to school like?
- What was your favorite subject, and why?
- Tell me about a teacher who stood out.
- What did you eat for lunch at school?
- What games did you play at recess?
- What did you wear to school?
- What was the hardest thing about school for you?
- What did you do after school let out?

Ask, don't test: "Tell me about..." works better than "Do you remember..."

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First jobs and working life

- Tell me about your very first job, paid or unpaid.
- How did you find work back then?
- What was a normal day like at that job?
- Tell me about a boss or coworker you remember well.
- What did you buy with your first pay?
- What skill from work are you proudest of?
- What did you wear to work?
- What was the funniest thing that happened on the job?
- If you could do any job for one day, what would it be?

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Kitchens and recipes

- Tell me about the kitchen in the home where you grew up.
- Who did most of the cooking, and what did they make best?
- What dish do you think of as yours?
- What did a typical supper look like?
- Tell me about a dish you didn't like as a child.
- What was always on the table for special meals?
- What smells come to mind when you think of that kitchen?
- What's a kitchen tool you used all the time?
- What recipe would you want to pass on?

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Music and dancing

- What music was playing in your home growing up?
- Tell me about a singer or band you liked as a young person.
- Where did people go to hear music or dance?
- What dances were popular when you were young?
- Tell me about a song that takes you back to a certain time.
- Did anyone in your life play an instrument? Tell me about it.
- What's a song you could sing every word of?
- What music do you like to hear now?

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Holidays and celebrations

- What holiday or celebration mattered most where you grew up?
- Tell me about the food that went with it.
- What decorations went up, and who put them up?
- What was your favorite part of the day?
- Tell me about a gift you gave or got that stuck with you.
- What traditions did your household have that others might not?
- How did you mark birthdays?
- What's a holiday tradition you'd keep forever?
- What did New Year's look like for you?

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REMINISCENCE QUESTIONS

Cars and travel

- Tell me about the first car you rode in or owned.
- Who taught you to drive, or how did you get around?
- What was the longest trip you took?
- Tell me about a road trip, train ride or bus ride you remember.
- Where did people go on vacation when you were young?
- What place would you love to see again?
- What did you pack for a trip?
- What car did everyone want back then?
- Tell me about a place you've always wanted to visit.

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Homes and neighborhoods

- Tell me about the street you grew up on.
- What did the house or apartment look like?
- Who were the neighbors, and what were they like?
- Where did people shop in your neighborhood?
- What did kids do for fun outside?
- Tell me about a favorite room or spot in that home.
- What sounds did you hear at night?
- What did a Saturday look like there?
- What's a place from your neighborhood that isn't there anymore?

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Sports and games

- What games did you play as a child?
- Tell me about a sport you played or watched.
- What team did you root for, and why?
- Tell me about a game or match you went to in person.
- What card or board games were played in your home?
- Who was the best player you ever saw?
- What outdoor games did the neighborhood play?
- What's a game you'd still like to play?

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Pets and animals

- Tell me about a pet or animal you knew well.
- What was its name, and how did it get that name?
- What animals were around where you grew up: farm animals, strays, birds?
- Tell me about the funniest thing an animal ever did around you.
- Who took care of the animals in your household?
- Are you a dog person, a cat person, or neither?
- What animal would you have if you could have any?
- Tell me about wildlife you liked to watch.

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Fashion and clothes

- What did people wear on an ordinary day when you were young?
- Tell me about a favorite outfit you owned.
- What did you wear when you dressed up?
- What hairstyles were popular back then?
- Where did you buy clothes, or who made them?
- Tell me about a fashion you loved that's gone now.
- What did people wear for dressy occasions?
- What's a piece of clothing you kept for years?
- What's a style today that surprises you?

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Weddings and big celebrations

- Tell me about a wedding you went to, yours or anyone's.
- What food was served at big celebrations?
- Tell me about a party you remember well.
- What did people wear to a big celebration?
- Where did people hold parties in your town?
- What music did people dance to at celebrations?
- Tell me about a toast, speech or moment that stuck with you.
- What makes a good party, in your view?
- What's a milestone you celebrated that made you proud?

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REMINISCENCE QUESTIONS

Seasons and weather

- What's your favorite season, and why?
- Tell me about winters where you grew up.
- What did summer days look like?
- Tell me about a big storm you remember.
- What did you do on a rainy day?
- What was the first sign of spring where you lived?
- What foods come to mind for each season?
- What did fall look like where you grew up?
- What would a good summer afternoon look like for you?

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