LOCAL LEARNING
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Two-Minute Interviews

A key skill in interviewing, one of the most challenging for inexperienced interviewers, is learning to listen carefully and make the interview feel like a conversation, even though the narrator is doing most of the talking. The activity below—the first one to use with students—helps develop those skills.

Procedure

• Divide the class into pairs.
• Ask each pair to decide who will go first and second.
• Tell students they're going to listen to each other talk for two minutes about a particular topic. Select a topic that relates to a lesson theme or a cultural tradition. Examples include describing a special place, a favorite game, holiday foods, a celebration.
• Tell students that while one partner talks, the other only listens, without taking notes or asking questions. When two minutes are up, ask the pairs to reverse roles.
• Invite each pair to stand or come to the front of the class, one pair at a time. Ask one partner to introduce the other and describe what their partner talked about. When finished, ask the partner if there is anything they would like to add or correct. Then reverse roles.
• **Discuss.** What did it feel like to listen and not ask questions? Was it easier to listen or to talk? Did anything surprise you? What did you learn? What more would you like to know? What skills did you use in this activity? (for example, close listening and remembering; demonstrating listening through eye contact, nodding, facial expressions; retelling someone's story in your own words; telling your own story; checking for accuracy)

EXTENSION: Follow this activity by asking pairs to return to their partners and ask three questions based on what their partner shared–a close-ended question, an open-ended question, and a follow-up question based on something they said.
Discuss. What more did you learn by asking questions? What was the main idea of the story your partner told? Give your story and your partner's story a title. Share why you choose your title with your partner. How are your titles similar or different? What do the differences tell you about how you each interpreted the other's story?

(Adapted from the *City Lore Interviewing Guide* Classroom Connections https://jfepublications.org/article/city-lore-interviewing-guide.)