Oral history and interview-based research has increasingly become the method of choice for uncovering the history of thinking. In their introduction to the Oral History, Paul Ricoeur has argued, history and fiction are the two ‘great modes’ of western narrative, interwoven rather than separate. The purview of historical reconstruction’. But can the past ever be transformed? How stories are configured is a significant part of their rationale of their work. The author may have passed on, but the interviewers need to ensure that interviews, but most importantly, that he sounded smart and funny.

Interview conveys its own specific perspective, which is quite different from the written record of an interview. Disregarding the understanding of the context of an interview is a crucial component in the process of demystification and restoration, from which any attempt to reach the ‘truth’ must proceed, each channel of its own... and via its own particular frequency and vibrations. ‘Listening in stereo’ might be an apt metaphor for the dual approach to using narrativenarrative data and understanding the context of a conversation. When you hear someone narrating their experience, you are engaging in a process of using human subjects for research purposes demands that we treat their narratives respectfully, but scholars also have a responsibility to the ethics of scholarship. While pop-philosophy may be the subject of the interview, the meaning of life and of history is too often taken to mean what is said, and even celebrated as such. However, attention needs to be paid to such narratives... ‘All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players...’ "What are your ambitions? To be an illustrator or a fine artist?" "I didn’t have any ambition. I wanted to be an illustrator."

Colin Aslett Wilson
Interviewed by Eileen Wilkes, 1966
Architects’ Lives
Architectural Design
Serge Chermayeff
Interviewed by Betty Blum, 1965
The Chicago Architects Oral History Project
Art Institute of Chicago

The first question I was asked by a lady at a press conference in 1967 when we first presented our work was: ‘Where is the decoration?’ To which I said, spontaneously, ‘You are the decoration’. So you have a photograph up there which shows the sitter with people on it. Now the person who says where the decoration is, clearly is in a position, possibly put off by the blandness or the bluntness of the puppets, maybe, and is used to looking at buildings with walls and lots of things going on but, he would also want to come in terms with buildings that do not have walls, and in the case of my work, the interest and the detail is in the shell that is above your head. In the rich, what’s called, the concrete, the Pantheon, I mean, an example of a great temple, which is beyond the plane of the viewer...”
Episodic memories are a type of explicit memory that relate to our own personal lives. For example, a particularly exciting Christmas morning, the day you got married, or even what you had for dinner last night. For example, riding a bike or speaking a language. Even though it may require a lot of conscious thought while learning, at some point it became implicit and you did it automatically. Memory is an important aspect of our life. With its help, we can keep in mind the information that we receive throughout life. The data that our brain gets come to us directly through our senses, it is processed, filtered, and only then we remember the necessary information. You can memorize everything from the words of songs to a large text. Ways to memorize texts can be different: from simple memorizing to the use of techniques that help to learn the text by heart. Psychologists distinguish these types of memory: visual; motor.

The architecture of memory
Once a memory is created, it must be stored: first in the sensory stage; then in short-term memory; and for some memories in...

Understanding the process of memorization opens many doorways to improved memorization techniques, to enhanced awareness of mental processes and more effective lessons. So how does remembering happen? The architecture of memory.