

# Guide to Folklore Collecting Assignments

Central California Folklore Archives  
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## Introduction:

The purpose of the collecting project is to make you better aware of the many folklore forms that surround you and to help you see yourself as a participant in a number of folklore processes. You may collect from strangers, acquaintances, relatives, or yourself. Since folklore is the stuff of the everyday, the collections should emphasize your life and world rather than the exotic or foreign. The collections should look at the 50 weeks you spend at home rather than the two weeks you spend (on Maui, Capri or Iceland) for your vacation.

Grades will be based on the number and variety of items you submit, on the kinds of informant and contextual data you provide, and on how well you follow format guidelines. (If you know a particularly good singer, joke teller, cook, narrator, etc., you can collect a number of items of the same genre - please consult with your instructor.) You must provide informant and contextual data that will make analysis of the item or text possible for any potential archive user; however, you need not analyze the items themselves other than to comment on the functions of the lore when possible. Remember that different kinds of items (beliefs, legends, songs, jokes, etc.) will require different kinds of background data on both the informant and the item. Try to give information that will make the item as understandable and useful as possible.

Grades will suffer from any poor English in your own comments but not from amateur drawings or photographs needed to clarify points nor from your reporting texts which contain poor grammar or lack proper sentence structure.

Collecting folklore is fun — unless you wait until the night before the assignment is due before beginning. Turn in a rough draft of your collection along with the relevant parts of your master list to get you important feedback which you can use to get an A. (Turn in copies that can have corrections made on them, not originals! Recycle!)

Please type your assignments or enter them into the computer using at least 12 point type (standard fonts like Times, Palatino, or Helvetica) with at least one inch margins.

The project, when turned in, will consist of the following elements (**in order**):

- 1 Vetting Sheet /filled out by instructor) and Collection Cover Sheet**
- 2 Collectors' Release forms** (one collectors' for their collection as a whole)
- 3 For each collector (grouped together by collector):**
  - Collector's Profile**
  - Informants' Release forms** (grouped together and one for each "item")
  - "Items"** on format sheets (grouped together and each new item starts a new sheet)
- 4 Master List-Index** (listing all items & their identifying numbers and serving as an index to the collection)

Everything must be in an unsealed 9 x 12 manila envelope(s) with identifying group number & collector names on outside. **Do not staple** or clip items, any releases, photos, etc. together. **Do not seal** the envelope!

## Format Sheet Explained.

**Name** of informant, last **highlighted** [If you yourself are the informant, put your name here; it is otherwise not always obvious which is the last name, e.g. Carter **John**, or Jackson **Pollock**]; “anonymous! is o.k., as is “John Doe”.

**Place collected:** (the place of **performance**, not the place referred to in the story...)

**Date collected:** (estimate if unsure)

**Title:** (Make up a short title that best describes the item)

**Genre:** (or "Type" of folklore)

"Genre" is not "context;" for example the genre for hashi (jap.: "chopstick") etiquette would be "custom," and "foodways" but the context "meals" or "eating;" the tabu that one should not stick the hashi upright in the rice bowl (since it reminds one of funeral ceremonies) is still custom; "death" may be the meaning, but it is neither the genre nor the context of the performance. "Tradition" or "culture" are **not** a useful genres to index a folklore collection.

**Folk Group(s):** (Be as specific as possible [e.g. "Mexican-American" instead of "ethnic;" "European-American" instead of "white" or "Caucasian;" "Kurok" not "Native American;" "Mormon" not "religious;" "carpenters" not "occupational."], and be as relevant as possible to the item performed. *Always* list (perceived) ethnicity(s) and gender(s). More than one folk group classification is desirable for a single item, but always include perceived ethnicity and gender. "American" or "family" are not useful groups to index a folklore collection where "everything" is "American" and each has their own "family."

### Informant Data:

In this space write in paragraph form the information about the person performing the item. Include information that gives the reader a greater idea of what your informant is like. The following list gives some few suggestions of what is potentially useful in this section. (Items with an asterisk are especially important to almost any item):

\* Name of informant

\* **Gender** of informant (at least perceived)

\* Age (or approximate age) of informant (you can give approx. date of birth or state something like: "informant was about 70 in 1985")

Region where informant was born/reared

Schooling background

\* **Ethnicity** or ethnic background (at least perceived)

\* Languages

Family background

Religious background

Occupation and/or other folk groups

Hobbies

\*The informant's relationship to you (e.g. brother, girlfriend, friend, customer, colleague, acquaintance. room mate, random person at the post office, etc.)

All this information is not necessarily applicable to all items. For example, if the item you have collected is a Polish joke, the hobbies of your informant may not be significant, but the ethnic background is crucial. Sexual orientation, for example, might be very relevant to the item collected but might also require very sensitive presentation. Remember the Golden Rule!

The aim is to record any information that will lead to a better understanding of the folklore and the informant's relationship to it, while at the same time remaining respectful of the complexities of human relationships. Addresses should only be on the release forms, not on the item forms. Be sure to identify the speaker if it is not yourself (whose voice & perspective is it here?). For instance: My informant, George Washington, stated: "I was crossing the Potomac..."

Sometimes your informant will not be available - it might be your grandmother who died 10 years ago or someone whom you met casually in 1996 back in Oklahoma on a trip. If you know their name, then list them as the informant. If you know something about the person (ethnic background, gender, whatever) give what you can. It is more accurate to list the source of your item than to say that you are the source when you are not - that would make the release "cleaner" but would misrepresent the data. See "Release Forms" below. If you gleaned your information from a "published" source, e.g. a book, newspaper, magazine, radio or television program or internet site, be as specific as you can about the "author" or responsible person "performing" the item, and list precise bibliographic information. Remember: if it is used "naively," that is: if it is not labeled as "folklore" or "urban legend" or as stemming from "folklore" or academic collections or editions expressly containing folklore, then it is probably legitimate for your collection; check with your instructor. If it is listed or named or treated as "folklore" by your published source, then it counts as "already collected" and does not belong in your collection. When in doubt, consult with your instructor or archivist.

### **Contextual Data:**

This refers to "**performance** context." In this section you can explain where and under what circumstances you collected the item. If possible, tell where and under what circumstances the informant came by the folklore item or text. What triggered the performance? Why was the item or text used, were other people present when the item was heard or observed? Did they participate actively? Who were the others around? In what way were those other people influenced by the performance of the item or text? How does this item or text function for the group in which it is encountered. What language was used (or is usually used)? Include relevant comments by the performer or others (in whatever language was used, if necessary with translation).

The questions listed are suggestions. The kind of questions you ask is dictated by the kind of item you collect. You will, however, try to elicit where, from whom and under what circumstances the item or text was learned by the informant, as well as how, why and where the informant "uses or performs" the text or item.

For example, if you are collecting a frequently used quilt pattern from your mother, you would want to ask her where it came from and why she likes to use that particular pattern. You would want to ask her about technique and aesthetic considerations and about who receives the quilts she makes. You would want to ask her where she learned how to quilt.

Or: if you are collecting a folk belief you will want to include the cause and effect as well as the expression of the belief itself. ("If you have warts, rubbing a potato on them and burying the potato will remove them"). "Context" refers much more to "social context" than to "locale."

## **Text or Item:**

This is the section where you list the original item or text you have collected. This might be a legend text, a photo, a recipe, a song, a joke, a description of a family celebration, a traditional holiday occurrence of some kind, a folk game, a folk toy, a riddle or droodle- one example from the many kinds of folklore. (If the item is from a published source [e.g., a book, newspaper, or the World Wide Web, etc.] make sure it is neither collected nor presented in that work as folklore. Previously collected and published items do not count as "original items of folklore." See the instructor for explicit advice on each printed/recorded item. Give a full bibliographic citation!)

In determining if an item is folklore, look to see who "owns" it: if it is the "Lord's Prayer" then the text is fixed and the church "owns" it; but if it is an informal variation "Rub-a-Dub, God bless this grub", then it is "owned" by the performer. If it is a poem out of a book, then the author "owns" it, but if it is an informal, "authorless" saying ("You're a poet but you don't know it" or "Roses are red, violets are blue, you have a butt like a B-22"), then it is "owned" by the performer.

Feel free to add pages as necessary if the item is a long one or if contextual notes are complex. Please include any remarks the informant(s) made about the lore, their attitudes toward it, etc. If the text is in a language other than English, please give the item in the original language and then in an English translation.

If there is ancillary documentation (e.g., an audio or video recording, CD, or the object itself) be sure to note that fact here, right on the sheet! If there is, for example, a song on a CD which you recorded, transcribe the text of the song here. It is not necessary to transcribe the music.

Transcriptions should be exact, including both your own intercalated comments as well as "a-hems," etc., on the part of the performer, and reproducing, for example, grammatical errors of the informant. "Stage directions" (such as [laughing and pointing]) should be included in square brackets. Make sure the reader knows who is speaking (who is the "I" doing the reporting - you or your informant??) and from which perspective.

Do not turn in actual objects if they are valuable to you; copy or photograph them!

## **Comments:**

These are optional, but the category is handy for any "extra" observations or comments you might have. Your comments go here. The informants' commentary goes under contextual data.

## **Restrictions:**

Here briefly indicate any restrictions which may apply, e.g.: "none;" "anonymous;" "please ask permission to publish if before 2019," etc. See below for more details.

## **Collector:**

At the bottom of the last page, list the following

your name

school (i.e., CSU, )

Course, instructor, semester, and year

## **Number:**

The identifying number should appear on **ALL** sheets to eliminate any possibility of their getting mixed up or wrongly sorted. In addition, the same group identifying number which labels this item here should appear **upon the release forms!** The i.d. numbers belong in the lower left hand corner. See below for particulars on the form of the i.d. number [yyyy-mm-dd, Group Last, First, #]

## Note:

Remember: PART OF YOUR GRADE DEPENDS ON FOLLOWING FORMAT. For the user looking at potentially dozens or even hundreds of items, it is important that the same kind of information be found in the same style in the same spot on all the documentation. Conversely, as William Wilson has mentioned, let the form be your servant, not your master.

Use the .doc files on the web version of this collection guide or from Blackboard to ensure formatting is right: <https://davidengle.us/CentralCaliforniaFolkloreArchives/>.

It is important to note that although this format and examples you may see are only one or two pages long, you may collect items much longer. You should not feel restricted to one or two pages — on the contrary. There is no page limitation on the item you submit. Larger or very complex items may count double. Check with your instructor.

If you have the opportunity to tape or video record performances or if you have photographs, please include these (or copies) with your item report and transcriptions. This is especially important for musical, dance and material items which most of us are unequipped to represent usefully on paper.

If you have any questions, please talk to your instructor.

Unless you state otherwise in writing on your paper or collection, submissions will be housed in the Central California Folklore Archives where the items will become the property of the Folklore Archives to be used for research and other academic pursuits by patrons of the Archives.

## Thanks:

Most particular and profuse thanks are due to Prof. Barre Toelken and the Fife Folklore Archives at Utah State University, Logan (<http://library.usu.edu/Folklo/index.html>), for allowing extensive use of their formats; Prof. William Wilson, in turn, had provided them with extensive models (cf. <http://lib.byu.edu/sites/muw/folklore/>). In addition I want to gratefully acknowledge the extensive and most useful critique performed by Dr. Michael Taft, Head of the Archive of Folk Culture at the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress. (cf. <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/archive.html>). Appreciation is also due California State University, Fresno for hosting this website until March, 2023.

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## Further Information can be found at:

*Ethnographic Collections in the Archive of Folk Culture: A Contributor's Guide* by Stephanie A. Hall <<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/cg.html>>

*Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques* by Peter Bartis <<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/>>

*Documenting Maritime Folklife, An Introductory Guide* by David A. Taylor <<http://lweb.loc.gov/folklife/maritime/>>

*Guide to Online Collections which are part of the American Memory Project* <<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/onlinecollections.html>>

*A Teacher's Guide to Folklife Resources* < <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/teachers/> >

*Folklife Sourcebook: A Directory of Folklife Resources in the United States* <<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/source/>>

## Categories Lists

This list is a **suggestion of some possible items** for you to consider when submitting a collecting assignment. These lists are **by no means** exhaustive!

### Genres:

legends and stories; contemporary legends; supernatural legends; religious legends; legends about historical events; personal experience narratives (memorates);  
local or place-name legends; character legends; etiologic legends;  
jokes; tall tales; fairy tales; folk tales; personal experience narratives  
folk speech and dialect; tongue-twisters; sayings  
folk songs; ballads; folk music; folk dance;  
proverbs; riddles; folk rhymes; droodles  
chants; charms; curses; taunts  
beliefs; "superstitions" (but label them "beliefs!"); good luck-bad luck charms; apotropaic magic  
divination (prediction of future; ways of predicting events or outcomes);  
healthways, folk health, remedies, cures  
games; pranks;  
foodways; [traditional] recipes, decoration, eating or preparation customs  
customs; celebrations; festivals; rituals;  
rites of passage events: birth, maturation, marriage, death; initiations;  
material culture items: things stitched, woven, whittled, quilted, braided, sculptured, built by hand  
folk art; graffiti; yard art; body art; decorations; scenes;

### Groups:

Ethnic groups such as Chinese-, Japanese-, Mexican- or Italian-American; Hispanic or Afro-, European-, or Asian-American are larger groupings. Be as specific as you can: Lakota rather than Native American; Hmong rather than Asian-American. Use, for example, "European-American" rather than "white" or "Caucasian."  
Religious and church groups such as Catholic, Mennonite, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim  
Age groups: seniors, children, teenagers, parents  
Occupational groups: academic, construction, union, mechanics, office, secretarial, farm, military  
Hobby groups: clubs, organizations, sports, campers, Boy Scouts, email lists, singers  
Role groups: parents, counselors, volunteers, political  
Try to avoid "family" as a group label as much as possible (only as a last resort, if the item is used to characterize or define the family: "family" is certainly often legitimate, but it is easy to miss other relevant groupings and it is easy to lose "everything" [from tamales to Easter egg hunts to folksongs] under a category of "family" which has become so broad as to be meaningless.) Use "family" only in conjunction with other relevant group labels.

### Performance Contexts:

Processes: food, work, sports, camping, traveling  
Incidental: small talk, (casual) conversation (about food, family, strange events, locality, weather, travel, ...), shop talk (occupational conversation)  
Occupation/Location: work, school, military, latrinalia, boots, bars, farming, foodways  
Instruction: e.g., rules of thumb, warnings, advice, teaching  
Sessions: story telling, jokes, songs, "lies",  
Recreational: dances, contests, parties, sports, (card, baseball, tag) games  
Performances per se: festivals, practical jokes, pageants, signs and demonstrations  
Life and Health: pregnancy, age, child rearing, illness, medical, cures, healthways  
Rites of passage and initiations: birth, death, mourning/funerals, marriage, confirmation, bar/bas mitzvahs, birthdays, quinceañera,  
Holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Equinox, New Year, Ground Hog Day, Western Days, Vintage Days, Independence Day,

## Indexing your collection

### One “Master List & Index:”

The Master List serves both as a table of contents and as the basis for indexing the collection into the Central California Folklore Archives; information from the Master List & Index will be scanned and key portions entered into the data base which is used to provide effective access to the material in the various individual collections. Thus it repeats succinctly some of the key information from the item sheets, characterizing the collection at a glance, giving important collector data, and making the items readily available for scholarly use. It is therefore of greatest importance to get the genre, folk group and the context/circumstances of the performance right. List where appropriate multiple “genres,” multiple “folk groups” — your job here is to “open up” the index, to help unknown users find your items as easily as possible, to allow others to discover new connections between the items, between contexts, between channels of transmission among diverse folk groups, in short your task is to help others find what they don’t yet know.

Lower left footer: the collection's identification number [but instead of the running item number, indicate “Master Lost”], e.g., 2010-05-16, **Group Gomez**, Mary, Master List

**running item number** [e.g., Group Identifier, #1, #2, #3, ...]

**Title:** [in quotes]

**Genre:** [listing several categories (e.g., "custom, belief, foodways") will make the index far more useful as a finding tool.]

**Description:** [in one short sentence]

**Informant(s):** [be sure to highlight the last names]

**Collector:** [list here the specific collector, be sure to highlight the last names]

**Folk Group(s):** [listing several categories (e.g., "women, African-American, seniors") will make the index far more useful as a finding tool. Always list perceived gender and perceived ethnicity]

**Context:** [the immediate circumstances & situation which sparked the performance; don’t just repeat the “genre” or “description”]

**Place Of Collection:** [town or region, e.g., Sacramento, Michoacán]

**Year Of Collection:** [approximately]

**Restrictions:** [should match the item and the release forms; blank implies none]

**Keywords:** [please leave this line blank: "for office use"]

**Notes:** [any references to other media, cross references in collection, etc.]

Please list all these categories, one to a line, indented, whether they are filled or not, categories bolded, as above. That will aid the computerization significantly. And please no hand corrections on the Master List.

### Diskette, CD, DVD or .opf: (not mandatory)

Optionally, one can copy all the word processing and master list files onto a diskette, CD or DVD and turn it in along with the project (nor would we object to digitized pictures, audio, etc., also, according to your capabilities) This will allow us to automate an index and eventually put public portions of the index on-line.

## A Number:

**Everything** which you turn in (including the Master List and release forms) on a collecting project should bear an identifying number on each sheet or object, made as “human” as possible, to enable us to locate it. You might call this a "call number," like in the library. Since these are group projects, one person in the group will use their name as an identifier for the entire group.

This Number (“Group Identifier”) is composed of:

The full year - the month - the date, the word “Group”, the Collector’s last name, Collectors first name (e.g., **2010-05-16, Group Gomez, Mary**) and then a running item number. Everything in the collection will bear a variation on the collection number. For example, for the first item:

**2010-05-16, Group Gomez, Mary, #1**

Everything pertaining to the first item in that collection will bear that same unique number. For example, 2010-05-16, **Group Gomez, Mary, #1** will appear on all three sheets describing the item, as well as on the accompanying photographs, on the pertinent release forms, and above the descriptions in the Master List.

Note: the “Group Identifier Number” uses the group name (in this example “Gomez, Mary”) — this is **NOT necessarily** the collector’s name (that info goes elsewhere).

The year-month-date will be the day on which the final projects are due, and all items in the collection will bear this identifying date; the format is yyyy-mm-dd. (i.e., include preceding 0's to enable computer sorting).

Exceptions:

1) The “Collection Cover Sheet” and “Collector’s Release Forms” receive the designation **#0**, for example:

**2010-05-16, Group Gomez, Mary, #0**

This is where you give information pertaining to the entire collection.

2) The “Master List & Index” receives the designation **Master List**, e.g.,

**2010-05-16, Group Gomez, Mary, Master List**

That is, the pages of the Master List have this footer; the running item numbers referred to have of course their respective item numbers. See the examples.

You will only assign the running item numbers, of course, when you turn in your final project. Keep the items from a particular collector together.

Use the "footer" capabilities on your word processor, not the "footnote" for doing your numbering.

Release forms and blank item formats are available as Word documents and as .pdf files on the web at: <http://davidengle.us/CentralCaliforniaFolkloreArchives/ColForm2-ReleaseForms.doc> (or <http://davidengle.us/CentralCaliforniaFolkloreArchives/ColForm2-ReleaseForms.pdf>).



## **Two Kinds of Release Forms:**

### **1) One Collectors' Release Form for the collectors; this is a group release form.**

Only one of these for the entire collection as a whole is necessary; it must be signed by all.

### **2a) One Informant Release Form for **each individual informant****

Number and cross-reference to refer to each of the informant's items [use its id number]; be sure to include yourself if you are an informant)

### **2b) Release Forms without Informant's Signature.**

In some instances the informant will not be available for releasing the item, perhaps the informant is deceased, or the item was performed in some casual context and the performer is not available (perhaps even unknown), or maybe the performer wishes to remain anonymous. In such cases the collector, as "owner" or person responsible, can sign the "Release Form Without Signature." If the situation of performance was amongst strangers (e.g., in a post office line), the collector can deem the performance to have been "public" originally and can release the item on the "Release Form Without Signature." Remember the Golden Rule.

See the models or download blanks at

<http://davidengle.us/CentralCaliforniaFolkloreArchives/ColForm2-ReleaseForms.doc> The release forms are meant to allow fair use of the items for academic purposes, and so normally no restrictions will be necessary. Xerox or print as many forms as you need for your projects. The informants and/or collectors do not give up any copyright or performance rights they may hold.

Basically, there are five kinds of release restrictions:

#### **1) None (This is the norm)**

Open and public; no restrictions are placed on the use of the material

#### **2) Anonymous**

These items may be viewed and used in the Archives, but if they are published, the name(s) of informant and/or collector are to remain anonymous.

#### **3) Publication by permission only**

These items may be viewed and used in the Archives but may not be published (or disseminated by mass means, e. g., radio, television, internet); or may not be disseminated without express permission of the informant and/or the collector.

#### **4) Limited access**

Neither open/public nor to be published, these items may be deposited but are not normally open to viewing or use in the Archives or to publication generally except under certain conditions or with the permission of the informant, collector, or the Director, as explicitly noted on the release form.

#### **5) Time restrictions**

These items may only be published, (or perhaps even used) after some fixed date (e.g., "may be used after Dec. 31, 2000"; "may be published after Dec. 31, 2020")

If restrictions are not expressly mentioned, all materials in the Archives may be freely viewed and used in the Archives for academic purposes and may be published in academic contexts with the permission of the director of the Archives. To repeat: The informants and/or collectors do not give up any copyright or performance rights they may hold. Project items which are not to be included in the Archives should be clearly labeled "NOT TO BE ARCHIVED." These items will be returned to the collector or appropriately destroyed, as per your instructions.

Each item from each informant (be it yourself or another), as well as the collection as a unit, must be released. If it is anonymous, then YOU release it. **Projects or items without all the necessary, signed-in-ink release forms cannot be accepted for a grade.**

## **Checklist of how to turn things in and their order of assembly:**

### **1) Vetting Sheet**

Put your Group Identifier Number at the top and fill in the Collector Names (in proper order) after “Collector A”, “Collector B”, etc. We will use these to give you feedback. When the collection is turned in for a final grade, be sure to include the vetting form previously filled out by the instructor.

### **2) Collection Cover Sheet**

### **3) Collectors’ Release Form**

Just one for the whole collection with all the collectors’ signatures on it.

Be sure to sign it and note where credit is due.

Restrictions (if none listed, it will be assumed there are no restrictions)

### **4a) Collector A’s part:** (each collector’s section gathered together, but **not** clipped or stapled)

#### **1. Collector Profiles**

#### **2. Informants’ Release Forms**

Restrictions (if none listed, it will be assumed there are no restrictions)

#### **3. Items**

The various pages should be **not** be clipped or stapled together. Pictures, CD’s, etc., should accompany their items.

All items must be explicitly referred to on the release forms. (use the i.d. number!)

Don't forget the release form for yourself if you are an informant.

### **4b) Collector B’s part: (and so on: Collector C, Collector D, Collector E)**

See above

### **5) Master List & Index**

Pages **not** clipped together, and **not** stapled, but following last Item of last Collector

### **Grading and Notes:**

Your grade will depend upon two main factors: the quality of the **group project** and the quality of your **individual contribution** to the group project.

The main basis of your grade will be your individual contribution to the collection (things like the Items, Profiles, Informant Releases, and the Master List [i.e., points 4 & 5 above]). This portion will be graded on your individual work alone.

The other portion of your grade will be the quality of the collection as a whole (things like Order, Format, ID-Numbers, Collectors’ Releases and the Master List (i.e. points 1-3 and 5 above). This portion will be graded globally as a group. The global group grade will be factored into your individual portion. It pays to work together!

Thus

Each group member is responsible to the group for getting the collection “right” as a group project.

And

Each individual group member is responsible for a minimum of 5 “items” (plus profiles, releases, indexing, etc.)

Those students submitting less than 5 items (or not including their part of the master list) will only receive a portion of the possible grade, or an “F.” Unreleased items do not count.

If the student’s portion of the whole would earn an “A” (95%) based on quality, the student who submits 5 items will also receive a “A.” The student who only submits four items will receive only 2/3 of 95% [=63%, or a “D”]). Students with 3 items or less will receive an “F.”

On the other hand, students submitting more than 5 items (of "C" or better quality) can receive extra credit: 6 items from that original “A” (earns about 115% or an “A+”!), while students submitting 7 items can earn even more (about 130% of the original 95% gets you 133% as a total) while those submitting 8 items for extra credit could earn about 140% of the original grade of 95%, or 133%, an A++).

**Vetting:** Prior to the collection being due, the instructor will vet (inspect for errors) your collection to improve it. I won't grade the work then, but I will grade that you submitted something, the more complete the better the grade — both at vetting and on final version!

**Incomplete or insufficient assignments:** Collections without master lists and all necessary release and cover forms are incomplete and will not receive a passing “global” collection grade. Individuals’ contributions which are incomplete will not receive a passing grade. All members of the group who wish to receive credit must sign the Collectors’ Release Form and provide the appropriate, signed Informant’s Releases (even if it is for yourself, the collector). Unreleased items and unindexed items do not count. (Trust us: we do check!)

**Late Policy** Up to Friday after the projects are due (i.e., within the same week as the due date), late collections will be marked one grade down (10 points). Up to one week late (i.e., projects turned in by the next day of instruction), collections will be marked down two grades (20 points). More than one week late will not be accepted. Incompletes must be arranged by the time of the final.

**Format:** Use the .doc files provided on the web version of the Collection Guide: <http://davidengle.us/CentralCaliforniaFolkloreArchives/> to make things much easier. You will lose points if things are not formatted correctly, are **out of order**, if things are stapled or clipped, if you do not include “Vetting Lists” in the final collection, if the pictures are not attached with photo corners resp. printed as “items,” or if the collection is not in a good-condition, labeled and in an unsealed **9x12** envelope. (Of course if you need the room, you can use more than one envelope.) The group should work together to insure the top-notch grade which will be used to calculate all their individual grades.

**"Returns policy."** If you provide real, physical objects that you want back, be sure to indicate that clearly. It would usually be much better just to provide clear pictures.

**Extra Credit.** Students submitting more than 5 items to their group’s collection will receive extra credit **IF** the basic collection would receive the grade of C or better. (In other words: large collections of inferior quality are not eligible for extra credit.) Submitting 7 or 8 items could work wonders for your grade. See above. Maximum 8 items for credit.

## Final Checklist of details, details, details

The guiding principle here is **CLARITY!** That is why you label and release EVERYTHING.

	<b>Vetting Sheet</b>	On top; turn in the sheet we used to give your group feedback the first time around (i.e., don't use a blank vetting sheet).
	<b>Cover Sheet</b>	Group Identifier correct? In the footer, as well? Semester and Year? Collectors' first and last names, and how many items submitted? Total number of items? Any restrictions — if “no,” be sure to check that box; if yes, check the box and list details below under “Restrictions” on the Collector sheets
	<b>Collectors' Release forms &amp; Restrictions:</b>	Name of all the collectors? Signature for each? Is there a Collector listed EACH item? Any restrictions?
	<b>Collectors' Profiles</b>	Autobiographic profile for <b>each</b> collector? Is each profile labeled with the full GroupIdentifier and item numbers?
	<b>Informants' Release forms:</b>	One for <b>each</b> informant, <i><b>including yourself</b></i> even though you might also be the collector? One for <b>each</b> item, no exceptions. Any restrictions or general notes? Remember, you don't have to allow unrestricted use, but you do have to have release forms referring particularly to each specific item in the collection.
	<b>Items:</b>	Are the formats and numbers correct? Typos? Is the order correct? <u>Does the information match that in the Master List and the Releases?</u> Is everything released? Remember: GroupIdentifier and item number on each page of each item
	<b>Collectors organized</b>	Is each collector's part (i.e.: Profile, Infomant Releases, and Items) together but not clipped or stapled? Right order: Collector A, Collector B, Collector C, etc.
	<b>Master List &amp; Index:</b>	All items there? Are the numbers right? <u>Do the numbers match across the sections?</u> Do the index categories match the item sheets and do they open up access to the material? Are all the categories there and filled out? Is the performance context right? Restrictions or notes? Page numbers?
	<b>Envelope:</b>	<u>9x12 manila?</u> No staples or clips? “Vetting Lists” on top. Order right? Name and group i.d. number on outside? All the collectors listed? <b>Each collector's part together (not clipped or stapled)?</b> Not sealed? If you have more than one envelop, label them as “1 of 2” and “2 of 2”.

## 12 Common Mistakes to Avoid — a "Word to the Wise"

Things which people often do wrong, and which will reduce your grade needlessly:

👎 *Not supplying the filled-out vetting page* your instructor originally used to give you feedback or *not having things in the right order*.

👎 *wrong or inconsistent identifiers*,  
for instance if the identifier should be  
**2010-05-16, Group Gomez, Mary, #1**  
and the collector of item number 7 is John Smith, the identifier is  
**NOT 2010-05-16, Group Gomez, John, #7**  
but rather:  
**2010-05-16, Group Gomez, Mary, #7**

👎 *Not every page labelled* (especially when an item runs over onto a second page).

👎 When the informant is *also* the collector, *informant releases not all signed*: If you are the informant as well as the collector, you still have to sign the informant release form (it is not enough to release it as collector only).

👎 *Collector releases not all signed* or not signed in ink as an original (no xeroxes of release form signatures!) and linked to specifically (and correctly and consistently) identified items.

👎 *Informant releases not all signed* or not signed in ink as an original (no xeroxes of release form signatures!) — even when the informant is also the collector — and linked to specifically (and correctly and consistently) identified items!

👎 Use of *non-descriptive categories* for genres or groups (rather than "culture" or "American" or "everybody," use "healthways," "cures" or "African-American," )

👎 Not telling the reader what the *relationship of the informant to the collector* is.

👎 Not providing an *immediate performance context* (such as "I was cooking dinner with my boyfriend last week when...")

👎 Using *genre categories in the folk group* area ("European-American," not stories)

👎 Using *folk group designations in the genre* area ("foodways, recipes," not Mexican)

👎 Using *group or genre categories as if they were contexts* (e.g., "stories" or "family" instead of "at dinner" or "playing softball").

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