THEN & NOW

Everyday life has changed in countless ways over the years. Read each comparison together, then use the questions to share memories and opinions about how things have changed.

MAKING A PHONE CALL	
THEN	Rotary phones, party lines, telephone operators and phone books.
NOW	Smartphones, texting, video calls and saved contacts.
LET'S TALK	What was your first telephone like? Did you ever have a party line? Which way of communicating do you prefer?

GROCERY SHOPPING	
THEN	Neighborhood markets, butcher counters, paper bags and paying with cash.
NOW	Superstores, self-checkout, loyalty apps and online ordering.
LET'S TALK	Where did your family usually buy groceries? What grocery item do you remember costing much less? What part of grocery shopping has changed the most?

TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS	
THEN	Film cameras, photo albums and waiting for pictures to be developed.
NOW	Phone cameras, digital photos, instant sharing and online storage.
LET'S TALK	What occasions did your family usually photograph? Do you remember the excitement of getting developed pictures back? Do you prefer printed photographs or digital ones?

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WATCHING TELEVISION	
THEN	A few channels, antennas, scheduled programs and one family television.
NOW	Hundreds of channels, streaming services, and multiple screens.
LET'S TALK	What television show did you make sure you never missed? Who usually decided what your family watched? Do you think having more choices has made television better?

LISTENING TO MUSIC	
THEN	Records, radios, jukeboxes, 8-track tapes and cassettes.
NOW	Streaming services, digital playlists, wireless speakers and smartphones.
LET'S TALK	What record or album did you play over and over? How did you discover new music when you were younger? What do you miss most about the old way of listening?

TAKING A ROAD TRIP	
THEN	Paper maps, motels, station wagons and stopping to ask for directions.
NOW	GPS, navigation apps, online reservations and real-time traffic updates.
LET'S TALK	Who was usually in charge of reading the map? What road trip do you remember especially well? Would you rather travel with a paper map or GPS?

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WRITING TO SOMEONE	
THEN	Handwritten letters, postcards, stationery, stamps and waiting days for a reply.
NOW	Email, texting, social media and messages delivered in seconds.
LET'S TALK	Did you ever have a pen pal or save special letters? What made getting a letter in the mail exciting? What has been lost as communication has become faster?

GOING TO THE MOVIES	
THEN	Single-screen theaters, drive-ins, concession stands and scheduled showtimes.
NOW	Multiplexes, reclining seats, online tickets and movies streamed at home.
LET'S TALK	What movie do you remember seeing at the theater when you were young? What was your favorite thing about going to a drive-in? Which do you prefer today: the theater or watching at home?

DOING THE LAUNDRY	
THEN	Clotheslines, wringer washers, washboards and ironing many everyday clothes.
NOW	Automatic washers and dryers, wrinkle-resistant fabrics and laundry pods.
LET'S TALK	Did your family hang laundry outside to dry? What do you remember about laundry day in your home? Which modern laundry convenience would you least want to give up?

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