

# **Exploring Family History**

## **Step-By-Step Activities to Engage Children in Researching Their Family History, Creating Time Lines, Examining Primary Source Photographs, Conducting Interviews, and More!**

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### **Acknowledgements**

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This is the second book in the series of Step-By-Step Activities for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers.

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# **Overview: Exploring Family History**

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## **History-Social Science, Standard 2.1**

Students differentiate between those things that happened long ago and yesterday by:

1. Tracing the history of a family through the use of primary and secondary sources including artifacts, photographs, interviews, and documents
2. Comparing and contrasting their daily lives with those of parents and grandparents
3. Placing important events in their lives in the order in which they occurred (e.g., on a time line or story board)

## **Significance of the Topic**

One of the best ways to engage children in history is by involving them in activities related to their own experiences. In this unit, students develop a beginning sense of history through the study of their family. Beginning with a time line of their school day and their own life, students then explore their family history and traditions, interview family members, create a family tree, examine artifacts, and analyze the daily lives of people who lived long ago in comparison to their lives today. Teachers should not assume any particular family structure. Instead, ask questions in a way that will easily include children from diverse family backgrounds. Be sensitive to family diversity and privacy, and protect the wishes of students and parents who prefer not to participate.

**Compelling Question:** How do families remember their past?

## **Supporting Questions**

1. What are some important events in my life and in what order did they occur?
2. What is a family? Who is in my family? How do I learn about the history of a family?
3. How is my daily life the same and how is it different from the daily life of my parents and grandparents?
4. How is my daily life the same and how is it different from daily life long ago?

## **Common Core State Standards**

A variety of activities in this unit develop the Common Core State Standards for reading/language arts and mathematics. Abbreviations for the standards are included below. For example, RI2.1 refers to Reading Standards for Informational Text, Grade 2, Standard 1.

### **Reading Standards for Informational Text**

RI 2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understandings of key details in a text.

RI 2.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area.

RI 2.7 Explain how specific images contribute to or clarify a text.

### **Reading Standards for Literature**

RL2.1 Ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why, and how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

RL2.2 Recount stories from diverse cultures, and determine their central message or lesson.

RL2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

## **Language Standards**

L2.1f Produce, expand, and rearrange complete and compound sentences.

L2.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 2 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

## **Writing Standards**

W2.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

W2.4 With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

W2.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects.

## **Speaking and Listening**

SL2.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic.

SL2.4 Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

## **Mathematics**

Tell and write time from analog and digital clocks to the nearest five minutes, using a.m. and p.m. (Measurement and Data, Work with Time, 2.7).

Draw a bar graph (with single-unit scale) to represent a data set with up to four categories ....compare problems using information presented in a bar graph. (Measurement and Data, Represent and Interpret Data, 2.10).

## **Special note about the terms today, yesterday, and long ago**

This unit uses the word **today** to refer to the present. The students' daily lives are today.

**Yesterday** refers to the recent past. The childhood of parents and grandparents is considered to be yesterday (1960's-80's). **Long ago** is not defined by the standards, but it should be sufficiently removed from yesterday to minimize confusion. To represent long ago, we recommend selecting one period of time such as the Colonial era, the mid-1800s, 100 years ago, or the World War II era.

## **A “Word Wall” for Academic Content Vocabulary**

As new academic content vocabulary words are introduced, construct word cards and add them to a “word wall” in the classroom. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and use the knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict the meaning of compound words (L2.4).

Sample academic content vocabulary words for this unit include:

ancestor	cousin	grandfather	mother	time line
artifact	document	grandmother	primary sources	uncle
aunt	events	grandparent	relative	yesterday
biography	family tree	history	research	
brother	father	interview	sibling	
children	generation	long ago	sister	

# Lesson 1: Constructing Time Lines

**Supporting Question:** What are some important events in my life and in what order did they occur?

## Activity # 1 Constructing a Time Line of the School Day

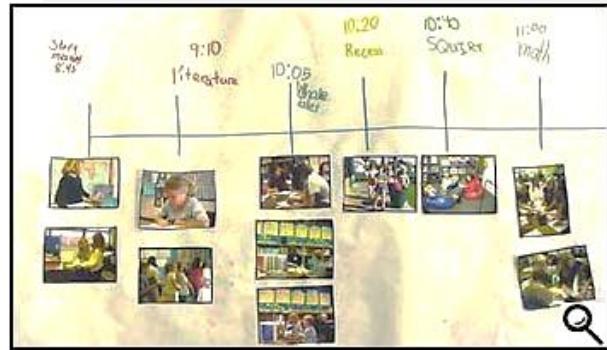
**Materials needed:** 8 index cards or sentence strips; digital camera and printer (optional); a copy for each student of **A Day in My Life** (Handout # 1.1 on page 7).

**Step 1:** Working together with the students, select 8 events that occur during the school day, including the time school begins, the time for dismissal, plus six other events such as reading, recess, math, lunch, and social studies. Write the event and the time it begins on an index card or sentence strip. Using both analog and digital clocks, record the time to the nearest five minutes, using a.m. and p.m.

(Measurement and Data, Work with Time, 2.7).

**Step 2:** If available, take a digital photo of each event and add it to the appropriate time card.

**Step 3:** Have students practice putting the school day events in chronological order according to the time they occur. Introduce the term “time line.” Explain to students that *time lines* are a way to show when events occur and in what order. A time line is read from left to right.



**Step 4:** Distribute to each student a copy of **A Day in My Life** (Handout # 1.1, page 7). For now, leave the top two spaces blank. Have students write the time to the left of “School begins” and to the left of “School ends.” For the day at school, fill in 6 other times and events.

**Step 5:** Note: It is recommended students complete this step at home with help from parents. Students personalize **A Day in My Life** (Handout # 1.1, page 7) by adding 2 things he/she does before school and three things he/she does after school. These may include the time to wake-up, breakfast, start to school, do homework, play with friends, bedtime, etc.

## Activity # 2 Constructing a Time Line of My Life

**Materials needed:** a time line of the teacher’s life (refer to the sample to the right); for each student, a copy of **My Personal Time Line**

(Handout #1.2 on pages 8 and 9); 4 copies of **When I Was**. (Handout #1.3 on page 10); and, 2 sheets of 12” by 18” construction paper.

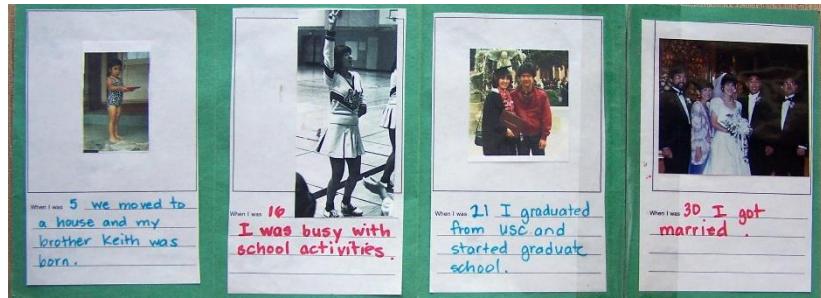


Figure 1: The time line shown above was created by a Grade 2 teacher to use as a model for the students’ time lines. This time line does not have a page for every year of her life, only for selected years. Tish Kato, Los Angeles Unified School District

**Step 1:** Explain to students that the significant events in a person's life (e.g., birth date, a move to a new house, starting school; birth of a sibling) can be displayed on a time line. Display a time line of your life with at least 5 to 8 key events. Explain how you made the time line. (Note: Refer to Step 3 below for time line directions.)

**Step 2:** For homework, send home a copy ***My Personal Time Line*** (Handout #1.2 on pages 8 & 9). With parental help, students should record one event and, if possible, locate one photograph for each year. Allow several days for students to complete this task.

**Step 3:** Preparation: Per student, 4 copies of ***When I Was...*** (Handout #1.3, page 10) and two sheets of 12" by 18" construction cut in half to form four sheets of 6" by 18."

Using the information listed on Handout #1.2, each student creates a time line of his/her life. One box on Handout #1.3 is used for each year of the student's life. Students add photographs or drawings in each box and write a description of the event underneath.

Cut out each page and mount two of the "When I Was..." pages horizontally on each sheet of construction paper. Tape the pages together to make a time line.



#### **Optional Idea for the Time Line**

In the time line pictured to the left, the student used a paper plate. First cut out the center of the plate and use it for the head. Use yarn to add hair. Use the rim of the plate to make the arms and the legs. Add hands and shoes for the feet. Each year of the time line is written on a strip of paper or on a 5" x 8" index card that has been cut in half lengthwise. For the body, the pages are taped in the back to form one long strip of paper.



A different time line format idea is shown to the right. Use ***A Time Line of My Life*** (Handout #1.4, page 11) to create the time line. Cut out the boxes and glue them on to construction paper. Add the head and body as shown.



#### **Optional Idea – Add Pennies**

Have students collect pennies, one for each year of their life and glue the pennies to their time line next to the appropriate year. Kids love trading pennies with each other until they get just the years they need. Be on the lookout each year for when the new pennies are available.

**Step 4:** Have each student share their time line and tell the story of their life, recounting experiences with appropriate facts and relevant descriptive details while speaking audibly in coherent sentences (SL2.4).

Handout # 1.1 **A Day in My Life by** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>
	School begins.
	School ends

## My Personal Time Line

Dear Parents:

With your child, please discuss significant events in his/her life and the year these events occurred. Help your child write one event for each year of his/her life. For example, "When I was 1, my sister Aileen was born." Yearly events might include: first step, first tooth, family births, weddings, deaths, a new pet joins the family, a memorable vacation, a move, beginning school, learning something new such as how to ride a bicycle, etc.

If possible, find a **photograph** to show each of the events. If you cannot locate photographs, students will draw pictures at school for these events. If you don't want to send original photos, you may send copies.

Directions: Write something important that happened to you during each year of your life. If possible, bring a photograph for each event.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday (month, day and year): \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 1 Important Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 2 Important Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 3 Important Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 4 Important Event: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 5 Important Event: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 6 Important Event: \_\_\_\_\_

---

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Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 7 Important Event: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 8 Important Event: \_\_\_\_\_

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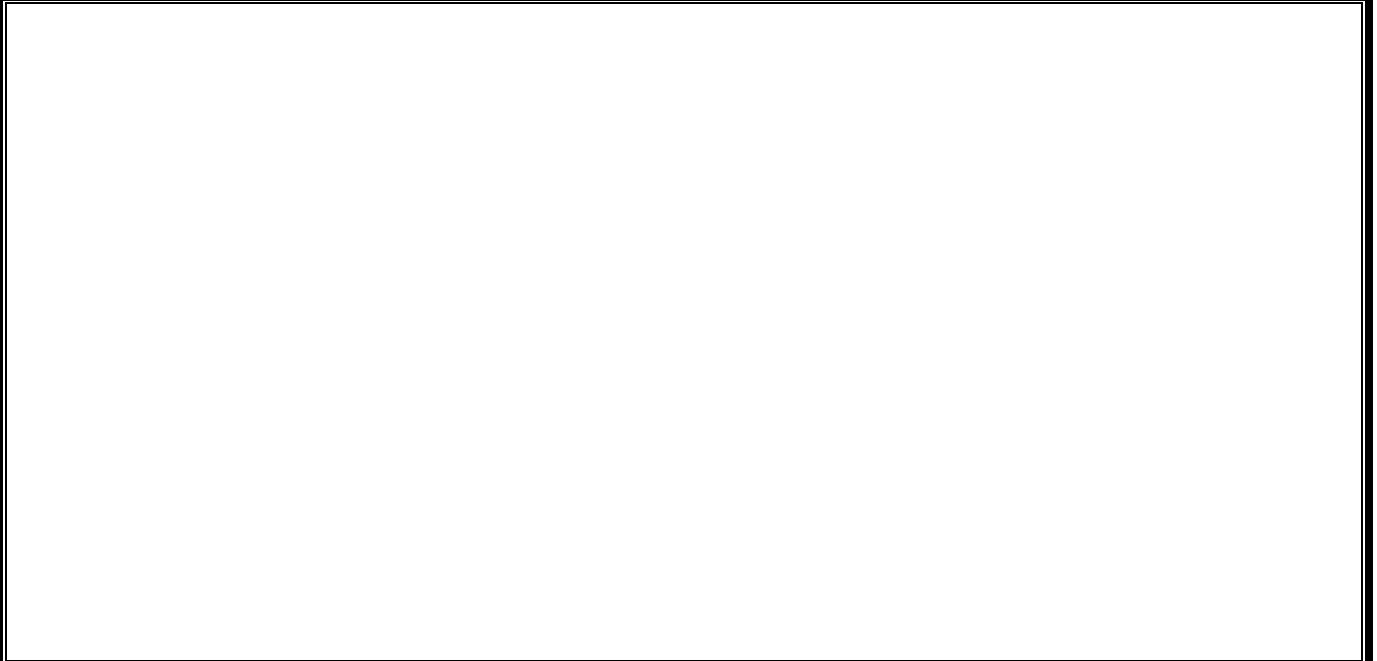
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Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 9 Important Event: \_\_\_\_\_

---

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Handout #1.3

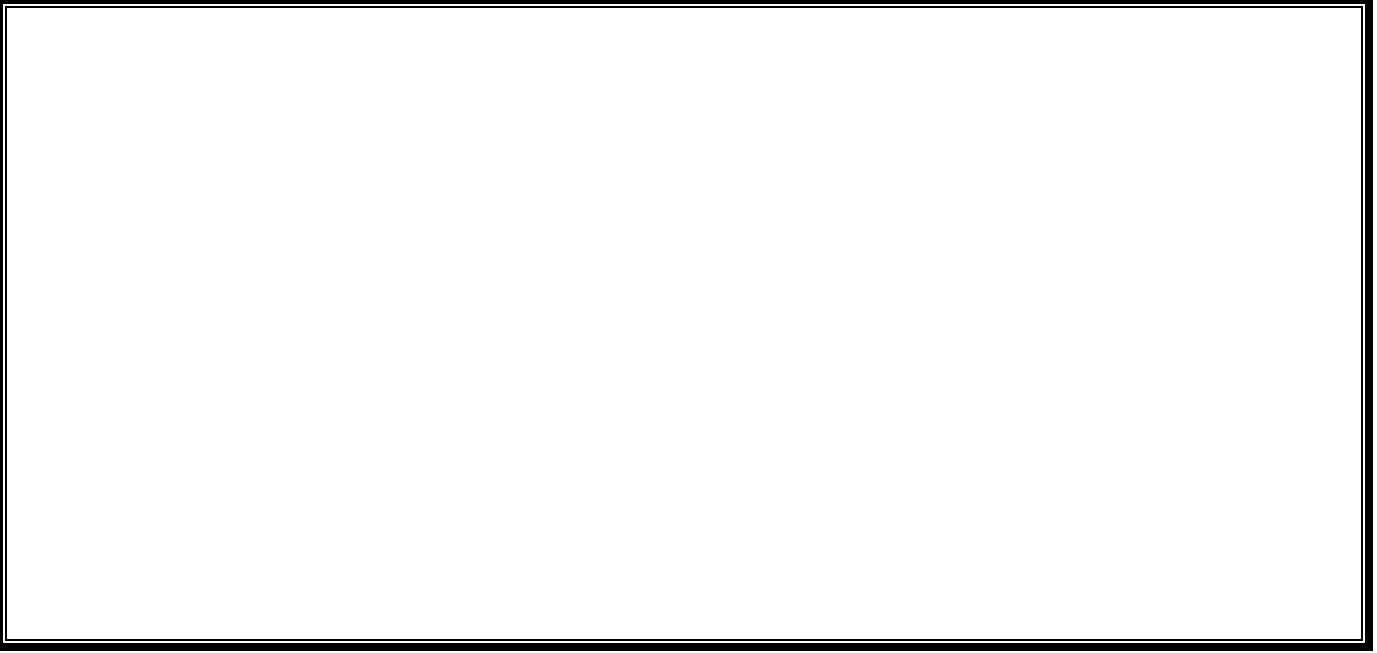


A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a child to draw or write about their past experiences.

When I was \_\_\_\_\_

---

---



A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a child to draw or write about their past experiences.

When I was \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

## A Time Line of My Life

<p><b>A Time Line of My Life By</b> <hr/></p>	<p><b>Year</b> _____</p> <p><b>Event # 1</b> <hr/><hr/></p>
<p><b>Year</b> _____</p>	<p><b>Year</b> _____</p>
<p><b>Event # 3</b> <hr/><hr/></p>	<p><b>Event # 4</b> <hr/><hr/></p>
<p><b>Year</b> _____</p>	<p><b>Year</b> _____</p>
<p><b>Event # 5</b> <hr/><hr/></p>	<p><b>Event # 6</b> <hr/><hr/></p>

Write a sentence about each event, add the year, and glue a photograph or draw a picture in the box.

## Lesson 2: Tracing the History of a Family

### Supporting Questions:

Part 1: What is a family? Who is in my family? (Activity #1 and #2)

Part 2: How do I learn about the history of a family? (Activity #3, #4 and #5)

Part 3: How do I trace the history of a family? (Activity #6 and #7)

**Note:** It is important to be sensitive to the families in your class and their desire for privacy. Make it clear that assignments can be modified if families do not have the information needed or if there is any discomfort with the assignments. Have some alternatives available e.g., the teacher's family, a friend's family, or an historical family from your community.

Set up a **Research Center** in the classroom (a table or a special area) where all the available books pertaining to families, parents, grandparents, and ancestors can be displayed (W2.7). It is also recommended the teacher display primary sources such as family memorabilia, photo albums, a birth certificate, a journal, a videotape or dvd, a newspaper article, etc. Artifacts from long ago such as clothing, household items, toys, etc. add variety. Throughout the unit encourage students to visit the center and to contribute primary sources such as photographs and artifacts from home.

### Activity # 1 Family Word Cards

**Materials needed:** an academic content vocabulary word card for each "family" word including: mother, father, parents, sister, brother, children, sibling, aunt, uncle, cousin, grandmother, grandfather.

**Step 1:** Ask students: What words do we use to name all the types of people in a family? Discuss words such as parents, mother, father, children, sister, brother, sibling, aunt, uncle, cousin, grandmother, grandfather, and any other. Display a word card for each (RI2.4).

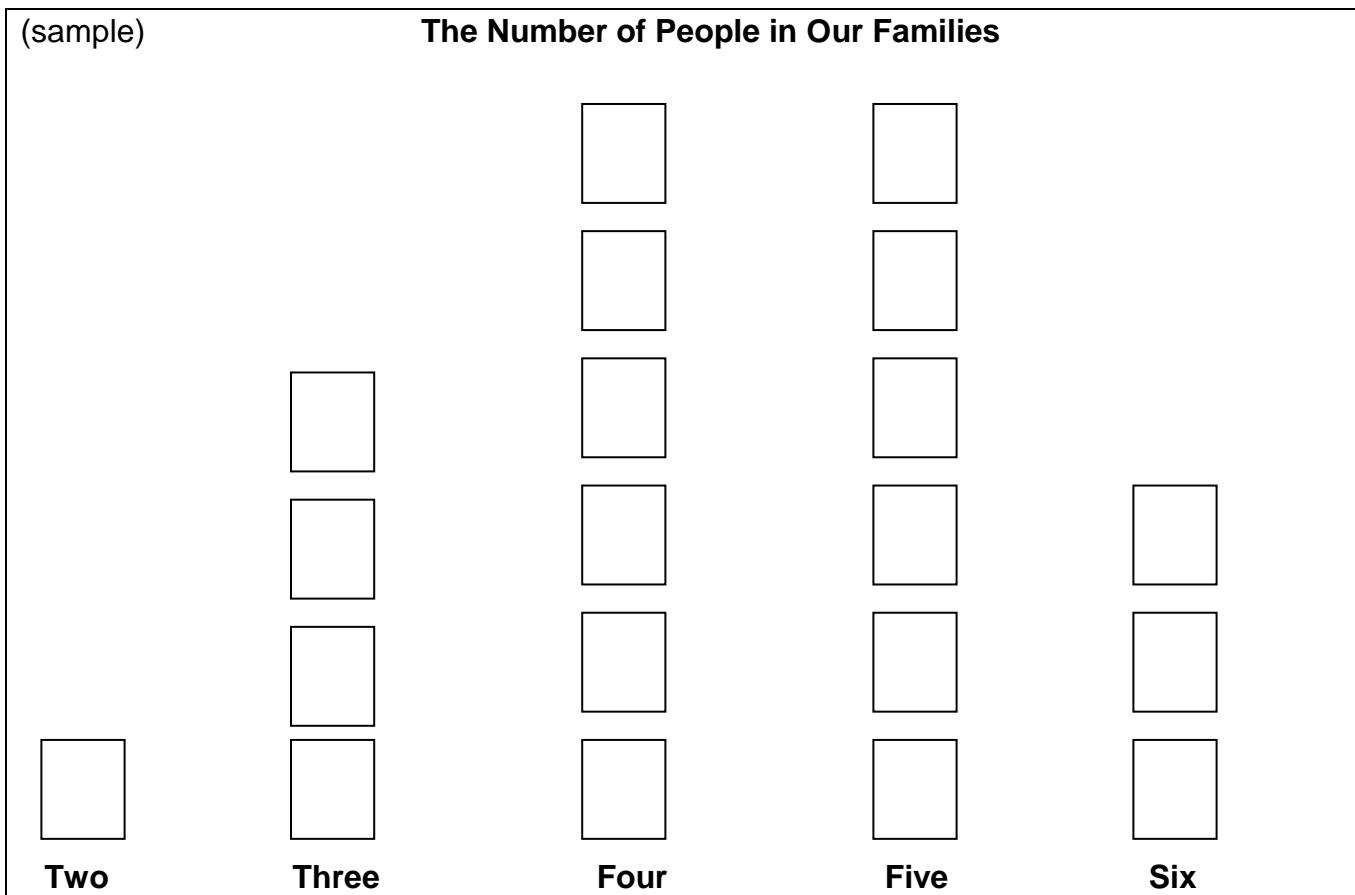
**Step 2:** Help students sort the word cards different ways. First, sort the cards by male and female. Note that some words, such as cousin, are gender neutral. Next, sort the word cards by generation. For example, grandmother and grandfather would be one generation, mother, father, aunt and uncle would be another generation, and brother, sister and cousins would be a third generation. Place the words on the word wall described on page 4 (RI2.4).

### Activity # 2 Who is in my family? A Graphing Activity

**Materials needed:** For each student, a 2" square piece of white construction paper; butcher paper for constructing the graph. Refer to the sample on the next page.

**Step 1:** On a 2" square of white construction paper, have each student write his/her name; draw a picture of his/her nuclear family (The nuclear family includes those people that live together in the same household.), and write a sentence about how many people are in their family. For example, *I have \_\_\_\_\_ people in my family* or *There are \_\_\_\_\_ people in my family*. If desired, students add pictographs on the card to represent each person in their family.

**Step 2:** Create a large graph, *The Number of People in Our Families*. (See sample below.) Each student glues his/her construction paper square on to the graph according to the number of people who live in his/her household. Students discuss the data represented on the graph and interpret the data shown. Help students explain how specific images (the graph) contribute to or clarify a text (RI 2.7). Solve some simple put-together, take apart, and compare problems. Write the student interpretations on the edges of the graph (Represent and Interpret Data 2.10).



### Activity # 3 How do We Learn about the Past?

Materials needed: Create the **Research Center** described on page 12.

Ask students, “How can we learn about the past?” Explain that a **primary source** is an object or document created in the past. A primary source helps us learn about people, places, and events in the past. Generate a list of ways we can find out about the past, including primary sources such as:

photograph	letter	document	artifact	interview family member
advertisement	map	report	journal	census data

This will be more relevant to your students if you show specific examples of primary source artifacts such as clothes, household items, documents such as a birth certificate, toys, etc.

**Secondary sources** are texts created after the time of the historical event. Examples include books and articles written by historians, textbooks, informational books, encyclopedias, internet sites.

Explain to students that historians and other experts *interpret* history using primary sources and secondary sources as evidence.

**Fiction** is a story. Some fiction may be based on real events and can help us understand history or life in the past. Fiction, even when it is about a real person, time, or event may have parts that are imagined by the author.

**Optional Activity:** Use the resources published by the Tenement Museum in New York: [http://www.tenement.org/education\\_lessonplans.html](http://www.tenement.org/education_lessonplans.html) In *Teaching with Primary Sources, Lower Elementary*, there is a lesson on Victoria Confino, an immigrant who lived in New York over 100 years ago. There are additional primary sources on the site about the family, including Victoria's report card.

## Activity # 4 Learning about Our Ancestors – Photo Analysis

**Materials needed:** Copies of family photographs. It is recommended the teacher use his/her family or select a family such as a local historic family or one of the “heroes” from Standard 2.5; vocabulary card for *ancestors*.

**Step 1:** Explain to students that *ancestors* are “any family members who lived before you.” Review the vocabulary words listed on page 4 of this unit. Determine which words refer to ancestors, i.e...., mother, father, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather (L2.4).

Ask students questions such as:

- What can we learn from our ancestors?
- Why it is important to know about the people who lived before us (our ancestors)?
- If we had been living during the time of our ancestors, would we have done things differently than we do today? Why?

**Step 2:** Show students a photograph of one of your ancestors (or of the family selected as the focus for this lesson). Ask the students what they think they can learn by looking at this old photograph. Using the questions listed on the ***Photo Analysis Worksheet*** (Handout #2.2, page 17) as a guide, have students examine the photograph and provide evidence as they answer the following questions:

1. What do you see in the photograph?
2. What questions do you have about the photograph?
3. When do you think this photograph was taken?
4. What seems the same as today?
5. What seems different from today?
6. What does the picture tell you about the past?

PROVE IT...Using Evidenced-Based Phrases...See the next page!

As students answer each of the questions about the photographs, ask them to provide evidence for their answer. The “evidence-based phrases” listed to the right will help students as they provide evidence.

Next, students work in pairs to analyze other photographs of ancestors. As one student asks a question, the other student answers using one of the “evidence-based phrases.” This practice will help students as they research their own family’s history (W2.7).

**Step 3:** Have students work with their parents to locate photographs of their ancestors. Select one of their favorite photographs (or a photocopy of the picture) to bring to school and tell the class, speaking audibly in coherent sentences, the appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details of who is in the photograph and how he/she is related to the person or the people (SL2.4).

Note: Teachers should not assume any particular family structure. Ask questions in a way that will easily include children from diverse family backgrounds. Be sensitive to family diversity and privacy, and protect the wishes of students and parents who prefer not to participate.

## Evidenced-Based Phrases

Based on what I see,,,,

From the photograph, I know.....

I know because...

The photograph showed...

An example is....

For instance....

## Activity #5 Learning about Our Ancestors – Artifact Analysis

Materials needed: a vocabulary card for *artifact*; copies of family artifacts from long ago such as clothing, household items, toys, documents, birth certificates, a family bible, journals, letters, etc...

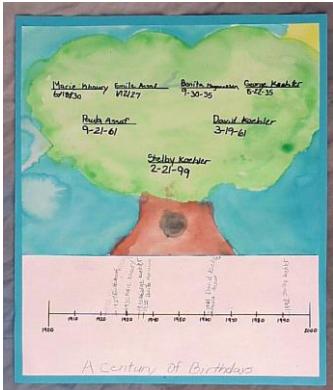
**Step 1:** Define an *artifact* as “an object from the past.” Display some of your family artifacts, such as documents, certificates and any other available items for students to examine one at a time (L2.4). Sample questions to ask:

- How or when might this artifact be used?
- What does this artifact tell us about life in the past?
- Do we still use this item? If so, how is it the same? How is it different?
- What can we learn about a family’s history from these artifacts?

**Step 2:** Encourage students to add artifacts to the **Research Center** by bringing in items (artifacts) that parents are willing to share.

## Activity # 6 Family Tree

Materials needed: at least 7 “post-its” or slips of paper for listing family names; for each student, a copy of **Family Tree** (Handout #2.2 on page 18).



**Step 1:** As the teacher, name all of the members of your family (or of the family selected for this lesson), including siblings, parents, and grandparents. (If desired, ask a student to name his/her family members for this activity.)

Write the names of each person on separate "Post-Its" or slips of paper. Place each "Post It" or slip of paper on the white board or on a sheet of chart paper. Begin at the bottom with your name (or the name of the person or student).

Above your name, put the parent names, and the

grandparents above the parent to whom they are related. Point out that a lot of information at one time can be hard to remember. Emphasize that a **diagram** can help us remember the people in a family and their relationships (RI2.7). This diagram is called a *family tree*.



**Step 2:** Using a copy of **Family Tree** (Handout # 2.2, page 18), have students work with family members to create a family tree or diagram of several generations in their family. Encourage the students to try to make their family tree or diagram at least three generations long.

Note: The literature book, *Me and My Family Tree* by Joan Sweeney, is a beginning resource that explains how a family tree is like a map of a family's history. Encourage students to ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understandings of key details in a text (RI2.1).

## Activity # 7 Family Traditions

Materials needed: For each student, a copy of **Family Traditions** (Handout # 2.3, page 19).

**Step 1:** Share examples of family traditions from your family: such as, favorite family foods, special ways of celebrating holidays, and any things unique to your culture. Discuss how these traditions help to tie the family members together. Family traditions help us learn about family history when stories are handed down from one to another.

**Step 2:** For homework, distribute to each student a copy of **Family Traditions** (Handout # 2.3 on page 17) so they may interview a member of their family (SL2.3). Family members may assist students as they write about family traditions.

As Handout #2.3 is returned, students recount a family tradition with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, while speaking audibly in coherent sentences (SL2.4). Assemble the pages into a book as shown to the right.

Note: There are many wonderful multicultural picture books about family traditions that can be used to talk about traditions. Examples include as *Too Many Tamales* by Gary Soto and *Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)* by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard. As students recount the stories from diverse cultures, help them determine the central message or lesson (RL2.2) and describe how characters respond to major events or challenges (RL2.3). Refer to the *Resources for Exploring Family History* at the end of the unit for references.



## Photo Analysis Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Examine the photograph and answer the following questions. What **evidence** do you have to support your answer?

1. What do you see in the photograph? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. What questions do you have about the photograph? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

3. When do you think this photograph was taken? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What seems the same as today? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

5. What seems different from today? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

6. What does the picture tell you about the past? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Family Tree

**Please list the names of the family members.**  
**Escribe los nombres de su familia por favor.**

---

**Grandmother**  
**Abuela**

---

**Grandfather**  
**Abuelo**

---

**Grandmother**  
**Abuela**

---

**Grandfather**  
**Abuelo**

---

**Mother**  
**Madre**

---

**Father**  
**Padre**

---

**Me**  
**Yo**

**Please help your child complete this page and return it to school.**

## Family Traditions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please help your child complete this form and return it to school.

Directions: What family traditions do you have in your family? For example, does your family have favorite foods they like to eat? Do you have any special ways of celebrating holidays? Is there anything you do that is unique to your culture?

Family Tradition	How did this tradition begin?	What makes this an important tradition in your family?

## **Lesson 3: Daily Life – Today and Yesterday**

**Supporting Question:** How is my daily life the same and how is it different from the daily life of my parents and grandparents?

### **Activity # 1 Read Aloud**

**Materials needed:** Children's literature books comparing life today with life in the recent past. (See the suggestions listed below and in the Resource section on pages 38 and 39)

Read a narrative story that compares life today with life in the past. Examples include *When I Was Little* by Toyomi Igus and *Grandma's Records* by Eric Velasquez. (For additional titles, refer to the *Resources for Exploring Family History* on pages 36-37.)

As you read the story, encourage students to ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why, and how* to demonstrate their understanding of key details (RL2.1). Have students describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges (RL2.3).

These stories illustrate how life today is both the same and different than life in the recent past. Have a discussion about how some things have changed and how many things (like playing with the toys) have remained the same.

### **Activity #2 Picture Sort –Today and Yesterday**

**Materials needed:** a copy for each pair of students of **Today...Yesterday** (Handout # 3.1 on page 23); for the teacher, three sheets of chart paper or butcher paper. Label the first chart *Today*, the second chart *Yesterday*, and the third chart *Long Ago*. (Refer to page 4 for a clarification of the terms.) Only the *Today* and *Yesterday* sections will be used in this lesson.

**Preparation in advance:** Locate photos of items from the **1960's to 1980's**, e.g., transportation; communication; clothing; fun and recreation; household items etc. and, pictures of similar items from today. Photos are readily available on the internet. This is an excellent opportunity for you to empower your students to search for the photos (W2.7).

**Step 1:** Give each pair of students a picture. Have the students place their picture on the appropriate chart for *Today* or *Yesterday*, and explain their choice. Do not paste the photos on the charts because they will be used in the next activity.

Discuss the pictures and the evidence students used to decide where to place their pictures. Save the charts to be used in the next lesson. (Note: If you laminate the chart paper, photos may be taped and easily removed.)

**Step 2:** Display two pictures of similar items, one from *Yesterday* and one from *Today*. For example, show a photo of a car found today and a car typical of the 1970s or 80s. Have students compare and contrast the pictures using the following writing frame:

Yesterday, \_\_\_\_\_. Today, \_\_\_\_\_.

Examples:

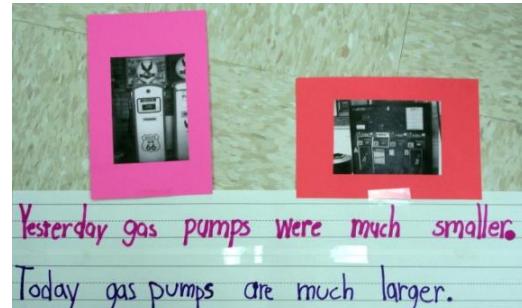
Today, people watch television and the internet.

Yesterday, people watched television.

Today, people play with dolls. Yesterday, people also played with dolls.

Today, people use a computer. Yesterday, people typed on a typewriter.

**Step 3:** Have each pair of students complete one page of **Today...Yesterday** (Handout # 3.1 on page 23). Illustrate the page with pictures or drawings of the items being compared.



### Activity # 3: Special Person Interview

**Materials needed:** For each student, a copy of **Special Person Interview** (Handout # 3.2, pages 24 and 25).

**Step 1:** Ask students to share any experiences they have had with a grandmother or grandfather, or other older persons.

**Step 2:** Prepare the students for conducting an interview by modeling an interview in class. If possible, interview your parent or grandparent or a senior citizen from the community.

Using a copy of **Special Person Interview** (Handout # 3.2, pages 24 and 25), model how to ask questions and write down the answers. In order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of the topic, encourage students to ask questions about what the speaker says (SL2.3). Remind students to thank the person.

**Step 3:** Have students practice asking a partner the interview questions.

**Step 4:** Using **Special Person Interview** (Handout # 3.2, pages 24 and 25), assign students to conduct an interview with a grandparent, parent, or a senior citizen they know (W2.7). (Note: If desired, select one "Special Person" and have the entire class interview this one person. Help students record the responses on Handout #3.2.) Allow at least one week for the interviews. The completed interview sheets will be used in the next activity.

### Activity # 4 Special Person Time Line and Biography

**Materials needed:** Completed interview sheets from Activity #3; for each student, a sheet of 6" x 18" light colored construction paper for constructing a time line; a copy of **Biography Guide** (Handout # 3.3 on page 26). (Optional) a copy of the worksheet **What I Learned from My Interview** (Handout # 3.4 on page 27).

**Step 1 Time Line:** On a strip of 6" X 18" construction paper, use a ruler to draw a line horizontally across the center of the strip. On the line, mark 6 dots at 3 inch intervals.

On top of the first dot, write the birth date of the special person. On each of the other dots, write in chronological order the dates from the "Special Person Interview (Handout #3.2).

Write a description of each event under the time line below its corresponding date. If possible, illustrate the time line with photos or drawings of the special person's life.

**Step 2 Biography:** Note: Guidance and support from adults will be needed for students to produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to this task and purpose (W2.4).

Using the *Special Person Interview* sheet and a copy of *Biography Guide* (Handout # 3.3 on page 26), have students write an informative/explanatory biography of their Special Person in which they introduce the person, use facts to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section (W2.2).

Begin with the body of the text. Model for students how to write into coherent sentences the date of birth, place of birth, and where the person lives now. For example: “Juanita Martinez was born in Newburgh, New York on January 8, 1953. Today she lives in Indio, California.” (If desired, produce and rearrange several complete and simple compound sentences for each section of the biography and let students select which one they prefer (L2.1f, W2.4).

Continue with the “Family Information” and the “Life as a Child” sections of the biography. Model how to use the information from the *Special Person Interview* sheet to write coherent sentences. Encourage students to use your model sentences and rearrange them into complete and simple compound sentences (L2.1f, W2.4).

The Significant Events section may be included in the biography or only on the time line.

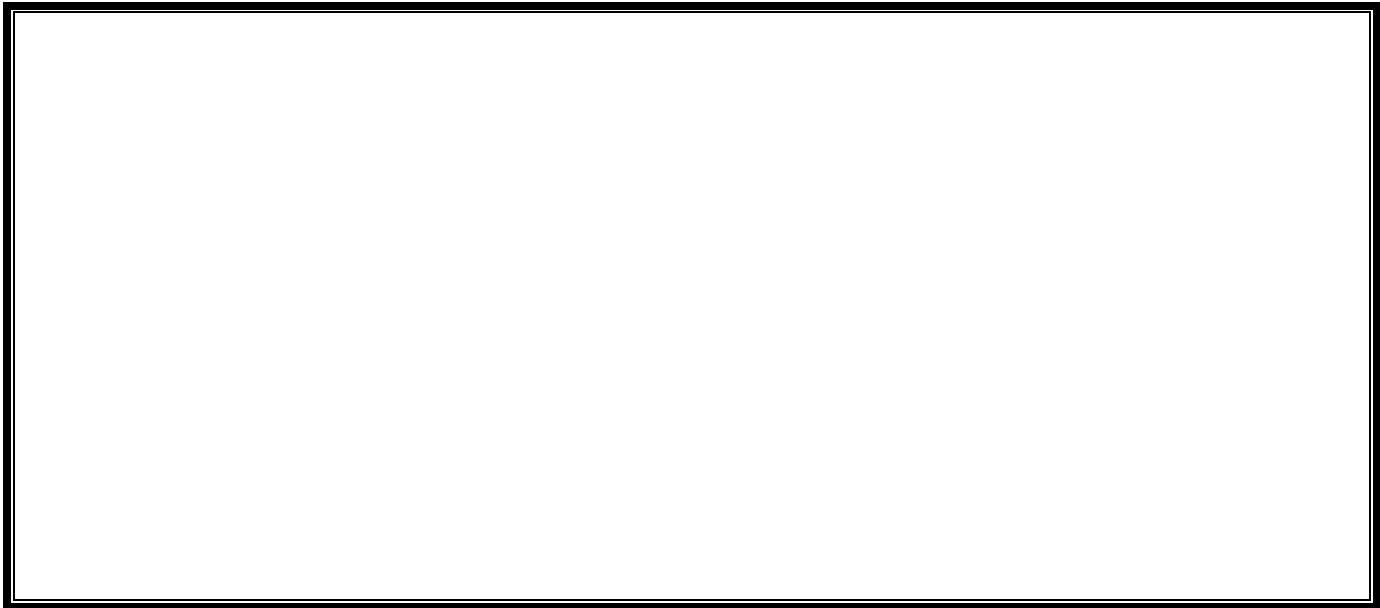
### **Optional Activity: What I learned from My Interview**

Have each student complete a copy of *What I Learned from My Interview* (Handout # 3.4 on page 27).

### **Optional Activity: Storyboard**

Have each student use his/her *Special Person Interview* to create a storyboard of the special person’s history and to compare the student’s life with that of the special person.

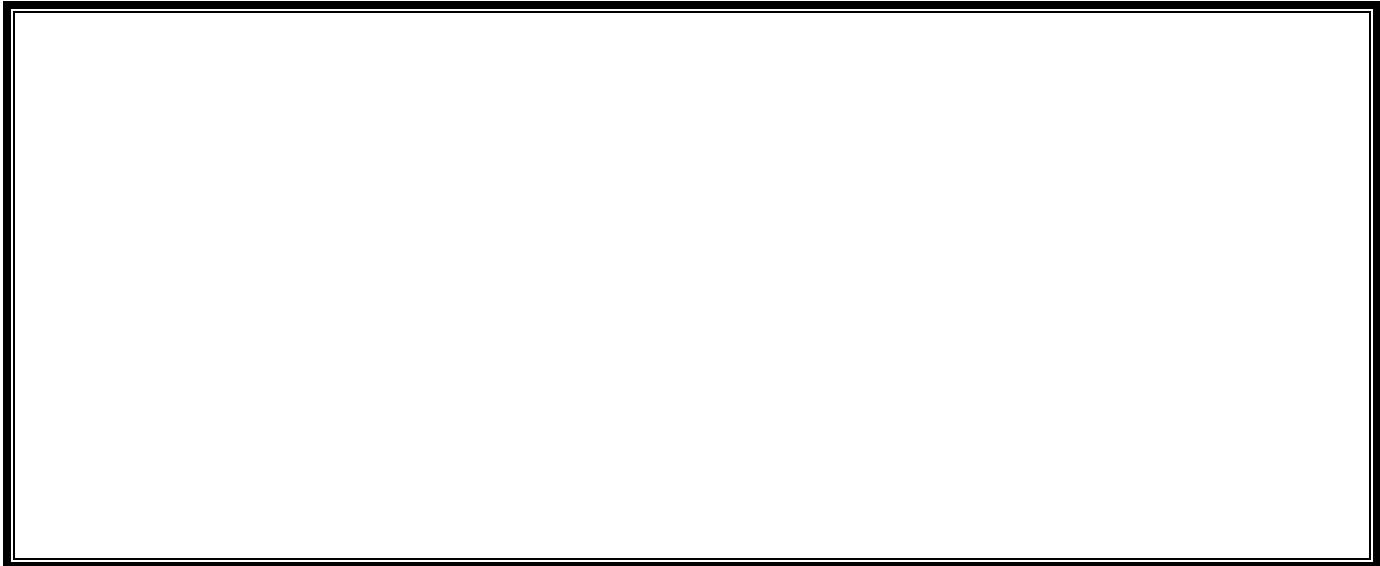
- Collect photographs or draw pictures of your special person. Put the pictures in chronological order.
- Make comparisons between your life and that of the special person you interviewed:
  - When grandma was young, she played with dolls and games. I play with dolls and games, too.
  - When grandma was young, she wore dresses to school. I wear dresses, pants, and shorts to school.
  - When grandma was young, she didn’t have a computer. She used a typewriter for important papers. I use a computer almost every day for writing papers and playing games.



Today, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Yesterday \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Special Person Interview

(Note: An adult may “print” the answers if the child is unable to write them.)

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of the person interviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Are you related? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

### General Information

When were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you live now? \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Information

1. Tell me about your parents (names, place of birth, jobs your parents held).

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2. Do you have brothers and sisters? How many and what are their names? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Are you married? \_\_\_\_\_ Tell me about your husband/wife and how you met. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Do you have children and grandchildren? Tell me about them: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Life as a child

1. What toys did you play with as a child? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What kind of transportation did you use as a child? \_\_\_\_\_

---

3. Where did you go to school? What was school like when you were a child? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What do you remember most about your childhood? \_\_\_\_\_

---

5. What were your talents and interests as a child? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. How has life changed since you were a child? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Significant Events:** Please think of 6 important events that have happened in your life. Begin with the year of your birth. List the dates and the events below.

DATE	EVENT
	Birth

If you have any other questions for your special person, please write them down on a separate sheet of paper along with the answers.

---

**Make sure you thank your special person for his or her time.**

---

# Biography Guide

Your biography should include:

## Cover

- The name of the special person interviewed
- Photograph or drawing of the person interviewed
- Student's name (as the author and illustrator)

## Body of Text

### General Information about the Special Person

- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Where he/she lives now

### Family Information for the Special Person

- Parents
- Brothers and sisters
- Husband or wife
- Children and grandchildren

### Life as a Child

- Toys
- Transportation
- School
- Talents and interests
- How life has changed since childhood

### Significant Events (May be included in the biography or only on the time line.)

- Describe 5 key events from the life of your special person

## (Optional) Other Information

- Other interesting information that you learned about your special person

## What I Learned from My Interview

Answer these questions about the special person you interviewed.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Special Person you interviewed \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is one way you and your special person are alike?

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2. What is one way you and your special person are different?

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3. What is one thing you learned from the interview of your special person?

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4. What are some questions that you still have?

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## **Lesson 4: Daily Life - Today and Long Ago**

**Supporting Question:** How is my daily life the same and how is it different from daily life long ago?

The focus of Lesson 4 is on daily life ***long ago***. Long ago is not defined by the standards, but to minimize confusion it should be sufficiently removed from yesterday (the childhood years of the parents and grandparents). To represent long ago, we recommend selecting one time period such as the Colonial era, the mid-1800s, 100 years ago, or the World War II era.

The teacher will need to collect pictures and artifacts from the time period selected. For example, if you choose 100 years ago (early 1900s), etc. locate pictures related to transportation; communication; clothing; fun and recreation and, household items etc. during the early 1900's.

### **Activity# 1 Picture Sort – Today, Yesterday, and Long Ago.**

Materials needed: for each student, a copy of ***Comparing Pictures from Today and Long Ago*** (Handout # 4.1 on page 30).

Advance preparations by the teacher and/or students: Find pictures of transportation; communication; clothing; fun and recreation and, household items etc. for the time period you chose to represent *long ago*; the charts and the pictures for *Today* and *Yesterday* used in Lesson 3; a new sheet of chart paper for the *Long Ago* category

**Step 1:** Give each pair of students a picture from *long ago*, *yesterday*, or *today*. Students place their pictures on the appropriate *Picture Sort* charts described in the last lesson (page 20). Discuss the pictures and the reasoning students used to decide where to place each picture. Do not paste the pictures on the chart.

**Step 2:** Give each pair of students a picture or have them search internet sources to find pictures from *Today* and a picture from the time period you have selected for *Long Ago*. Have the students work together to complete the worksheet ***Comparing Pictures from Today and Long Ago*** (Handout #4.1, page 30) (W2.7).

### **Activity #2 Today and Long Ago: A Book of Comparisons**

Materials needed: For each student, a copy of ***My Book of Today and Long Ago*** (Handout #4.2, page 31) NOTE: Cut the page in half and give each student one-half of a page. This will form the cover of the book; 5 copies per student of ***Today...What has Changed? Long Ago...What has Stayed the Same?*** (page 32). These will be the “insides” of the book.

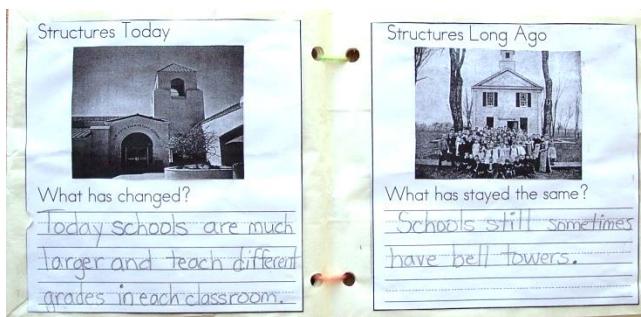
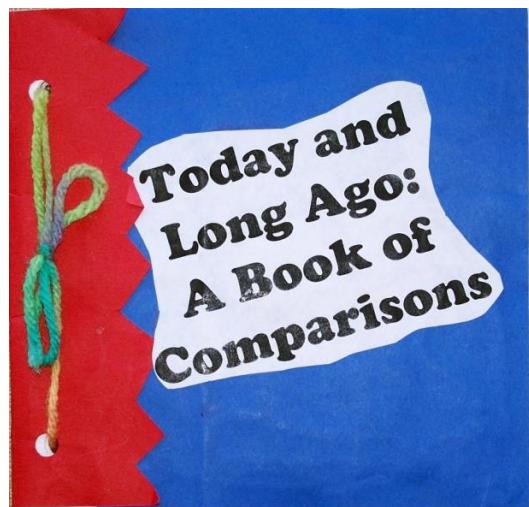
For each student, a set of two photos for each category you select, e.g., transportation; communication; clothing; fun and recreation and, household items, etc. Xeroxed copies work just fine. The photos will be used for the book each student will construct.

To assemble the books: each student will need 3 white paper lunch bags OR 6 sheets of 6" X 18" construction paper; string, yarn, or raffia to tie the pages of the book together; a hole-punch, scissors, glue, and crayons or markers. See the samples on the next page.

In this activity, each student (or pair of students) will complete a book that compares *today* with *long ago*. If you complete one page per day, the activity will take 5 days to complete. This activity provides an opportunity for students to work together and participate in a shared research and writing project (W2.7).

**Step 1:** Use Handout #4.2 (page 31) as the cover. Students cut out the page and glue it on right side of a folded white paper lunch bag OR on a folded sheet of 6" X 18" construction paper. Set the cover aside.

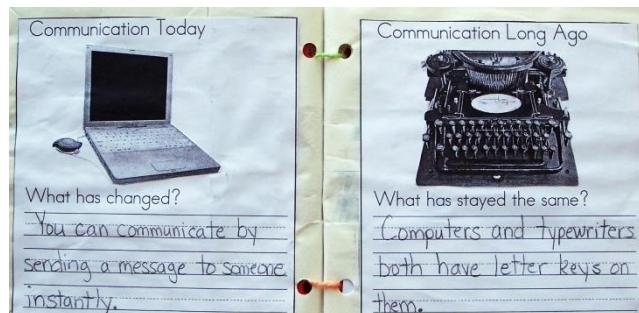
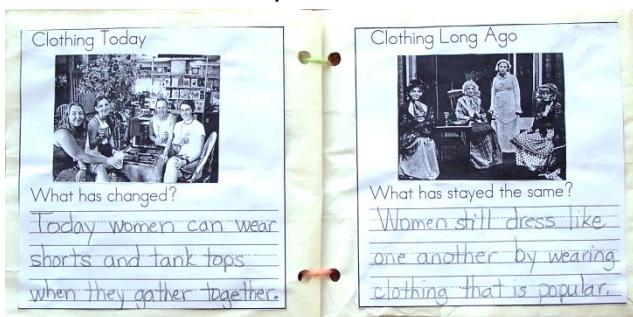
**Step 2:** Distribute one copy of **Today...What has Changed? Long Ago...What has Stayed the Same?** (page 32) to each student or pair of students. The students write the name of the category to be compared that day. Use one of the following categories: transportation; communication; clothing; fun and recreation, household items, or, substitute a different category.



Students draw pictures or paste copies of photographs that show examples of life today and life long ago. Students write one or more sentences to explain how these items have changed and how they have stayed the same.

**Step 3:** Continue each day using a different category.

**Step 4:** When all pages have been completed, assemble the book. If you used the white paper bags, fold them in half and use a hole-punch to put two holes on the left side as shown in the photo on the top right. Use string, yarn, or raffia to bind the book together as shown on the cover pictured above.



## TODAY

## LONG AGO

# **Today and Long Ago:**

## **A Book of Comparisons**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Today and Long Ago:**

## **A Book of Comparisons**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Today***

**What has changed?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Long Ago***

**What has stayed the same?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Extended Activities

### Making Time Lines

**Write an autobiography using your time line.** Note: This autobiography is included as preparation for the later study of biographies in Standard 2.5. In the same week that students are working on their personal time lines, teachers may want to read a few simple autobiographies or share their own life story. This will familiarize the students with the genre and prepare them to write their own autobiography. Using the *Personal Time Line* (Handout #1.2 on pages 8 and 9) as a story map, help each student write his or her own autobiography. It is recommended that you model each of sections (W2.2, W2.4).

The autobiography should include:

Cover

1. Title
2. Full name
3. Photograph (or picture)
4. Use the word autobiography in some way on the cover

Body of the text

1. One page for each year of the student's life. Each page should include
  - Date (year)
  - Sentences describing the event for the year
  - Photograph or picture to illustrate the event
2. One page describing a major influence in your life (people, events, places)
3. One page describing "my goals" for the future
4. Page numbers (optional)

**Make a time line of your school's history.** Have a group of students interview the principal or teachers who have been at the school for many years. Use questions generated by the class and the teacher. Students label and illustrate the time line. Display in the school office.

### Tracing the History of a Family

**Where Our Ancestors Lived.** Have students research the state or country where their grandparents were born. Locate each on a map. Discuss the countries where students' grandparents were born. What would the climate be in that country? Why? Explain how climate affects peoples' lives; the clothing they wear, the food they eat, the way they build their homes, etc.

Create "**Ancestor Poems**" (Handout EA # 1, page 35) for a grandparent or another ancestor. An *I Am Poem* is a poem that can be used to describe any character, setting, idea or concept found in language arts, social studies, science, and other content subjects. It can have as many or as few stanzas as you wish. It is a wonderful way to teach about nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Before having students write the poem, model one that the class does together.

**Write and illustrate a postcard** to send to grandparents or other family members who live far away. Describe and draw a picture of their town or school for relatives who might not know or remember what the area is like.

**Family Recipe Book.** Have students ask a family member for a recipe that is unique to their cultural background. Made a class recipe book and illustrate it with a map of the countries included in the book.

## Daily Life - Today, Yesterday, and Long Ago

**Go to the library or internet and photocopy an old newspaper** (50-100 years old).

Compare the copy with your local daily newspaper. Look at the front page, sports page, advertisements and other sections in your local newspaper. Look for the changes in layout, headlines, ads, clothing, furniture, foods, etc. Compare the photocopy and the newspaper.

**Visit a museum** near you that has displays of clothing and household goods from the 1800s and the early 1900s. Compare what you see with today's clothing, household goods.

**Take a field trip to a local historical home.** Look at the architecture outside and inside the home. Look at the furniture in the home. If possible, take photographs. Compare the photographs with homes of today. Make a class chart, recording the similarities, the differences, and the things that are unique to each of the homes. Study the history of the family who lived in the home. If possible construct a family tree. Do any of the descendants live in the community today? If so, invite one as a guest speaker.

**Visit a local retirement home.** Students can have one-to-one talks with the senior citizens living there. Each student can find out what the seniors' school and home life was like. Back at school, the class can do a shared writing project about what they learned on their visit.

**Read the book *Dance at Grandpa's*** adapted from *The Little House Books* by Laura Ingalls Wilder and illustrated by Renee Graef. Discuss how the party at Grandpa's looked in this book and how a present day party at the student's grandparents' house might look. Locate Wisconsin on a map of the United States. Ask such questions as: When do you think this story took place? What clues do you have from the book? Do you ever go to visit your grandparents? Did Laura's family travel to grandpa's house the same way you go to grandpa's house? Does the house look the same? Does the clothing look the same? What types of things do you do?

**Great-Grandparents** Ask a great-grandparent, or a local senior citizen that is a great grandparent to visit the class and tell about his/her life. Encourage the guest to bring artifacts and photographs.

**Have a Family History Day Celebration.** The *Family History Day Celebration* is a time for students to display their family history projects - time lines, family tree, biography, etc. Students can help in the planning and organizing of this event. For example, they can decide where to display their work and projects, help put up bulletin boards, and decide what refreshments are to be served to the guests. If desired, students and their parents can select a type of food from their family's background to bring to the celebration. Ask about three students and three parents to be the food hosts and hostesses for the event. Have students write invitations to their families asking them to attend the *Family History Day Celebration*. At the Celebration, have students act as guides and escort their guests around the classroom as they explain the various projects that were completed during this unit. Be sure that all students are included in the day's activities. If a student's family cannot attend, then the teacher or one of the attending parents can act as substitute parents.

## Ancestor Poem

by \_\_\_\_\_

A is for \_\_\_\_\_.

N is for \_\_\_\_\_.

C is for \_\_\_\_\_.

E is for \_\_\_\_\_.

S is for \_\_\_\_\_.

T is for \_\_\_\_\_.

O is for \_\_\_\_\_.

R is for \_\_\_\_\_.

S is for \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Example of an Ancestor Poem**

**A** is for Angelica, my mom who likes to cook.

**N** is for nutmeg, the secret ingredient in Grandma's pie.

**C** is for Conchita, my great-grandmother who lives in Mexico.

**E** is for Elsa, my grandma who likes to take care of me.

**S** is for spaghetti, my favorite food my mamma makes.

**T** is for Tony, my great-grandpa's nickname.

**O** is for Osuna, my dad's last name.

**R** is for Pucarolo, my grandpa.

**S** is for Socorro, my great-grandmother's first home.

## **Resources for *Exploring Family History***

Bunting, Eve. *A Day's Work*. Illustrated by Ronald Himler. HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition 1997. When Francisco, a young Mexican American boy, tries to help his non-English speaking grandfather find work, he discovers his *abuelo* has something to teach him.

Bunting, Eve. *The Wednesday Surprise*. Illustrated by Donald Carrick. HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition 1989. This book shows the relationship between Anna and her Grandma. Anna spends Wednesday nights with her Grandma. They sit on the couch and read picture books together. They are preparing a special surprise for Dad's birthday.

DePaola, Tomie. *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs*. Puffin Books, c1973; Reissue 2000. This is the story of a boy's relationship with his grandmother and great-grandmother. When the great-grandmother dies, she becomes Nana "upstairs."

Dorros, Arthur. *Abuela*. Illustrated by Elisa Kleven. Picture Puffin Books, c1991; Reissue 1997. Rosalba and her *abuela* (grandmother) take an extraordinary trip on Rosalba's imagination over Manhattan Island in New York. Many of the places they see remind Abuela of when she first came to the United States.

Friedman, Ina R. *How My Parents Learned to Eat*. Boston: Sandpiper Houghton Mifflin, 1987. A child tells of the happy resolution of a slight problem stemming from diverse cultures within the same family.

Graef, Renee (illustrator). *Dance at Grandpa's* (Little House Prequel adapted from *The First Little House Books* by Laura Ingalls Wilder). HarperCollins, 1995. This is a story about Laura and her family traveling by sleigh through the woods to attend a big party at Grandpa's house. It is a beautifully illustrated book which depicts life in the late 1800s.

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers, A Collection of Family Poems*. (Reading Rainbow Book), Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2001. This collection of poems is about different family members. It is a good book for the teacher to read or as a Readers' Theater.

Houston, Gloria. *My Great-Aunt Arizona*. Illustrated by Susan Condie Lamb. Harper Collins Publishers. 1997. Arizona Houston Hughes grows up in Appalachia to become a teacher who influences generations of school children.

Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald. *Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)*. James E. Ransome (Illustrator). HMH Books for Young Readers, 1995. Sisters visit their Great-Great-Aunt Flossie, whose house is full of books, pictures, and "boxes and boxes and boxes of HATS." Each hat has a story.

Igus, Toyomi. *When I Was Little*. Higgins Bond (Illustrator) NJ: Just Us Books, c.1992. A grandfather shares stories about his childhood with his grandson.

Nelson, Robin. *Transportation – Then & Now*. First Step Non-Fiction. Lerner Classroom, 2003. This book presents a brief look at how transportation has changed over the years.

Pak, Soyung and Hartung, Susan Kathleen. *Dear Juno*. (Picture Puffins). Puffin Books, Reprint 2001. Juno's grandmother writes in Korean and Juno writes in drawings, but that doesn't mean they can't exchange letters.

Parr, Todd. *The Family Book*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2010. Whether you have two moms or two dads, a big family or a small family, a clean family or a messy one, every family is special in its own unique way.

Pellegrini, Nina. *Families Are Different*. New York: Holiday House, 1991. An adopted Korean girl doesn't look like either her mother or father, but then she realizes that lots of families are different. The book can be used as an independent reading book or a read aloud.

Polacco, Patricia. *In Our Mother's House*. Philomel Books, 2009. How can a family have two moms and no dad? Marmee and Meema's house is full of love, and they teach their children that different doesn't mean wrong.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt*. Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books. c. 1988, Reprint 2001. Family heritage and history are reflected in the quilt that enfolds an infant.

Pomerantz, Charlotte. *The Chalk Doll*. Frane Lessac (Illustrator) Harper Collins, 1993. Stories of a Jamaican childhood are shared between a mother and daughter in this illustrated book that depicts a Caribbean culture.

Rotner, Shelly and Kelly, Sheila M. *Families*. Holiday House, 2015. Big or small, similar or different-looking, there are all kinds of families. Some have one parent, some have two, and many include extended family.

Rylant, Cynthia. *When I Was Young in the Mountains*. (Reading Rainbow Books). Puffin Books, p. 1993, c. 1982. This is the story of a very special Appalachian childhood. The text and the illustrations evoke the love of a place, of a family, and of a way of life.

Simons, Lisa M. Bolt. *Transportation – Then & Now*. First Facts, 2014. Discover how transportation has changed over hundreds of years, and where it might be in the future.

Soto, Gary. *Too Many Tamales*. Puffin Books, 1996. This book portrays the traditions and celebrations in a Latino family as a mother and daughter make tamales during the Christmas season. Maria loses her mother's ring while making the tamales.

Sweeney, Joan. *Me and My Family Tree*. Annette Cable (Illustrator). Dragonfly Books. C.1999, p. 2000. This book introduces the concept of a family tree. A little girl draws a picture of her family tree, adding her brother, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Velasquez, Eric. *Grandma's Records*. Walker Childrens, 2004. Grandma, who grew up in Puerto Rico shares her memories and passions for music with her grandson Eric.

Williams, Vera B. *A Chair for My Mother*. Reading Rainbow Books, p. 2007 c. 1982. After a fire destroys their home and all their possessions, Rosa, her mother, and grandmother save money until they can afford to buy one big, comfortable chair that all three of them can enjoy.

# **Exploring Family History**

## **Step-By-Step Activities to Engage Children in Researching Their Family History, Creating Time Lines, Examining Primary Source Photographs, Conducting Interviews, and More!**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

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This is the second book in her series of Step-By-Step Activities for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers. Available NOW is *Kid's Guide to Laws and Government*. Available SOON in the series will be *Expanding Map Skills, and Biographies of People Who Have Made a Difference*.

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**Dr. Lisa Hutton** is a Professor of Education, Chair of the Liberal Studies Department, and the Director of the California History Social Science Project at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Her research interest includes elementary history-social science and developing historical thinking with elementary students.

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