

Tracing History, New Traditions

by Tori Rice

Second Grade
History Social Science
Academic Standard
2.1.1, 2.1.2

Description	Students explore connections to the present and the past through the creation of a living historical document. Inspired by interviews, artifacts, and family traditions, the document is a living one that can be added to for years to come.
Goals	Deepen understanding of how the present is connected to the past, identifying similarities and differences between the two. Strengthen listening, speaking, and writing skills. Encourage collaboration and creativity.
Materials	Notebook or paper (several pieces, folded together to make a “book”) [could also use cereal boxes/shoeboxes/cardboard for the drawings], pencil, crayons/markers, optional: scissors, glue, colored paper
My Family Interview	Two copies
Step 1	Interview an adult family member using the “My Family Interview” sheet. This could be a parent, grandparent, or guardian. You could conduct your interview with someone in the household or via phone/Zoom.
Step 2	Write a short narrative. In your notebook/book, use the notes from your “My Family Interview” page and write a short narrative about the person you interviewed. Include their name, their relationship to you, and any other information that you found especially interesting about them. Include their favorite family tradition in your writing.
Step 3	Gather additional sources and document them with writing and drawings. Place them in your notebook. Artifacts: Ask the person you interviewed to show you their most prized artifact (Hint: This is from question #4 on the “My Family Interview” sheet.) Let them talk about it in detail and take notes. What is it? Where did they get it? When did they get it? Why? Draw a picture of the artifact and write a description underneath. (Optional: Cut out your drawing and glue/tape onto colored paper or cardboard.)

Photos: Have the person you interviewed share photos of themselves at different ages. Do they have a favorite photo? Draw a picture of the photo and write a caption. Include who is in the photo, where it was taken, when it was taken, and what is happening.

Newspaper articles, historical books, movies: Are there any secondary sources available that you would like to include? Draw a picture of your findings. It could be a magazine or newspaper article that your family member clipped in childhood. Write a sentence or draw a picture about what you discovered in your research.

Step 4

Now it's your turn! Have your family member interview you. They can pick the interview questions from the list that would fit for the interview. (For example: "What was your biggest dream when you were younger?" becomes "What is your biggest dream?") Include a drawing of your most prized possession. Make sure your family member asks you about your favorite family tradition! Clip an article from the newspaper or a magazine of something of interest to you or of something happening in your community. Have the family member add their findings about you to the notebook.

Step 5

Create a new family tradition! Brainstorm some ideas in your notebook for a new family tradition with your family member. Have your household vote on their favorite. Are traditions important? Why or why not? Try out your new tradition and document with writing and/or a drawing.

Step 6

Share and reflect. Share your living family document with other members of the household. Discuss what you have learned about your family history and the person that you interviewed. What similarities did you see between the past when your family member was a child and the present? What are some of the differences? What did your family member learn about you?

Invite other family members to add to the document. Keep the document in a shared space so others can enjoy and add details. Make sure to add blank pages.

My Family Interview

My name: _____

Name of family member: _____

Relationship to me: _____

Think: What would you like to know to get to the “meat” of this person’s story?

Ask questions 1-4. These will come in handy later!

1. What is your favorite family tradition and why?
2. Where were your parents born?
3. How is life different today than when you were my age? How is it the same?
4. What is your most prized artifact? (This could be an item handed down from another family member, something they have earned and/or something from their childhood - art, jewelry, clothing, scrapbooks, military or household items)?

For questions 5-27, you do not need to use all of the questions. Select the ones that are the most interesting to you and will get you the "meat" of the story.

5. What is the hardest thing you've ever had to do in your life?
6. When you were young, did you ever get bullied?
7. Who is the most famous person you've ever met?
8. What kind of hardships did you have to go through?
9. Where did you grow up?
10. What was your childhood like?
11. What's your native language?
12. Have you lost any family members/loved ones?
13. Did you go to school? Where?
14. Who was your most memorable teacher?
15. What was your biggest dream when you were younger?

16. What was the most exciting place you ever visited?
17. Have you ever had to make sacrifices?
18. What was your favorite food as a kid?
19. Who was your best friend? Are you still friends?
20. What activities did you do when you were little?
21. Did you ever have to leave your hometown due to...(war, natural disaster...) ?
22. How would your friends describe you?
23. What was your favorite song as a child?
24. Were you more of an outdoor or indoor person?
25. How did you meet your significant other (husband, wife, partner)?
26. What was your favorite story as a child?
27. What type of jobs have you had?

What other questions would you like to ask? Write them below: