

FAMILY TREE ACTIVITIES

The family you're from and the family you find

These activities are for teaching a family tree unit, and will enable students to think more deeply about family, friends, and their community.

Family Interview

Have each student think of five to seven questions to ask a family member or caregiver about a certain time in their lives. (Example: What was one significant thing that happened in the world while you were in middle school?) Ask the students to share questions and answers with the class, and discuss any historical events that are mentioned.

Historical Fiction Writing Prompt

Once they have finished sharing, have them write a short story about traveling back in time and meeting the person they interviewed. Be sure they include some historical background for the year they have traveled to.

Letter Writing Project

Students will write a letter to a family member who would have been alive in the early 1900s. Have them introduce themselves and describe their day-to-day life. Example: They can write about all the technology available today, and research whether there was an earlier version that their ancestor might have interacted with or what the equivalent was. If the student likes video games, encourage them to imagine and research what their ancestor might have played for fun.

What Does Community Mean to You?

Ask the students what community means to them. They can respond with either a definition or an abstract answer. This should start a more in-depth discussion. Ask the students if they can think of anyone in their community (not immediate family) or someone they see all the time—for example, store owners, librarians, and of course, teachers—who contributes to their life in a significant way. Ask how this person is contributing to and shaping their lives. Give the students a little time to reflect.

Family-Centric Reading

