



**Need some inspiration for how to write up your own story and/or the stories of your family?**

Check out these selected biography and autobiography titles for some great examples of storytelling!

**For Kids**

*The Abracadabra Kid*  
by Sid Fleischman  
Youth Nonfiction / B F628

*Boss of the Plains*  
by Laurie Carlson  
Youth Easy / Fic CARLSON

*Flora and Tiger: 19 Very Short Stories from my Life*  
by Eric Carle  
Youth NF / B C192

*Knots in My Yo-Yo: The Autobiography of a Kid*  
by Jerry Spinelli  
Youth NF / B Sp46

*Rocks in his Head*  
by Carol Otis Hurst  
Youth Easy / Fic HURST



*Through My Eyes*  
by Ruby Bridges  
Youth NF / 379.2 B764

**For Teens**



*Chinese Cinderella*  
by Adeline Yen Mah  
Young Adult NF / B M277

*Devil in the Details*  
by Jennifer Traig  
Young Adult NF / 616.8522 T68

*Hole in My Life*  
by Jack Gantos  
Young Adult NF / B G158

*Our Eleanor*  
by Candace Fleming  
Young Adult NF / B R674s

*Sir Charlie: Chaplin, the Funniest Man in the World*  
by Sid Fleisman  
Young Adult NF / B C365f

*Soul Surfer*  
by Bethany Hamilton  
Young Adult NF / B H1802

The **Creative** Link  
Council Bluffs Public Library





# Genealogy for kids!

**Trees** are supported by a strong root system. Without their roots they would blow away in the wind. **Family roots** are the same way. Our roots allow us to become unique and creative individuals. They make us who we are today. In the following pages you will find activities, recipes, and educational resources that help you learn about your roots.

## How to get started:

### First you need to start off with what you know.

Write down everything you can remember about each of your living family members.

### Things to write down might include:

- their full name (first, middle, maiden, and last)
- birth date
- marriage date
- things they did for fun
- where they worked
- funny stories that they have told you
- where they have lived
- what is their nationality (French, German, Indian, etc.)



## Next start interviewing:



**Call** your family members and set up a time to ask them questions and also see if they will share some pictures with you.

**Pictures** are a great way to learn about your family and see how they resemble you.

# Sample Interview Questions

Your family is a lot more interesting than just where and when they were born! Here are just a few sample questions – ask and see what you discover!

1. Do you remember the happiest moment of your childhood?
2. What did you do in your free time before and after school?
3. What did you do for summer vacation?
4. How did your family spend the holidays?
5. Did you get an allowance? If so, what did you have to do? How did you spend it?
6. Describe the soundtrack of your teenage years. What were your favorite songs/bands?
7. What did your parents think of your taste in music?
8. Tell me about your first date. Where did you go? With whom? What did you do?
9. What was your first job? How old were you? What was your pay?
10. Describe your wedding day.
11. Have you ever kept a diary? What sorts of things did you write in it?
12. If you had all the time in the world and all the money you needed, what would you do?

## Ways to capture your own history for your future generations...

- Keep a diary.
- Preserve your photos. Since photos are kept electronically more and more, you won't necessarily have boxes of prints like your grandparents. Be careful to organize your photos by the year they were taken and the event.
- Scrapbook. There are tons of resources about scrapbooking at the library, so feel free to ask if you need ideas!
- Write a letter to yourself every year on your birthday. Include your friends, your favorite things, what's happened to you this year, and anything else you think you might want to remember. Seal the letters and save them to open as an adult.



# Oral Histories: Become a Story Collector

So you've got all your family tree basics down—you know when and where your parents and grandparents were born and a couple of funny stories, but how can you make sure that your family's greatest stories live on forever?

## RECORD THEM!

The point to collecting stories is to pass them on—you can collect stories in notebooks, on tape or video recorders, or simply record them in your memory and pass them on to other family members.

The only rule to story collecting is to be a good listener. Don't interrupt. Turn off your cell phone, put your iPod in your bag, and *just listen*...an adventure awaits!



### Recording your interview?

#### Here are a few things you won't want to forget...

- Test your equipment before the interview.
- Choose a quiet place without distractions to conduct your interview.
- Make sure you have fresh batteries and extra tapes or discs in case your interview goes longer than expected.
- Label your notes/tape/disc with the interviewee's name and the date of the interview.
- Introduce yourself and the subject of your interview at the beginning of your tape/disc if you are using an audio or video recorder.



# Activities

### Visit a cemetery

Take your child to the cemetery where their ancestors are buried. While there tell some stories that you remember about that relative and maybe show them the pictures you have of them.

### Create a heritage album

Scrapbooking is a great way to record history about your family. To do this all you need is an album, paper, adhesive, and pictures. This can be a great experience for both children and adults.

### Play old games

A fun game that is special to play is Authors or Cities. This game is similar to Go Fish, except it uses cities and countries and authors and books. This game is fun because it is traditional in some families. Talk about and play games that you remember playing as a child.

### Write your own autobiography

Why not tell your story for the future generations? It is fun and a great way to remember special memories. Start by sharing a memory from when you were very young and work up to the present. (See page 4 for tips on how to get started.)

### Write a biography about a family member

After you interview each family member why not make it into a story and place it into a homemade book of your family? This also makes a wonderful gift! (See page 4 for tips on how to get started.)

### Make a family cookbook

Do you love the cheesecake that Grandma always makes? Why not get her recipe so that you can make it on your own some time? Making a family cookbook is a wonderful way to get fun recipes and take some neat pictures of foods and family along the way.



Just think about how special it will be one day when your granddaughter or grandson finds the information that you have gathered about your family history.

# Writing a Biography or Autobiography

## Steps to Writing a Biography or Autobiography

- Choose someone to write about or write about your self (autobiography).
- Find out as much as you can about the person you have chosen.
- Write a title. The title could include the name of the person you're writing about or a line from the story that you will tell.
- Write a paragraph that includes information about when s/he was a child. When s/he were born, where s/he lived, and who s/he admired.
- Write a paragraph that tells about the person's talents and accomplishments. What goals has this person achieved? Has this person ever faced a problem? How did they get past this problem?
- Write a conclusion that includes why it was special to write about this person. What can we learn from this person's achievements? How has this person's story affected you?
- Once you have finished your story, make sure that you read it to your Mom or Dad to check for mistakes and spelling errors.



# Genealogy for teens!

## Genealogy is...

According to Webster's Dictionary, genealogy is the account or history of the descent of a person's family. But it's so much more than that, too...

## Genealogy is history

Check out your grandma's old family photos. Your grandma probably has stories to tell you about each photo and all the people in it. But what stories can the photo tell you? What are the people in the photo wearing? What's in the background? What can you tell about the day-to-day life of the people in the picture? How might their day have been different than your day was today?

## Genealogy is math

If you have 2 parents and they each have 2 parents, how many grandparents do you have? Great-grandparents? Great-great-grandparents?

## Genealogy is storytelling

Passing down family histories through oral stories is one of the oldest traditions in the world. Stories help us form our identities, explore our values, entertain us, and build bonds between us. And listening to stories will help you learn how to tell stories, too!

## Genealogy is you

By looking at your family's history, you can see where you came from and how you came to be who you are, living in the place you are living. As you learn who your family is, you can learn more about who you are.

