

First Year Family Project: Timeline of My Life

One of the most important parts of our study of history is the study of the child's own history. This year, each child will make a timeline of his or her own life. Timelines show the passage of time in a linear fashion. The children have seen many linear timelines in our classroom, and we suggest that you use this format when making your family project. Work with your child to create a linear representation of his or her life from birth to present.

You can make the timeline as creative as you wish! You may simply work with your child to choose a photo (or draw an illustration), and he or she can write a few sentences for each year. Your child may choose to make his or her design more elaborate. In the past, cardboard or poster board folded accordion-style has worked well for display purposes.

Your child should write something for each year, however short. It should be written as beautifully as possible with no spelling mistakes. (We recommend that you direct your child to write on a separate piece of paper that can then be glued onto the timeline after it has been checked by an adult.)

Have fun! (It's not easy having to choose from all those adorable baby pictures!)

Project Due: Monday, February 5th

Second Year Family Project: Family Tree and Interview

Family Tree

With the help of parents and other relatives, trace your family's ancestors as far back as you can. Use any family pictures that you can find. You can use a tree shape or any other format. You will present your work to the class, so make sure that you know the relationships and the names of the people on your family tree. You should practice presenting your family tree with your parents before you bring your project to school.

Interview

Interview your oldest family member (or an older relative or family friend) to see how his or her childhood was different from yours. Below is a list of questions you can ask; you may also ask any other questions that interest you. Then, write about this person's life in paragraphs and put it in a cover.

Parents: When your child does this interview, it may be helpful for you to either record the conversation or listen on an extension and take notes. Then, your child can refer back to these notes when writing his or her paragraphs. Please let your child write his or her own paragraphs. You may help by giving guidance about organization ("should this come first, or this?") and editing (pointing out misspelled words and having your child look up how to spell them). Let us know if you have questions about how much to help your child with his or her writing.

Suggested questions to ask during the interview:

- What were you like when you were my age?
- What was going on in the world when you were my age?
- What was important to you?
- What was your family like?
- Describe a day at your school.
- What kind of clothes did you wear?
- What were your favorite sports or games?
- What was your house like?
- Did you have chores?
- Did you ever get into trouble?
- What happened to you if you were naughty?
- What was my mom or dad like when she or he was little?
- What are your favorite memories of me when I was born?
- What have been the most important changes in the world since you were a child?
- Which changes have been the best for you? The worst, in your opinion?

Project Due: Monday February 12th

Third Year Family Project: Autobiography

au•to•bi•og•ra•phy (*noun*) an account of a person's life, written by that person

auto (Greek- from *autos*, meaning self) *biography* (Greek- from *bio*, meaning life, and *graphy*, meaning writing)

Please write a report about the person you know best – yourself! You will write your own life history; this is a chance to tell the world about yourself. You will write about your early years... about your parents or stepparents... about your extended family... about your friends... about places you have traveled or places you would like to visit... about your pets... about your funniest moments... about your hobbies... about your plans for the future... about the world of the past... about how you would like to be remembered...

Your autobiography is an opportunity for you to celebrate your unique experience in this universe. You will interview friends and family members, collect photographs and draw illustrations, and spend a lot of time remembering your life.

This project will take many weeks from beginning to completion. At the end of this project, you will have written an entire book! You will have eight carefully planned chapters, some photographs, some illustrations, a title page, a table of contents, an acknowledgement page, and a dedication page, all bound in a cover you have designed and decorated. This book will be a very special keepsake – a history of who you were at age eight or nine – something wonderful to share with your family when you are older!

Please follow the attached guidelines carefully. Have your parents read the guidelines with you and make a schedule for completing each chapter. The due date may seem far away, but a big project like this can't wait to be done until the last week!

Parents: Your child should write his or her own paragraphs. You may help by giving guidance about organization (“should this come first, or this?”) and editing (pointing out misspelled words and having your child look up how to spell them, or suggesting alternative punctuation, like adding a comma or exclamation point). Please let us know if you have questions about how much to help your child with his or her writing.

Project Due: Monday, February 26th

Pages to Include:

Cover – the cover should be attractive and carefully designed; make the cover interesting and inviting, using your own title and illustrations!

Title Page – a page that repeats the title from the cover and has the name of the author (that's you!)

Dedication Page – a page where you dedicate your book to someone who is special to you

Acknowledgement Page – a page where you thank everyone who helped you with the work; this includes anyone you interviewed, anyone who helped you proofread, edit or type your book (be sure to spell everyone's name correctly!)

Table of Contents – a page that lists each chapter title and the page number where each chapter begins

Eight Chapters – see the next page for the descriptions of the chapters

General Information

- All pages after the Table of Contents need a *page number* at the bottom.
- You may use any kind of paper you like. If you are using a computer, you may want to decorate your pages after you print them out (you can add a border, decorate one side, make a fancy page number, etc.). If you are handwriting your pages, write neatly in ink (pen), and use only one side of each page.
- Each chapter should be *at least one page*. The page (or more than a page if you wish) should include writing with illustrations or photos.
- Be as creative and original as you can. Your life is different from anyone else's, so your story will be different as well. Be creative, but stay true to your own life in each chapter.
- Have fun! It will be so much fun to read this book when you are finished!

Chapters

Each chapter should be at least one page of writing. Please write in complete sentences, and make new paragraphs when necessary. Below are the topics for each chapter with some suggestions of what you could write about for these topics. You may also create your own title for each chapter!

Chapter One: My Ancestors and Relatives

This chapter will be about your grandparents or step-grandparents. What was their childhood like? Where and when were they born? Get any information you can about their years growing up. Describe them as they are today if they are living, or what you or your parents remember about them if they are no longer living. If you have no grandparents, perhaps there is someone who has been like a grandparent to you, and you may like to explain what makes this person special to you. Any other special relatives (aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.) may be included in this chapter as well. Try to make your descriptions of people as interesting and as real as possible. You do not have to list all of your relatives; just list a few who are really special to you.

Chapter Two: My Immediate Family

This chapter will be about your immediate family (parents or step-parents, brothers or sisters). What do these people look like? What work do they do? What are their hobbies or interests? Find something interesting to share about each of these people. What is special about them? How have they influenced your life? Family pets, if you have them, can be included in this chapter.

Chapter Three: My Early Years

This chapter will be about your life from birth until you started school. Of course, you will not remember a lot, so you will need to interview parents and relatives to find out about yourself when you were little. What did you like and dislike? What important events happened? Funny stories about you when you were little are always interesting to read, and will be fun to share with your classmates now and with your family when you get older.

Chapter Four: My School Years

This chapter will be about your career as a student. What can you remember about your preschool and elementary grades? Describe each school year as fully as you can remember it. Who were your teachers, classrooms, and friends? What are some special memories? Try to describe what the very first day of school felt like. Were you nervous, happy, sad, excited? Ask your parents about their memories of your first day of school. How did they feel on that special day?

Chapter Five: My Favorite Things

In the movie, *The Sound of Music*, Julie Andrews sings, "Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens... these are a few of my favorite things." This chapter will be

about some of *your* favorite things! “Things” can be whatever you choose: what you like to do, read, eat, or look at, places you like to visit, etc. Tell about your hobbies and how you spend your free time. Tell about your favorite vacation, songs, movies, books, etc. Anything that is a favorite of yours belongs in this chapter!

Chapter Six: My Annoying, Embarrassing, or Frustrating Things

In the previous chapter, you shared your thoughts on your favorite things. This chapter will be about your not-so-favorite things. You can tell about something embarrassing that happened to you, or just a funny thing that happened. You can share a pet peeve (something that really annoys you), or something that makes you feel frustrated. You can talk about your least favorite school subject, tell about a movie that disappointed you, or a book that didn’t turn out the way you thought it should. Practice the Golden Rule! Please make sure that you **do not** include any annoying or frustrating things that would hurt someone’s feelings or be unkind to anyone.

Chapter Seven: An Historical Perspective

This chapter will be about events that have occurred in your lifetime. You may have impressions of things that have happened in the recent past, like sports victories, endangered animals, stories in the news, etc. Research a few events that have happened in your lifetime and tell your thoughts about them. Why were they important? Try to form your own opinions rather than writing what you may have heard your parents or classmates say.

Chapter Eight: Remember Me!

Abraham Lincoln is remembered for being an honest person and a great president. In this final chapter of your autobiography, tell how you would like to be remembered. Imagine yourself in the future, looking back on your life. What happened to you after you left Thacher? Did you go to college? What did you choose for your life’s work? What did you become famous for – Being the first person on Mars? Discovering a new dinosaur? Finding a cure for the common cold? If you had children, what was it like being a parent? Use your imagination!