

How To Do Your Family History/Tree

In order to make the best decisions and choices you can, it is important to know who you really are. To do that you need to know from where and who you came from, that is, your ancestors, your family. We have created a 'Family History Worksheet' to help you get a good start in determining who and where you come from. The following instructions will help you complete this worksheet.

Some people spend many years filling in their 'family tree' as they hunt down information that helps identify family members. We won't spend that much time here, but that doesn't mean that you can't continue your search for as long as you like, and go back even farther in the history of your family. Tracking down your family members is a lot like a policeman or detective solving a mystery. You can start filling in the blanks on your worksheet by writing in the names of relatives that you know. Then you can ask your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles about your family/ancestors: who married or had children with who, who was adopted into a family (and who his/her parents were). Depending on your program's organizers or your personal interests, you may also want to include the village each person came from, when they died, or other information. Don't give up searching just because your immediate family members might not have all the knowledge you are seeking, ask them 'who else might know'. Maybe a local elder that was friends with your grandparents or great grandparents can answer your questions. Maybe it's a relative or elder that lives in another community that has that knowledge. If you get permission to call long distance you can be like the great detective that always solves the mystery. Remember, even if a person can't fill in a blank in your family history, they may be able to suggest someone else that may know.

Here's how you go about filling in the 'Family History Worksheet':

1. Put your name at the top of page 1.
2. Now go to the bottom of the page where it says 'Children' and put your name in space number 1, followed by the rest of your brothers and sisters (siblings).
Other options include: listing siblings by age, noting adopted children, noting those who have passed on, etc.
3. Just above the 'Children' line, write in your mom and your dad in the space provided. Notice that your mom is now identified by the letter '**A**', and your dad is '**B**'.
4. Now go to the top of page 1 where it says 'Maternal Grandparents' and you will see that it asks for **A's (your mom's) mom and dad**. Write these in and notice that your mom's, mom is also identified as '**C**', and her dad is '**D**'.
Now fill in the kids they had together or adopted.

5. The column to the right is titled, 'Paternal Grandparents' or your dad's ('**B**') parents. Write your dad's, mom in space '**E**', and dad's, dad in space '**F**'. Then fill in the kids they had together or adopted.
6. Flip the paper over to page 2. In the middle of the page you'll see a gray-colored row, the left column reads, 'Maternal Great Grandparents' or **C's mom and dad** (*your mom's, mom's, father and mother*). While this may seem to be getting confusing, if you follow the LETTER used to identify each mom or dad you will know what family member goes in each space. In this case your mom's, mom's, mother will be '**G**' and your mom's, mom's, father will be '**H**'. Then fill in the kids they had together or adopted.
7. Move to the column to the right and fill in your 'Maternal Great Grandparents' (**D's mom and dad**) and their children.
8. Finally move up to the top of page 2 and fill in the blanks for your 'Paternal Great Grandparents' (**E's mom and dad**) family, and then **F's mom and dad's** family in the right column.

From here program organizers can decide how to proceed. The information in the worksheet can be used just as it is or it can be use to construct a 'family tree' for each youth participant's family. The tree can be made by using a square for men, a circle for women, and lines to show the connections among them. A slanted line through a circle or square can be used to show that the person has passed on. Each family tree can be connected to the appropriate family trees as marriages bring relations together. A very large space - like a wall at the community hall or school - can be used to show the connection between all the families in the village, thereby demonstrating how we are indeed 'all one'.

With the ability to scan and crop old photos and print portraits off the computer, another nice touch is to use a uniform sized picture of each family member with his/her name included to construct the family trees, rather than circles and squares.