

Web Unit Plan

Title: My Family: Past, Present, and Future

Description: Students in grade two explore the lives of actual people who make a difference in their everyday lives and differentiate between events that happened long ago and events that happened yesterday by studying their family histories.

At a Glance

Grade Level: 2

Subject sort (for Web site index): Social Studies, Math

Subjects: Social Studies, Math, Language Arts

Topic: Family History

Higher-Order Thinking Skills: Analysis, Synthesis

Key Learnings: Tracing History, Comparing Past and Present, Data Analysis

Time Needed: 3–4 weeks

Unit Summary

Students in grade two explore the lives of actual people who make a difference in their everyday lives. They differentiate between events that happened long ago and events that happened yesterday by studying their family histories. A number of projects are completed that preserve the past, capture the present, or impact the future, including analyzing information and drawing conclusions about how and why the world has changed. The unit concludes with students creating family history time capsules that preserve the past and present for the future.

Curriculum-Framing Questions

- **Essential Question**
How will I make a difference?
- **Unit Questions**
How can I preserve the past, capture the present, and impact the future?
Where did I come from, and where am I going?
In what ways has life changed since my parents and grandparents were my age?
- **Content Questions**
Who are our ancestors?
What kinds of artifacts can teach us about the past?

Assessment Processes

View how a variety of student-centered [assessments](#) are used in the My Family: Past, Present, and Future Unit Plan. These assessments help students and teachers set goals; monitor student progress; provide feedback; assess thinking, processes, performances, and products; and reflect on learning throughout the learning cycle.

Instructional Procedures

Prior to the Unit

Prior to the unit, create and update a class Web site or wiki to include project and assessment information as well as due dates and useful links for the unit. Send home a newsletter regarding the unit.

A class vocabulary chart may need to be created as well that can be added to throughout the unit. Some words that may start the chart are: *artifact, generation, preserve, impact, ancestors, history, past, present, future.*

Introducing the Unit

Pose the Unit Question, *How can I preserve the past, capture the present, and impact the future?* Create a class chart with the following headings:

Preserve the Past	Capture the Present	Impact the Future
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Remind students of the (year long) class Essential Question, *How will I make a difference?*

Tell students that over the next several weeks, the class will explore how families make a difference in people's lives and how the students can make a difference in their family members' lives.

Ask students to consider ways they might "make a difference" in their own families by preserving the past, capturing the present, and impacting the future. Discuss what these terms mean and why they are important using the vocabulary chart created earlier.

Have students brainstorm answers in pairs or small groups. Afterwards, have groups share with the large group and record all responses on a class chart. Refer to the chart often and add to it as the unit progresses.

Preserving the Past

Family Tree

Introduce the idea of a time capsule to students, and explain how they will be creating and gathering several artifacts to add to a time capsule to preserve their history.

Explain to students that one way to help preserve the past is by completing a family tree to include in their time capsules. Introduce the concept of a family tree and share an example. In addition to recording names and birthdates, students will also record traits and characteristics of each family member. Student use this information to complete Venn Diagrams to compare and contrast traits in order to determine how they are alike and different from their family members and as a resource (birth dates) for later research to compare what life was like when their relatives were their age.

Pass out the [family tree worksheet](#). Discuss the items that students will be required to complete:

- Birth dates
- Eye color
- Hair color
- Special traits/interests
- How I am like this person

Have students take home and complete the family tree worksheet for homework. Throughout the next week, schedule students to share their family trees with the class. Later, the family trees will be added to the time capsules.

Relative or Ancestor Biography

Explain to students that they will also help preserve the past by creating a multimedia biography about a family member that made a difference. Students interview the person (if still alive) and/or other relatives to gather information about the person they have selected. Students also find primary sources such as scanned photographs of people, places, and artifacts, as well as videos and audio recordings, if available. Students organize their findings into a persuasive and informational presentation that preserves the person's past for future generations and defends their position that this person truly made a difference. Student presentations should address the following questions:

- *Who made a difference in your family?*
- *What was life like when the person was your age?*
- *How have life changed? Compare the person's past and your present.*
- *Was life better then or better now? Explain how and why.*
- *How did the person make a difference?*
- *What can we learn from the person?*
- *How and why should the person be remembered?*

See the [multimedia biography](#) sample and then, as a class, brainstorm a list of questions that may be asked for the interview that covers the preceding requirements. Organize and type up a list of the core questions created by the class. Each student should use the questions for the interview, but they may add to the list as well. Check in with each student to be sure that they have decided on a family member to interview or collect information about. Students should have a time frame in which to complete these interviews, so they can begin working on their multimedia presentations in class. If available, have students videotape their interviews and include a clip in their final presentations.

Hand out the [self-assessment](#) for the multimedia biography, and review the checklist with the students. The self-assessment outlines the expectations for the project and should be used by students to monitor their progress. After students have completed their research, conducted their interviews, and are ready to create their presentations, assign time slots for them to work on the computer. Coordinate parent volunteers or older buddies to help students' scan pictures and create the presentations. In addition, schedule time to conference with each student, review their self-assessment checklists, and answer any questions.

"How Have Things Changed" Graph

This activity helps students to both capture the past and begin to focus on the present.

- Describe a time machine scenario. Have students pretend to go back in time to when their great grandparents, grandparents, and parents were young. Have students use the birth dates recorded on their family trees and add seven or eight years (their current age) to the date. Using [dMarie Time Capsule](#)* have students check prices, current events, pop culture, and any other information to find out what life was like when their relatives and ancestors were their age.

Wrap up the activity by having students respond to the question, *How is life different then and now?*

As a class, discuss the Unit Question, *In what ways has life changed since my parents and grandparents were my age?* After some discussion, explain that to answer this question, groups will develop a research question that focuses on how life has changed since the time when their great grandparents, grandparents, and parents were young. Model this with students by coming up with a class question.

Ask students, *How can we answer our research question?* After some discussion, explain that each group should come up with at least four interview questions to help answer the group's research question. Model with students the types of questions that will give them the best data. Have students focus on questions that will result in a numerical answer.

Next, assign students to groups and set them to work creating their research question, and interview questions. Meet with each group to monitor progress and answer any questions. For homework, have students interview at least four people using the question that their group has created.

The following day, students should combine their numbers with their group and create a graph to represent their data. Groups can use the [graph template](#) to record their data. Show students how to analyze their graphs, and draw some conclusions about their hypothesis. Allow each group to share their data and results. Have students include their graphs in their biography multimedia presentations.

Optional Extension: Some groups may want to extend their survey to a wider audience. With the help of parent volunteers or older buddies, students can design a Web site or wiki with a survey or use an online survey tool, like [Survey Monkey](#)* to gather more information. Groups can post their research question, hypothesis, and graph, and continue to collect data from the online surveys.

Capturing the Present

Autobiography

Return to the chart created at the beginning of the unit. Focus on the middle column, "Capturing the Present." Remind students of the answers they came up with and ask them to generate any new ways they can think of to capture the present. Lead them into a discussion about recording one's own life story and introduce the term *autobiography*.

Select and read an age-appropriate autobiography together, focusing on the types of narrative elements included, such as early years, school years, career, family, dreams, influential events or people, and accomplishments.

Pose the Essential Question again, *How will I make a difference?* Follow up with other questions such as:

- *Where did I come from, and where am I going? (Unit Question)*
- *What story do I have to tell?*
- *How will I be remembered?*
- *What will future generations learn from me?*

Tell students that they will now have a chance to record their own life story. Pass out the [autobiography checklist](#) and review expectations for the project. Explain to

students that this checklist should be used to help guide their progress while working. Hand out an [autobiography storyboard](#) to each student and have students begin drafting their own life story. Ask students to imagine their future as well as their past and present, and to project what the future might hold for them—career, family, accomplishments, and so forth. Remind students that autobiographies are a recorded history, so students should write their autobiographies as if the events (even their projected futures) have already happened. See [autobiography sample](#). Meet with students periodically to review their checklists and monitor progress, and provide opportunities for students to receive peer feedback between drafts. Students should hand in their autobiography storyboards for your final review before publishing their autobiography on the computer.

NOTE: The following activities result in artifacts from the present that students add to their time capsules at the end of the unit. These activities can be completed as homework.

Family Recipe

In this activity, students select and copy a favorite family recipe to include in a class cookbook and in their time capsule. Pass out the [recipe handout](#) which also includes a place for students to record traditions, special memories, or history related to the recipe. Go over the handout with students, explain expectations, and answer any questions that may arise. Have students take this home to fill out and bring back to class. In addition to adding the recipes to a class cookbook and to time capsules, students also bring their “dish” to school to share at the culmination of the unit. Parents and grandparents will be invited to a “Celebrating Our Families” night to come and see all the unit projects and sample the various family recipes.

Timeline

Pose the Unit Question, *Where did I come from, and where am I going?* and explain to students that an easy way to answer this question is to create timelines. Use sample timelines to show students how the major events in a persons’ lifetime can be recorded. Show students that timelines can be set up in many ways. After examining and discussing a few sample timelines, have each student create a family timeline that captures important family events from the past and present, and includes what they hope is yet to be. Have student use the information they have gathered in their interviews and family tree to start filling in the past and present portions of their timeline. Have students continue to add to their timeline as they complete other projects in this unit.

Tradition Quilt

Discuss the importance of traditions and how traditions help define families and preserve the past. Address the following questions:

- *Why are traditions important?*
- *What is your favorite family tradition?*
 - Describe the tradition
 - Place the tradition on your life timeline
 - Explain where the tradition came from and how it has been passed down
- *How does the tradition make your family different from other families you know?*
- *How will you carry on the tradition?*

Have each student create a family quilt square that represents a favorite family tradition. Combine each square to make a class quilt.

Impacting the Future

New Tradition

Pose the question, *How can the past live on through me?* To help students see how they can make a difference in their own family and impact the future, have them decide on and write about a new tradition they would like to start and pass on to the future generations. Have them add this to their autobiography.

Time Capsule

Pose the question, *What “treasures” help to tell your family’s story?* To help answer this question, students create a family time capsule or treasure box that may include only 10 items from their family’s past and present. Boxes or other containers can be used as time capsules. The Web site www.mdhs.org/kids/timecapsule.html* has easy directions for creating a time capsule. Students should include all of their unit projects or copies of them in the time capsule, along with any other treasures that they feel would help to preserve their family history, capture their present, and impact the future. Have students use the [time capsule checklist](#) to provide descriptions of each object. Tell students to attach a description to each object. Their time capsules will be displayed and shared at their celebration night before being sealed and stored away.

Wrapping Up the Unit

Schedule times for students to share their completed biography presentations with the class. Use the [biography rubric](#) to assess the completed projects.

Finally, to wrap up the unit, hold a “Celebrating Our Families” night and invite parents and grandparents to come see all the completed unit projects and sample the various family recipes. Gives students the option to share their biography presentations. Also, provide opportunities for visitors to give feedback to students in recognition of their work.

Revisit the Essential Question, *How can I make a difference?* and the Unit Question, *How can I preserve the past, capture the present, and impact the future?* Have students respond to the questions either verbally or in writing.

Prerequisite Skills

- Mini-lessons on spreadsheet and keyboarding use
- Prior experience with word processing and file management
- Previous cooperative learning and Internet use

Differentiated Instruction

Resource Student

- Make modifications as dictated in the student’s IEP
- Have the student work with more able buddies
- Have the student work with parent volunteers or teacher’s aides
- Provide templates and scaffolding
- Allow for more oral work and less written work as appropriate

Gifted Student

- Encourage broad and deep research
- Have the student create a brochure for the heirloom instead of a simple description
- Have the student organize, catalog, and create a class museum
- Have the student create an invitation to send out for the family celebration night
- Have the student conduct Web quests or complete some of the other projects related to the unit from the <http://edsitement.neh.gov>* Web site (also listed in the Resources section)

English Language Learner

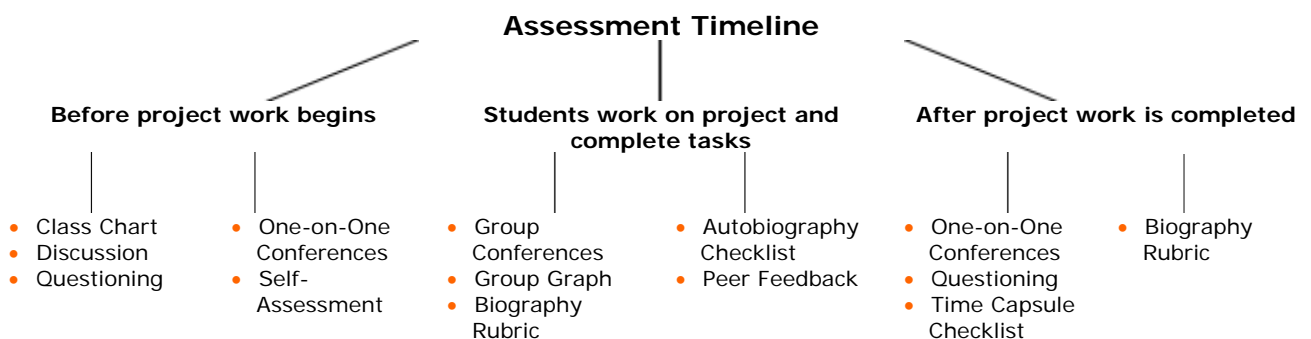
- Encourage support from other first language speakers who are more proficient in English
- Provide extra time for completing the assignments
- Have parent volunteers or teacher's aides provide assistance
- Offer teacher-created templates and graphic organizers for the student to fill in
- Use visuals, manipulative learning tools, and illustrated text

Credits

A teacher participated in the Intel® Teach Program, which resulted in this idea for a classroom project. A team of teachers expanded the plan into the example you see here.

THINGS YOU NEED (highlight box)

Assessment Plan



The unit begins with a class-created chart, which prompts discussion and provides an opportunity for the teacher to assess the students' prior knowledge of the topic. Questioning is used throughout the unit to spark discussion, monitor learning, and promote higher-order thinking. To help students self-monitor their learning, have them use the [self-assessment](#) while working on their biography storyboards. One-on-one conferences between the teacher and student help to keep students on track and provide the assistance second graders need while working independently on a project. Use the [biography rubric](#) to assess the students' multimedia biography presentations.

Group conferences and more discussions help to assess learning while students work on collecting data and creating their group graphs. Students should use the [time](#)

[capsule checklist](#) to ensure that they have included all ten items and to provide descriptions of each item. Students also use the [autobiography checklist](#) to guide their progress while writing their autobiographies. Peer conferencing provides feedback for students as they go through the writing process. During one-on-one conferences, use the student's [autobiography checklist](#) to take notes and assess student work. Finally, assess student understanding of the Essential and Unit Questions through discussion and/or written responses.

Targeted Content Standards and Benchmarks

Grade 2 California Content Standards

Social Science

People Who Make a Difference

2.1 Students differentiate between things that happened long ago and things that happened yesterday.

1. Trace the history of a family through the use of primary and secondary sources, including artifacts, photographs, interviews, and documents.
2. Compare and contrast their daily lives with those of their parents, grandparents, and/ or guardians.

Math

Statistics, Data Analysis, and Probability

1.0 Students collect numerical data and record, organize, display, and interpret the data on bar graphs and other representations:

- 1.1 Record numerical data in systematic ways, keeping track of what has been counted.
- 1.4 Ask and answer simple questions related to data representations.

1.0 Writing Strategies

Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

Organization and Focus

1.1 Group related ideas and maintain a consistent focus.

Evaluation and Revision

1.4 Revise original drafts to improve sequence and provide more descriptive detail.

2.0 Writing Applications

2.1 Write brief narratives based on their experiences:

- a. Move through a logical sequence of events.

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Construct a family history timeline and family tree identifying parents, grandparents, and ancestors
- Describe contributions and impacts of family members
- Compare the students' daily lives with the lives of their relatives and ancestors
- Develop a multimedia biography about a family member based on research and first-hand interviews
- Write autobiographies, including predictions about what the future might hold

- Develop and test a research question
- Gather, graph, and analyze data
- Add a family recipe to a class cookbook
- Describe a family tradition and create a quilt square to represent it
- Propose a new family tradition
- Identify, prioritize, and select items to be include in a family history time capsule

Resources

Materials and Resources

Printed Materials

- Second grade social science text book, library books, handouts
- Pearce, Q. L. (1997). *Social studies made simple, grade 2*. Grand Rapids, MI: Frank Schaffer Publications.
- Wright, M. E. (2002). *Clearly social studies grade 2*. Grand Rapids, MI: Frank Schaffer Publications.

Internet Resources

- What is History? Timelines and Oral Histories
http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=406*
Lesson plan for creating timelines and oral histories
- Historical Treasure Chests
www.k12science.org/curriculum/treasure*
Activity for students to investigate authentic materials from the past
- EDSITEment
http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=325*
My Piece of History lesson plan to put students in touch with their family history
- Maryland Historical Society
www.mdhs.org/kids/timecapsule.html*
Directions for making a time capsule
- A Family Quilt Storybook
www.mdhs.org/kids/quilt/quiltstor.html*
Provides a template for creating a quilt square
- EDSITEment
http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=346*
Family and Friendship in Quilts lesson plan
- EDSITEment
http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=242*
Stories in Quilts lesson plan to create a class quilt
- dMarie Time Capsule
<http://dmarie.com/timecap/>*
Find out what happened on any day in history
- Survey Monkey
<http://surveymonkey.com/>*
A tool to develop online surveys

Technology—Hardware

- Computers for creating autobiographies, biographies, graphs, and Web sites

- Digital camera for taking photos of students and families for autobiographies and biographies
- Printer for printing student products
- Internet connection to enable research
- Scanner to insert original paintings or drawings by students into brochures

Technology—Software

- Database/spreadsheet software for graphing activities
- E-mail for contacting family for research
- Encyclopedia on CD-ROM for research
- Web browser to research and complete activities throughout the unit
- Word processing to complete the brochure
- Multimedia to publish biography