



Project Try-It Activity

Illinois 4-H Youth Development Program

Family Heritage

MAKE A FAMILY TREE

Learn about your ancestors by completing a basic family tree starting with yourself and working out to your great grandparents!

Activity Time: 1 to 2 hours | Recommended Ages: 8 to 18

SUPPLY LIST

- Access to phone or internet to contact relatives
- [Family Tree Worksheet](#) (pdf)
- Pencil
- Assorted family records (if available)

WATCH IT!

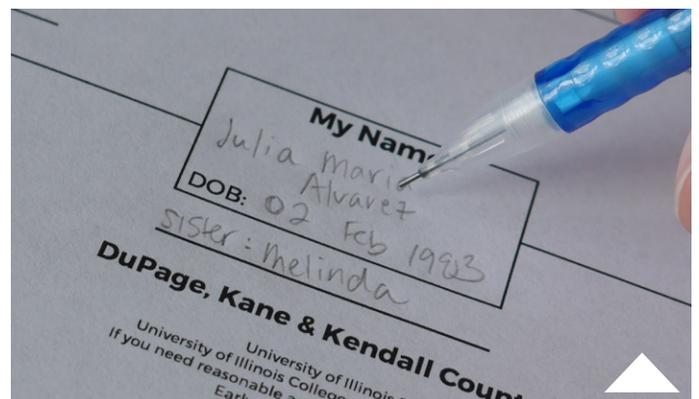
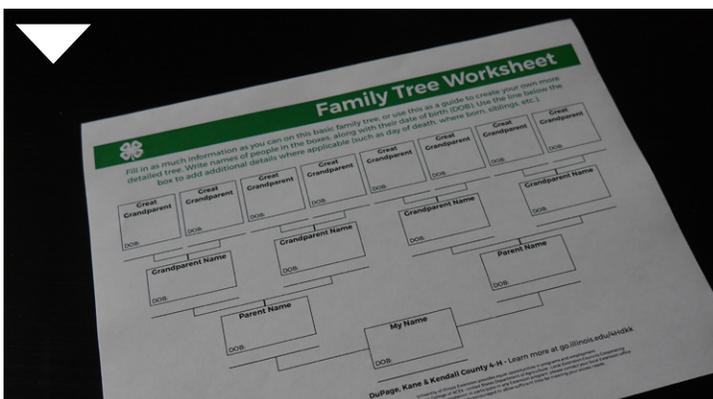
View a video tutorial of this activity by using the qr code (right) or visiting: <https://youtu.be/Ls7UaG5EqGc>



Note for families: This activity encourages youth to interview family members to get basic genealogy information. This action, along with some of the “Apply It” activities may bring to light unexpected stories or surprises. For example: maybe Grandma was married before she met Grandpa. Most genealogists enjoy finding such facts, but some people may feel differently. Please be prepared for this possibility and adjust your family’s level of participation accordingly.

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

1. Start by downloading our Family Tree Worksheet (<https://uofi.box.com/v/4HFamilyTree>). You can fill out this sheet digitally or print it and fill it in with pencil.



2. At the bottom center of the worksheet start by filling in your full name (first, middle and last) in the box that says “My Name.” Then write your date of birth next to “DOB” on the bottom line. Note: if you’d like to write your “DOB” in the way widely used in genealogy, use the international date style of day first, the first three letters of the month, then the year (i.e. 6 Feb 1989).

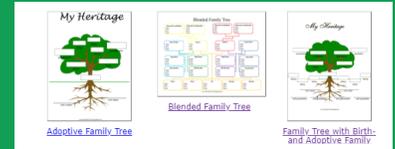


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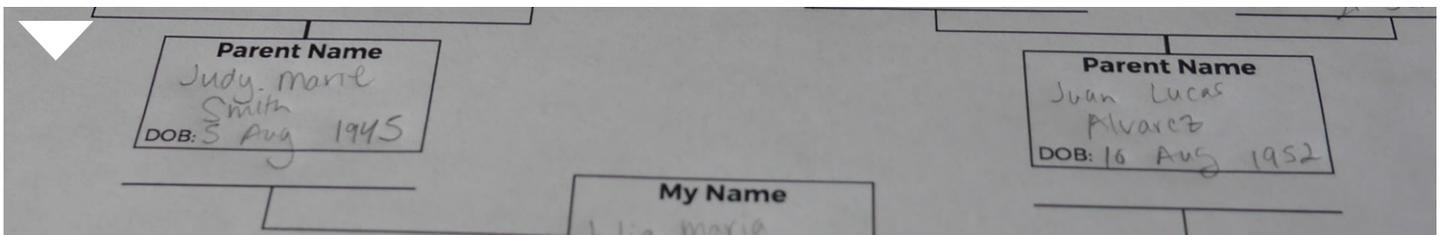
Use the line below your name to add any additional details you'd like, such as your siblings' names (if applicable) or the town you were born in. If you're fuzzy on details, talk to your parent or guardian or consult a document like your birth certificate (if available).

NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILY TREE RESOURCES

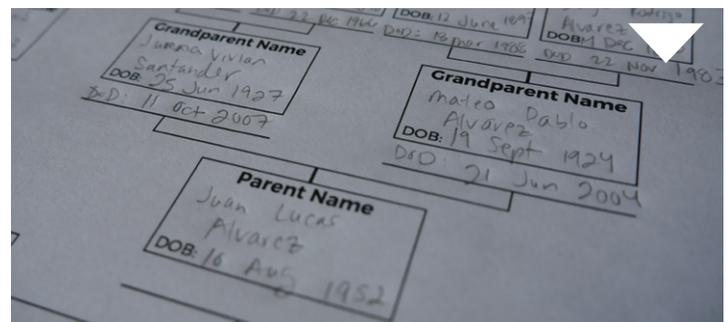
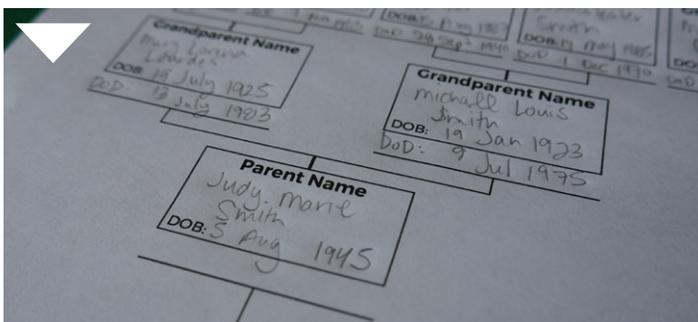
If you have a non-traditional family and our basic family tree chart won't work for you, you can explore other options at <https://www.familytreetemplates.net/category/nontraditional>.



- After you've filled in your information, you're going to move up a level and fill in details about your parents (or guardians). The easiest way to get this information is usually to just ask them for it! If you can't get the information directly, you can ask other relatives or consult family records. Find out your parents' full names and dates of birth and list that info in the boxes marked "Parent Name." For your mother, list her last name as her maiden name (or the name she had before she got married, which appears on her birth certificate). During this step and all the following steps, it's okay to leave any information you don't know blank. You can use the lines below the boxes to add additional details about each parent (like their wedding date).



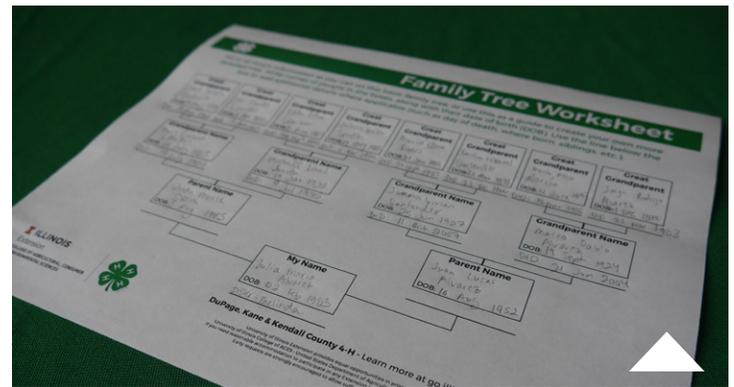
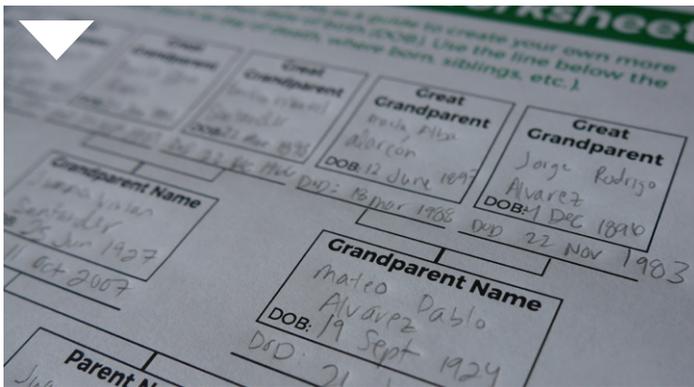
- Once you have your parents both filled in, you're ready to move on to the boxes for both sets of grandparents. To fill these in, you can ask your parents for information, or if possible, contact your grandparents directly via phone, email or social media (they will probably be excited to talk to you!). Above your mother's box, fill in her parents' names (your maternal grandparents) and dates of birth in the two linked boxes that read "Grandparent Name." Just like in the previous step, use maiden names for all the women on the chart. Then fill in the grandparent boxes above your father's box with the names of his parents (your paternal grandparents) and their dates of birth. As before, use the line below their boxes for additional information (like siblings, place of birth or date of death, if applicable). If your grandparents are no longer living, your parents may have family documents they can share, like birth certificates, where you can find this information. Leave any info you can't find blank.





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- After you've filled in as much information as you can about your grandparents, you're ready to move up to the top row of boxes on the family tree: your great grandparents. If your grandparents are still living, contact them to see if they can help you fill in this information. Similar to before, for each of your grandparents, you'll list their parents' names and dates of birth in the two linked boxes above their name that read "Great Grandparent." If applicable, write these individual's days of death on the lines below their boxes. Just like in the previous step, use maiden names for all the women on the chart. If your grandparents aren't available to assist, see if any other family members, like parents, aunts, uncles, or others, might know this information. If you run into trouble completing this section, look for other resources in the "Apply It" section of this document.



- You've successfully completed our family tree worksheet to find some of your ancestors. Feel free to flesh out this document by adding people like children, siblings and cousins. If the worksheet gets too complicated, you can transfer the info to another larger sheet. We encourage you to share what you've found with other members of your family.



MAKE IT A CONVERSATION!

During this whole activity, we strongly encourage you to talk to your various family members in person, on the phone, or via video chat to collect the information. This will encourage conversations that might result in you learning some interesting family stories.

APPLY IT

Genealogy is the study of families, and family history, and often involves tracing lineages, or ancestry. Genealogists use tools like interviews, historical documents and records, and genetic analysis to collect their data. Working off this basic information, they also can document family stories, and put people's lives into historical context.

Now that you've started to explore the world of family history, what can you do next?

- Find photos of as many of the people on your chart as you can (such as those at right), or look for other documents to learn more about each person on the tree. Go through family records and photos first.

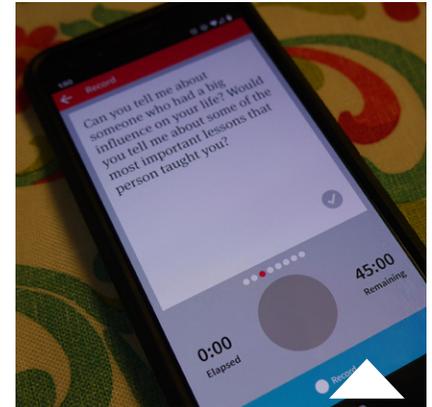




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Then, visit the Illinois State Genealogical Society's website (<https://ilgensoc.org>) to check out free resources to research further.

- With parental permission, fill in gaps in your family tree, or expand it, by checking out an online genealogy database like Family Search (<https://www.familysearch.org>) or Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com>). Family Search (see image below left) is free, while Ancestry has a fee (but your local library may have a subscription to the service). Please note that you have to create an account to access these services, so this should be done with your parent or guardian.



- Conduct an interview with a family member to hear some family history firsthand. Check out a variety of great questions from StoryCorps to get a meaningful conversation going (<https://bit.ly/38XifiK>). If you're techy, you can use the StoryCorps Connect app (see image above right) on a phone or tablet to record your conversation and have it be preserved in the StoryCorps archive at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Learn more about StoryCorps Connect and listen to stories from this project on their website (<https://storycorps.org/participate/storycorps-connect>).

PROJECT CONNECTION

Did you have fun learning about your ancestors and completing a basic family tree? If you like to do research to learn about your family and their history, Family Heritage is the 4-H project for you. In this project you will gain research skills, increase your knowledge of personal identity and your family heritage, improve family communications, and search for and document genealogical information.

REFERENCES

- Family History Treasure Hunt (Ohio State University Extension) available for purchase at <https://extensionpubs.osu.edu/family-history-treasure-hunt/>
- Genealogy (Wikipedia) at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogy>
- 7 Genealogy Activities You Can do With Kids (Family Tree Magazine) at <https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/7-genealogy-activities-for-kids/>

Learn more about Illinois 4-H at 4h.extension.illinois.edu. Contact your local 4-H staff for more information. Find your office at go.illinois.edu/FindYour4HOffice.

