

Lesson One What Is History?

(Note to Parents: Please give your child time to answer all the questions and discuss these ideas out loud as you are reading. You will need either a spiral notebook, a composition book, or a notebook to keep your student's projects in, so they can have their own little history book at the end of the year.)

History starts with what you did five minutes ago. So to begin our studies, you have to help us get started. What did you do this morning? Did you make your bed? Did you eat breakfast? Did you get dressed? What are you wearing today?

You have just told the story of your morning. History is full of stories from many people and many places. I am going to tell you some stories in this class. They will be from longer ago than this morning, but we will go back just a little at a time, to help your imagination grow.

Do you know what imagination is? Imagination is when you make or change a picture in your mind. Have you ever imagined that a cloud looked like a pancake or a dog? Or maybe it was your pancake that looked like a cloud! Using your imagination can be very fun, and it is important in history. To understand times before we were born we have to use our imagination, because the world was a little bit different that long ago. But before we can imagine what it was like, we need information. We need to know just which things were different and what life was like way back then, before we can make a nice beautiful, bright, and colorful picture of those times in our imaginations.

Your first assignment is to be an investigator, someone who asks questions in order to gather information. I want you to ask your mom and/or dad how many things are in your house that they did not have in their houses when they were the same age as you. You might be surprised to find how different the world was when they were little girls and boys. Or maybe you will be surprised to find out that only a few things have changed since they were little. We will talk more about when your parents were kids in a few weeks.

Now I have one more assignment for you to do to finish this lesson. You are going to make a book. Does that sound hard? Don't worry. We will only work on one page at a time, just a few pages each week. When you are done, you will be able to tell the story of history from the day you were born, all the way back to the day when the first light bulbs were manufactured and the first telephone call was made. Of course, that is a very long time ago—more than a hundred years! Your book will help you remember all of the things that happened in between the light bulb and you!

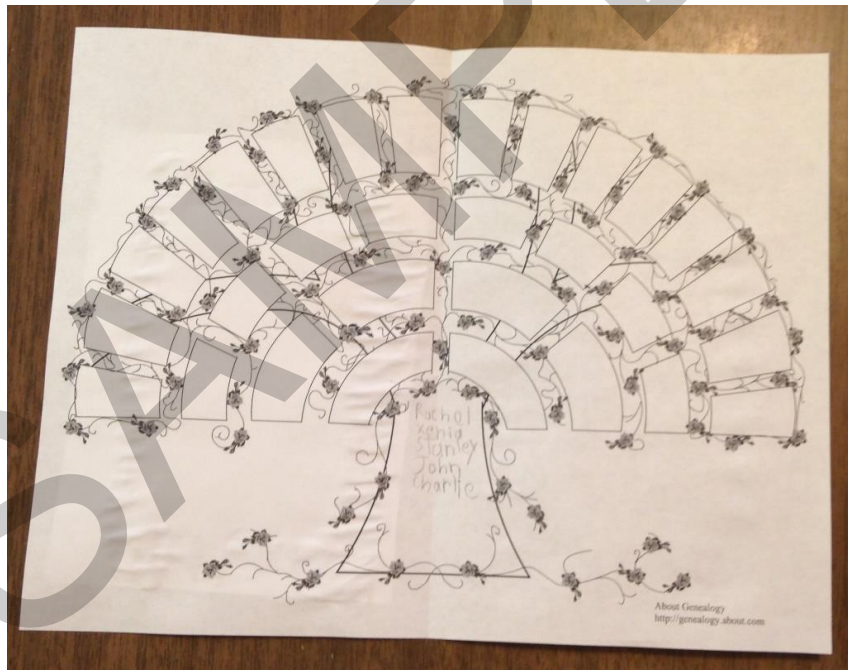
On the inside cover of your notebook you will glue the Pledge of Allegiance. This is a special promise we make to our flag and country. Many children all over the country say this pledge when they begin their school day.

Stepping Through History: Starting with You

By Marla Szwast

On the first page of your notebook, glue the table of contents. I've listed all the titles of our lessons for you, but since it is your book, you will have to fill in the page numbers where you have glued in each assignment. You will also need to number each page of your book as you add pages. This way you can quickly look up anything that you want to review or to show someone.

1. Glue the [Pledge of Allegiance](#) to the inside cover of your notebook.
2. Add your [Table of Contents](#) chart to your notebook
3. Today you will put a very special tree in your notebook. It is called a family tree. We will work on it a little at a time as we study history. Today, I just want you to write your name on the trunk of the tree. You can also put all of your brothers' and sisters' names on the trunk if you have any. If you cannot write small enough yet, that is okay, ask your mom or teacher to help you put the names in neatly so you will be able to read them later.
4. Here is the [family tree page](#).
5. Fold your tree page in half, like a book, and glue the back onto the next page of your book.
6. Cut out the [Family tree title page](#) on the gray line. Color the tree and then glue the title onto the front of your family tree book.
7. Here are pictures of how it should look when you are done.





8. On the next page, draw a picture of your family. You can do this on a piece of blank paper that is cut to a good size, and then glue it in your book.