



THE HISTORY CHANNEL PRESENTS:

# Family Tree

A two hour world premiere airing on September 17, 2001 at 9 pm ET/PT.

## FAMILY TREE

Birth certificates. Death notices. Marriage records. Census lists. All of these primary documents are potential keys that can unlock a family's past. *Family Tree* tells the story of professional and amateur genealogists who have reached back through time to discover the fascinating history of families. Your students can build primary document analysis skills as they learn how history can teach them about their families and themselves.

This guide is divided into two parts. The first part is for the teacher to use as a pre-viewing guide. The second is a chart of questions for students to help them understand the concepts discussed in *Family Tree* and to organize what they have learned.

## NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

This guide fulfills the following National Standards for History as developed by the National Center for History in the Schools: Historical Thinking Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 for Grades K-4 (Topic 1, Standard 1) and Grades 5-12 (Era 5, Standard 2; Era 6, Standard 2; Era 10; Standard 2).



## PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

### VOCABULARY

The following vocabulary will be important for your students' comprehension of the video and activities:

<b>ancestor</b>	(n.) member of a person's family who lived a long time ago, usually before the grandparents
<b>ancestry</b>	(n.) a person's ancestors as a group
<b>census</b>	(n.) an official count or list of all the people living in a country or district, often including information such as age, sex, and occupation
<b>descendant</b>	(n.) a person's child, grandchild, great grandchild, or so on into the future
<b>DNA</b>	(n.) the molecule that carries the genetic code that gives living things their special characteristics
<b>gene</b>	(n.) one of the parts of the cells of all living things, which is passed from parents to children and determines how a person looks and grows
<b>genealogy</b>	(n.) the history of a family
<b>genetics</b>	(n.) the ways that personal characteristics are passed from one generation to another through genes
<b>oral history</b>	(n.) history based on spoken stories, not written records
<b>posthumous</b>	(adj.) coming or happening after death
<b>ship's manifest</b>	(n.) a list of the goods and/or people on a ship
<b>surname</b>	(n.) a person's last name or family name

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Explore the notion of a family tree. Ask your class why people use the symbol of a tree to describe a group of people descended from the same ancestors. How can the study of genealogy connect a person to the past? On the wall-board, have a student write ideas from the class about why different people study their family trees. What is their motivation? After viewing the video, this list should be reviewed and revised as a group activity.



## PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

### VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Photocopy the Student Worksheet and hand it out to your class. Review the questions with your class before they view the documentary.

1. What is a genealogist? Give examples of the type of information sources a genealogist might use for research. You may add to this answer as the program continues. (Answer may include federal census, ship manifests, army records, family bible, birth certificate, city directories, old phone books, graveyards, deeds, court records, church records.)
2. Why did some tribal groups give babies silly or unattractive names, such as “Smelly” or “Monkey breath?” (To make them less desirable to evil spirits.)
3. What is a surname? Why did people develop surnames? (To identify themselves more clearly. If there were only first names, modern life would be very confusing.)
4. Most surnames have roots in four major categories. What are these categories? (*You may have to replay this section of the tape to insure comprehension.* The four major categories are father’s or clan name (Johnson, O’Connell), physical description (Little, Blanco), occupation (Taylor, Navarro) and location (Glenn, North, Genovese).)

#### STOP THE TAPE AND REVIEW THIS SECTION.

Have your students give examples of surnames that fit into these major categories before proceeding.

5. What is Ellis Island? (A “gateway to America”, an island off New York City where the government processed thousands of immigrants in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.) Why do so many people use the records from Ellis Island for their ancestry search? (because over 40% of the American population is related to someone who immigrated through Ellis Island.)
6. How has the Internet helped people researching their family tree? (It helps people find names and results much faster.)
7. What has the Church of the Latter Day Saints done to save family history records? Why is it so interested in this? (They have created a granite storehouse inside a mountain to preserve records. The “Mormons” believe that ancestors can be saved posthumously, that is, after they have died, if they died before learning the teachings of the Church of the Latter Day Saints.)
8. What is oral history? Why do many genealogists mistrust oral history? (Oral history is based on spoken stories, not written records. Many genealogists believe that oral history passed down for generations is not reliable.)
9. What technology was used to prove the stories passed down by descendants of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings? (DNA tests)



## PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

10. What are some of the specific problems encountered by African Americans researching their family trees? (There are few good records about African Americans prior to the Civil War, because many were held in slavery. Slaves were not allowed to read or write, and their owners could change the names of the slaves whenever they wished. Few slaves had surnames.)
11. Why were genetic diseases so common among the kings and queens of Europe? Describe one disease that was passed on by Queen Victoria. (Because members of royalty often married to strengthen their power, they often married relatives. Two genetic diseases transmitted by Victoria are hemophilia and porphyria.)
12. Why are members of the San Gabrieleno tribe in California so interested in genealogy? (They want to prove that they are a legitimate tribe of Native Americans to gain the benefits and recognition of that status.)



### EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Visit [www.genealogy.com](http://www.genealogy.com) and learn more about how to conduct a genealogical search. Each student may create a family tree. The tree may only illustrate one side of the family ancestry.
2. Family trees can be works of art. Students may design templates for family trees that provide room for the names and dates in each generation. Encourage designs that are highly functional and aesthetically pleasing.
3. Invite a local genealogist to visit the class and discuss his or her work and the variety of primary sources used for this kind of research.



## FAMILY TREE STUDENT WORKSHEET

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<p>2. Why did some tribal groups give babies silly or unattractive names, such as “Smelly” or “Monkey breath?”</p>	
<p>3. What is a surname? Why did people develop surnames?</p>	
<p>4. Most surnames have roots in four major categories. What are these categories?</p>	
<p>5. What is Ellis Island? Why do so many people use the records from Ellis Island for their ancestry search?</p>	
<p>6. How has the Internet helped people researching their family tree?</p>	



## ***FAMILY TREE* STUDENT WORKSHEET**

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7. What has the Church of the Latter Day Saints done to save family history records? Why is it so interested in this?	
8. What is oral history? Why do many genealogists mistrust oral history?	
9. What technology was used to prove the stories passed down by descendants of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings?	
10. What are some of the specific problems encountered by African Americans researching their family trees?	
11. Why were genetic diseases so common among the kings and queens of Europe? Use a dictionary or an encyclopedia to help you describe one disease that was passed on by Queen Victoria.	
12. Why are members of the San Gabrieleno tribe in California so interested in genealogy?	

