

Frank Sadorus Collection: Photographic Family Tree Activity

Objective: Students will learn more about their family and about genealogy by collecting and placing photographs of their parents, grandparents, etc., in a family tree-like chart or positioned by generation, and by their finding out more about the occupations and lives of their ancestors.

Students will learn more about photography by examining the photographs of the generations of their family, from snapshot to polaroid to studio portrait to tintype and researching them on the Internet.

Grade Levels: Elementary to Middle School

Time Required: 60 minutes plus time outside class to collect photographs. (Electronic method requires 15 minutes of scanning time plus manipulating in Photoshop or other software, which can take 30 or more minutes to size images.)

Materials:

- ?? Hands-on Family Tree Chart: posterboard or card stock cut to size, perhaps 12" by 18"
- ?? pencil to mark layout for each photo (use scratch paper first)
- ?? gluestick, pen to label family members
- ?? ruler

Digital Family Tree Chart: computer, scanner, photo manipulation software, printer (or web site to post to).

Procedure:

Hands-on Chart: Each student will collect small photographs (or copies of them) of themselves (and maybe their siblings), their parents, grandparents, and farther back, if possible. They will arrange them on a posterboard with their own photograph at the bottom, their parents photos on a line above that, etc., showing the generations. When arranged satisfactorily, they will glue them down with gluestick. They will label them in pencil and pen with the correct names and relationship to them.

Vocabulary: self, portrait, parents, grandparents, siblings, great-grandparents, generation, ancestors, descendants, family tree.

Digital Chart: Each student will scan the collection of photographs of family members. They will open them in image manipulation software and crop and size them to a compatible size (such as 150-200 pixels width) at 72 dpi for the Web or higher for print. They can save them as GIFs in indexed color to save space. They will then either:

- 1) print out the images and glue them down manually or
- 2) paste the images into Pagemaker, Word, or other document page as their chart. This requires some time and layout care, leaving spaces to type in the names and relationships next to each photograph. (See example in PDF version)

Illinois State Board of Education Goals:

Social Science: 16.C.1b (US) Explain how the economy of student's local community has changed over time. (Did ancestors live in the same town, where, how?)

18.B. Understand the roles and interactions of individuals in society. (Compare family structure, size, makeup through generations).

18.C.2. Describe how changes in production and population caused changes in social systems. (farmers, miners, etc. moving into towns to new professions and lifestyles.)

Art: 27.B.1 Know how images, sounds and movement convey stories about people, places and times. (Photographers and photographs convey stories).

Assessment: Students should be able to name all the people on their family tree chart and their relationship to the student.

They should use correctly words from the vocabulary list to describe their chart's content.

Students should be able to identify, in general, the type of photographs they have collected--polaroid, black and white, color portrait, snapshot, studio portrait, tintype, daguerrotype, hand-painted, etc.

Students should be able to tell something basic about each relative -- their birth date, profession or job, size of family, reason for moving to, exciting family legend, etc.

Sample Photographic Family Tree



Molly and Abner, Sue's great-grandparents
Mary and Will Ike, Sue's great-grandparents



May and Oliver, Sue's grandparents
Ed and Carrie, Sue's grandparents



Sibyl, Sue's mother
Ernie, Sue's father





Sue