

**PROTOTYPE TITLE: *My Personal Connection***

**AUTHOR: Angela Di Michele Lalor**

**PAGES CHOSEN FOR WEBSITE: 8, 9, 14, 23, 25,**

**DESCRIPTION:**

What better way to make sense of the history of this country than to study it through your own family history? In *My Personal Connection*, middle school students learn about immigration as they create genealogy charts, photo albums and autobiographies based on research into their family's history and the history of the United States. Students work toward important social studies and English language arts standards as they strive to answer the essential question, "What is our personal connection to History?"

## My Personal Connection

### Student Assignment

*"Bring us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses.."*  
*America is a nation of immigrants. Most of us have family members who came to America from another country. They may have come at different times and for different reasons but each has influenced our country in some way. This learning experience gives you the opportunity to explore your family history and examine how it has been affected by historical events, how your family history has affected you and how it has affected the history of America. By looking at your own family you can make a personal connection to history.*

**Part One: Create your own genealogy chart or photo album.** For this part of the assignment use a variety of resources such as family documents, family members, family pictures, and family bibles, to create a genealogy chart or photo album that tells a story about your ancestors. Upon completing your genealogy chart or photo album, be prepared to share it with the class and, of course, your family.

**A. Follow the format we have discussed in class to create a family tree of at least ~ three generations. A genealogy chart should contain:**

- Proper symbols for male/female
- Identification of deceased family members
- Birth, death and marriage dates where available
- Color-coding: maternal: paternal
- Hometown, where available
- A family trend such as one of the following: education, religion, talent, trade or occupation

**B. A photo album should contain**

- Overview of family tree on the front page. A simple genealogy worksheet will be provided for you.  
Each photograph should be labeled with the following:
  - Name
  - Birth/death date
  - Color coded- maternal/paternal
  - Hometown, where available
  - A family trend such as: education, religion, talent, trade or occupation

**Part Two: Based on your genealogy chart or photo album, classroom lessons and additional research, write an autobiography in which you tell an insightful and personal story about yourself. Include the following:**

- Description of your family history
- Make a connection between the following topics and your family history:
  - Why people wanted to come to America -Effect of immigrants on America
  - Social, cultural, political and economic problems faced by immigrants in America
  - Immigration law.
- Connection between your family history and the person you are today by examining family trends, traditions and practices.
- Draw a conclusion about the following question: Do we really have a personal connection to history?

Developed by Angela Dj Michele Lalor Copyright © CSETL. 1999.

### *Student Assignment Option:*

For those students who may have difficulty completing the assessment due to lack of information or personal reasons, the following may be completed in place of the original assessment.

**Part One: Create a genealogy chart for an important person in your life.** Ask someone who you admire if he or she would be willing to share his or her family story with you. Prepare questions and conduct an interview with this person. Follow the format we have discussed in class to create a family tree of at least three generations.

**A genealogy chart should contain:**

- Proper symbols for male/female
- Identification of deceased family members
- Birth, death and marriage dates where available
- Color-coding: maternal, paternal
- Hometown, where available
- A family trend such as one of the following: education, religion, talent, trade or occupation

**Part Two: Based on the genealogy chart, interview, classroom lessons and additional research, write a biographical sketch of one family member in which you tell an insightful and personal story. Include the following:**

- Description of the family history
- Make a connection between the following topics and family history:
  - Why people wanted to come to America
  - Effect of immigrants on America
  - Social, cultural, political and economic problems faced by immigrants in America
  - Immigration law
- Examine family trends, traditions and practices.
- Draw a conclusion about the following question: Do we really have a personal connection to history?

## Module Four: *Who Came to America?*

Learning Opportunities	Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the concept of multiculturalism. Display a group of items, and have students identify what the items are and where they came from. Introduce the major groups of immigrants and the different periods of immigration</li> <li>• Review the major components of a timeline by having the students work with a timeline on immigration.</li> <li>• Break the class into small groups. Have each group study a group of immigrants. Using classroom resources, students will identify major events occurring in the United States and in the world during this period of immigration and plot the major events on a timeline. Students will also plot the individual group member's findings about their own families on the timeline.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will complete a timeline that contains the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major historical events</li> <li>• Immigration data</li> <li>• Student immigration information</li> </ul> <p>Students will answer the questions, "What correlation is there between historical events and your family history?" Students will share their findings.</p>
<p><b>Standards</b></p> <p><b>Social Studies Standard One:</b> Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.</p> <p><b>Key Idea 2:</b> Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss several schemes for periodizing the history of New York State and the United States.</li> <li>• Develop and test hypotheses about important events, eras, or issues in New York State and United States history; setting clear and valid criteria for judging the importance and significance of these events, eras or issues.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast the experiences of different groups in the United States.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Idea 3:</b> Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and analyze the major themes and developments in New York State and United States history.</li> <li>• Understand the interrelationships between world events and developments in New York State and the United States.</li> </ul> <p><b>English Language Arts Standard Four:</b> Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.</p> <p><b>Key Idea 1:</b> Oral communication in formal and informal settings requires the ability to talk with people of different ages, genders, and cultures, to adapt presentations to different audiences, and to reflect on how talk varies in different situations.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in conversations and discussions on academic subjects, anticipating listeners' needs and skillfully addressing them.</li> <li>• Express their thoughts and views clearly with attention to the perspectives and voiced concerns of the others in the conversation.</li> <li>• Use appropriately the language conventions for a wide variety of social situations.</li> </ul>	

**Autobiography Rubric**

4	3	2	1
<p><b>Content:</b> refers to information contained in the autobiography.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates a detailed and highly personal account of one particular group of immigrants, as well as immigration in general.</li> <li>Describes the interrelationship between world events, ideas and traditions, and developments in United States history and foreign policy, as they pertain to the personal account.</li> <li>Examines in detail the contributions of specific groups and people to American society and culture.</li> <li>Uses specific examples to make a connection between ordinary people from the family and the values, beliefs and traditions of the United States.</li> <li>Identifies and explores specific family trends, traditions and practices and how they are passed down through generations, making connections between the past and the present.</li> <li>Makes connections between the role of immigration in the development and interactions of social, cultural, political, economic and religious systems in the United States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates a case study of one particular group of immigrants using personal experience.</li> <li>Examines ideas and traditions that led to foreign policy.</li> <li>Explains the contributions of specific groups of people to American society and culture.</li> <li>Describes how ordinary people represent the values, beliefs and traditions of the United States.</li> <li>Identifies family trends, traditions, and practices and how they are passed down through generations.</li> <li>Understands the role of immigration in the development of social, cultural, political, economic and religious systems in the United States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates a general and impersonal case study of one particular group of immigrants.</li> <li>Limited description of ideas and traditions that led to foreign policy.</li> <li>Lists the contributions of immigrants in general to American society and culture.</li> <li>Explains isolated, individual accomplishments unconnected to the values, beliefs and traditions of the United States.</li> <li>Explains current family practices unconnected to the past.</li> <li>Discusses immigration in regard to certain social, cultural, political, economic and religious developments in the United States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undeveloped, detached case study.</li> <li>Undeveloped and unconnected explanation of foreign policy.</li> <li>Includes little information on the contributions of specific groups of people to American society and culture.</li> <li>Provides an overview of group accomplishments unconnected to the values, beliefs and traditions of the United States.</li> <li>Explains family practices unconnected to trends, tradition and practices today or in the past.</li> <li>Disregards the connection between immigration and social, cultural, political, economic, and religious developments in the United States.</li> </ul>

## Peer Feedback Form

After reading your classmate's autobiography, find evidence of the following topics:

1. Description of family history \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Connection between family history and the following topics:

• Why people wanted to come to America \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Effect of immigrants on America \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Social problems faced by immigrants in America \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Cultural differences experienced in America \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Political problems faced in America \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Economic difficulties faced in America \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Connection between family history and the person you are today  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_