

# A History Mystery

Focus of Unit & Alignment to Standards

**Affective Focus:** Reducing anxiety and stress, coping strategies to calm worries.

**Academic Focus:** Historical thinking, historical research, history of the circus (as representative topic)

<p><b>Big Ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History is the study of the people, places and events of the past.</li> <li>Historians study the past by analyzing primary documents and artifacts.</li> <li>Primary sources help us understand history from a “first-hand account.” Secondary sources are based on author’s perception.</li> <li>Good historical research questions go beyond “right there” answers.</li> <li>Young learners understand themselves in context with their families.</li> <li>Understanding the source of information is important in developing trust in the validity of the information.</li> <li>Analyzing and looking at more than one document helps one understand the significance of the information in the documents.</li> <li>Learners can try tools to calm their fears and worries.</li> <li>By studying the past, we can learn more about ourselves.</li> <li>Exhibits can communicate historical information to an audience.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Student Inquiries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is history?</li> <li>What can I learn about the past from a photograph?</li> <li>What are primary sources and how can I learn from them? What is the difference between a primary and secondary source?</li> <li>How do I write good historical research questions?</li> <li>How do I know if I can trust a source?</li> <li>How can I be sure that I understand what really happened in the past?</li> <li>What can I do to help myself when I worry?</li> <li>How does learning about the past help me learn about myself?</li> </ul>
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## Skills Focus

<p><b>Affective Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive risk-taking</li> <li>Work ethic</li> <li>Expressing and labeling feelings</li> <li>Understanding self through family</li> <li>Ability to self-calm when worried/stressed</li> </ul>	<p><b>Disciplinary Skills</b></p> <p><b>Math:</b> Use math to solve a problem and enhance understanding of historical documents.</p> <p><b>ELA:</b> Communicate clearly and accurately when speaking and writing, read and listen with a critical mind, interpret text to understand the past, cite evidence to justify opinions.</p> <p><b>History:</b> Chronological thinking, analysis and interpretation of historical events, family history, see events through the eyes of the people that lived it, historical research, and analysis.</p> <p><b>Science/Technology:</b> Using technology to gather information and communicate to an audience.</p>	<p><b>Thinking Skills</b></p> <p><b>Creative Thinking:</b> Elaboration, originality, flexibility</p> <p><b>Critical Thinking:</b> Problem solving, evaluation, synthesis, analysis, identifying patterns, making generalizations</p> <p><b>Research:</b> Observation, interview, data collection, formulating meaningful questions, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, analyzing primary documents, communicating information to an audience</p>
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## Learning Objectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners will articulate their feelings associated with their worries.</li> <li>Learners will identify strategies for reducing stress.</li> <li>Learners will define and apply an understanding of the meaning of vocabulary words.</li> <li>Learners will collect and analyze documents, photographs and artifacts to examine their family’s history.</li> <li>Learners will distinguish between primary and secondary documents.</li> <li>Learners will apply historical research skills.</li> <li>Learners will generate historical research questions.</li> <li>Learners will evaluate the trustworthiness of a source.</li> <li>Learners will apply critical and creative thinking skills to historical research tasks.</li> <li>Learners will create and execute a plan for a historical exhibit.</li> </ul>
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## Lesson 4

### Student Inquiry:

How do I write good historical research questions?

### Summary of Chapter 4

Miss Adams encouraged the Dragonfly Kids to begin their historical research by generating questions. They wrote seven questions in their History Mystery Notebook. Miss Adams helped the kids look through town records. They discovered that Lottie Funn lived in Sun Valley in 1910, when the letter was written. When the kids saw a Sun Valley School photo from 1910, they were able to identify Lottie as one of the girls in the lake photo. They traced Lottie's family to find out that her great-granddaughter, Sunny, lives in Sun Valley with her family. The kids make a plan to find Sunny, and ask her if she has any information about Lottie.

### Learning/Performance Goals:

- Learners will write a narrative journal entry.
- Learners will define and apply an understanding of the meaning of vocabulary words.
- Learners will generate humorous names to practice and apply their creativity skills.
- Learners will draw a personal family tree.
- Learners will identify relevant questions.
- Learners will generate research questions about their ancestry and family tree.

### Minilesson

#### 1. Introduce the chapter to learners

- Facilitators can help students focus the purpose for reading by stating, *"Let's read to find out how the Dragonfly Kids began their historical research."*
- Walk through the chapter with students to define and review any words that may be challenging. The new words for this chapter are *family tree* and *related*.

#### 2. Discuss the concept of historical research.

- Historical research should be more than finding information with "right there" answers that learners repeat. Research should begin with questions that require learners to find information from various sources, and analyze the information to find the answer. A full research curriculum for this age group, **Ready for Research** is available to supplement research process instruction.
- Historical researchers rely heavily on primary documents, so much of this unit will focus on analyzing primary documents to understand and document family history.
- *If learners have prior experience with research 'reports', they often believe that research is simply looking for information about a topic or subject in books or on the internet. Through authentic research pursuits, intellectual curiosity is encouraged and nurtured. Although teaching research process skills is an important goal, a complementary focus on fostering a positive and robust love of learning and discovery is an equally valuable goal.*

#### 3. Introduce the tasks to learners

Read the student inquiry for the lesson to students: **How do I write good historical research questions?**

- Explain to students that in this lesson, they will write questions to learn more about their family. This work will help them develop skills to undertake historical research and learn more about their family history.
- Discuss the focus on the learner's family as the subject of the research.

## Student Tasks

### 1. Journal Entry (Task 4.1)

Prompt: Do you think that you are like someone in your family? Maybe you share a talent, or like the same things, or you look the same. Write about how you are the same or different from a person in your family.

### 2. New Words to Learn (Task 4.2) *family tree, related*

Review the new words for the chapter, and add any words students are unfamiliar with. Since students have had some practice with this vocabulary format, facilitators can instruct students to identify challenging words independently.

### 3. Fun With Names (Task 4.3)

- This task is a creativity task that invites learners to develop their sense of humor. Many learners will recognize the humor in the author's name choices as they are reading the chapter. A discussion to uncover the humor in the name choices would support those learners who may need to have these names pointed out more directly.
- Facilitators may need to discuss the obvious difference between an author's decision to use names as a way to inject humor, and hurting another person's feelings by making fun of his or her name.

### 4. History Notebook 4: My Family Tree (Task 4.4)

- Learners will create a personal family tree. Parents or family members will be asked to engage with the learner to research the family tree. If this is not possible, facilitators may decide to allow learners to simply draw their immediate family on the family tree.
- Learners should not be limited to drawing a diagram similar to the one in *A History Mystery*. Facilitators can find many examples of creative family tree formats by doing a simple google search of images with the search term, *creative family tree*.
- If a learner has no access to family information, facilitators can help learners access a biography of an individual of interest to use a subject for this task and other tasks related to family history in this unit.
- This task **supports the standards of the National Council for the Social Studies**; *In the early grades, young learners develop their personal identities in the context of families, peers, schools, and communities. Central to this development are the exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals and groups are alike and how they are unique, as well as how they relate to each other in supportive and collaborative ways. (National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning and Assessment.)*

### 5. Question Practice (Task 4.5 A and 4.5B)

- Young learners may have limited experience with recognizing whether a question is relevant or irrelevant. Task 4.5A introduces this important skill to learners. The actual relevance of a question can be more subjective than is obvious. Learners may have a different opinion on the most relevant question, and I encourage facilitators to ask learners to justify a choice that may seem like it is the less obvious choice.

- *Learners may need additional direct instruction and practice with this skill. Facilitators are encouraged to embed opportunities for distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information in tasks in all disciplines for advanced learners on a regular basis.*
  - Task 4.5B is an introduction and practice with generating relevant research questions. Learners can be instructed to complete this task independently, followed by discussion with peers and/or the facilitator.
  - *At times advanced learners are reluctant to share genuinely original ideas for fear of failure. The need to be "right" can be stronger than the need for intellectual risk. Giving advanced learners sufficient time to process information and work through tasks independently, before sharing their thoughts with peers, can give them the confidence to take positive academic risks.*
6. History Notebook 4: Questions About My Family Research Questions (Task 4.6)
- Learners will generate questions about the family photographs they have collected for their historical research family history project.
  - Learners should be reminded that the family photographs are primary documents. They should be encouraged to look at all of the details in the photographs as they did in prior tasks. Facilitators can access a Hint Card to provide sentence stems to support this task. (See Hint Card 4.6)

#### **Assessment**

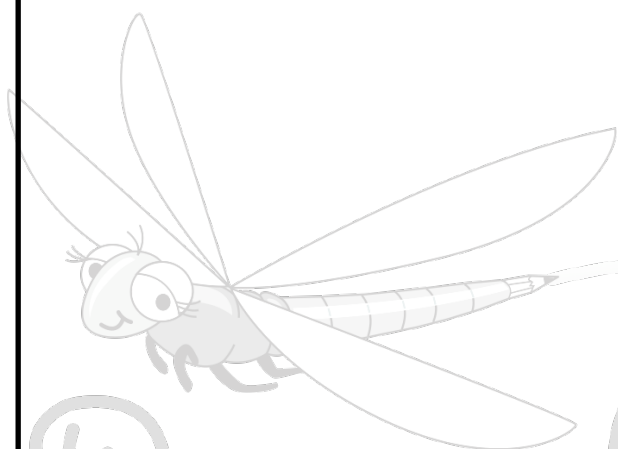
- Self-evaluation  
Facilitators may choose to have learners complete a self-evaluation each day for each lesson, or once a week to keep them accountable for independent work.
- Anecdotal notes  
Daily or weekly observations can be recorded to document student performance for all or some of the tasks. Facilitators can focus on specific skills for each student or group.
- Skills Checklist

#### **NOTES:**



## Journal Entry

Do you think that you are like someone in your family? Maybe you share a talent, or like the same things, or you look the same. Write about how you are the same or different from a person in your family.



Dragonfly Kids

**New Words to Learn****related**

I think it means...	Dictionary definition
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Draw a picture



Dragonfly Kids

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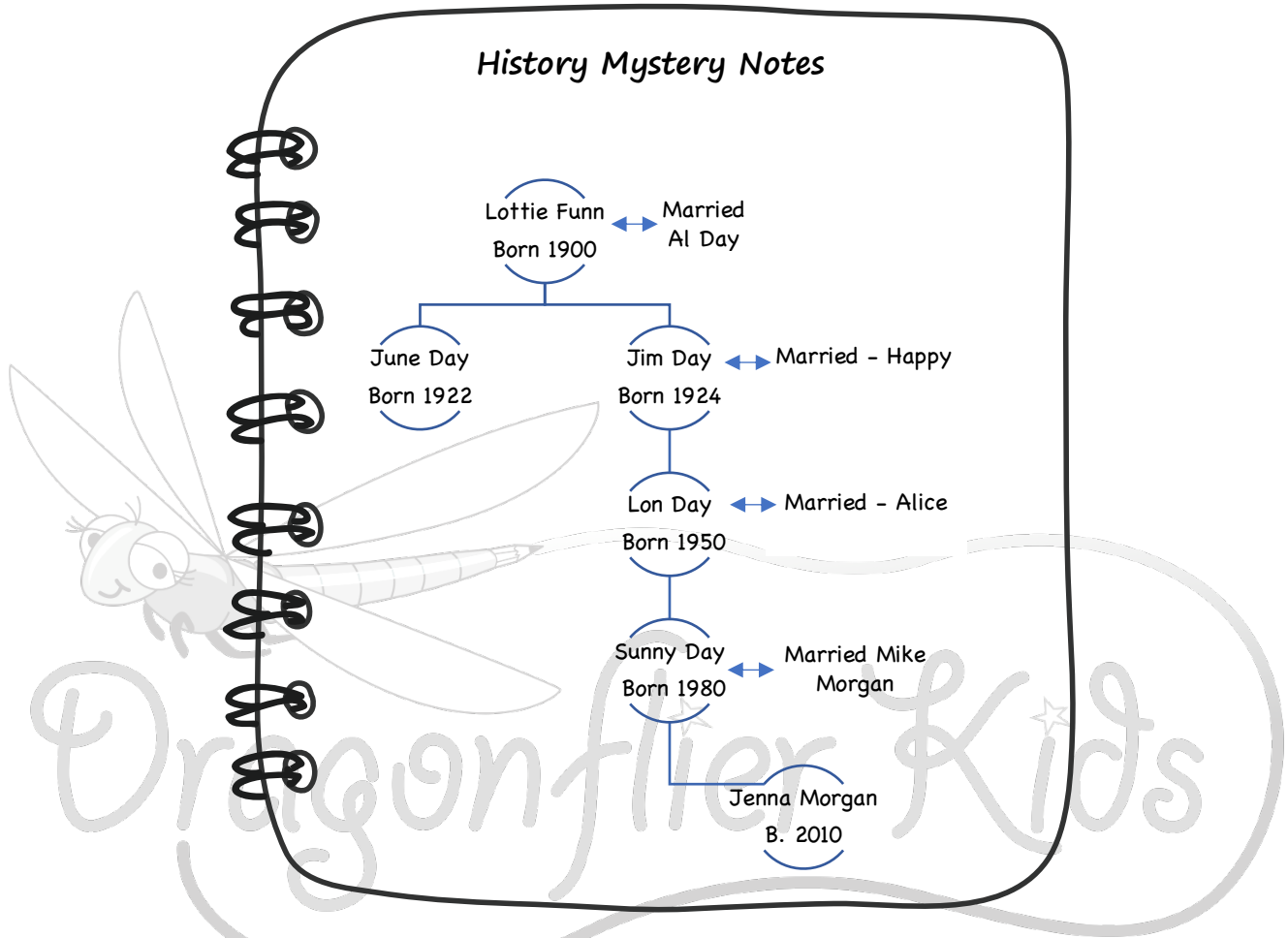
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Write a sentence

## Fun With Names

When authors think of names for their characters, they sometimes choose names that are interesting or even funny. Lottie's parents' names were Nomar and Mora Funn. What makes that funny? Look at Lottie's family tree in *A History Mystery*. Do you notice anything interesting about the names?



Come up with some fun names of your own! One trick is to use an adjective for the first name and a noun for the last name. Try it yourself. It should be a 'Lottie Funn'!

Adjective (First Name)	Noun (Last Name)

## History Notebook 4

### My Family Tree

Use the family tree that Viv drew in the book as a model to draw your own family tree. If you want to be more creative, you can draw the tree in a creative way. Be sure that your drawing shows how your family members are related.

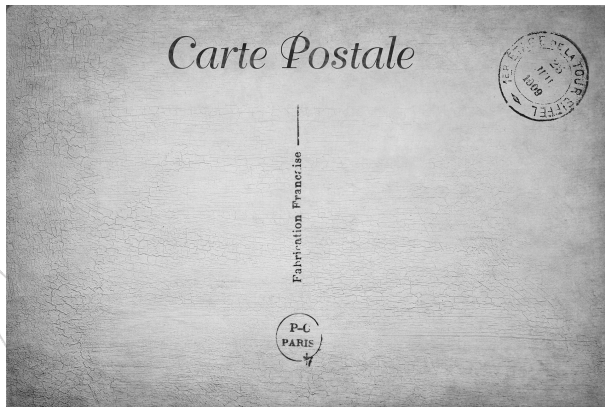


Dragonfly Kids

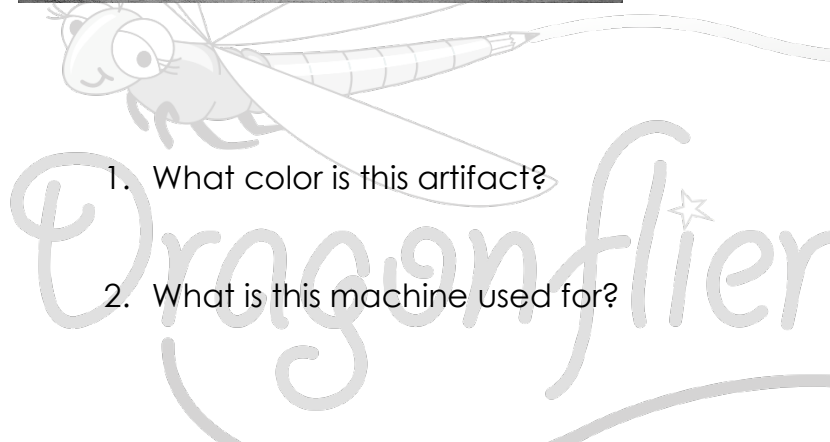
## Question Practice

Historical research begins with good questions. The Dragonflyer Kids had many questions after they found Clemmie's letter and the photograph. Writing good research questions takes practice, so let's get started.

Look at the picture of the document or artifact and **circle the question** that would help you understand more about that document or artifact.



1. What country is this postcard from?
2. What are the measurements of this postcard?



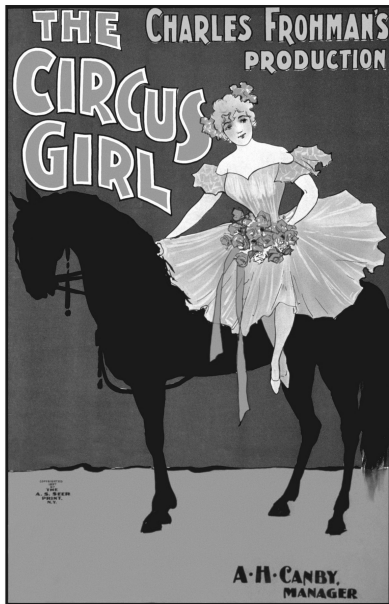
1. What color is this artifact?
2. What is this machine used for?



1. Why is this woman in this poster showing us her arm muscle?
2. Who drew this poster?



Look at the poster, photograph and artifact and write one or more questions. Be sure that your question(s) will help you learn more about the document or artifact.



My question(s):

My question(s):



My question(s):



## History Notebook 4

### Questions about My Family History

Use the photograph you have collected, or ask someone in your family to help you collect more photographs of your family from the past. Look at the photographs and choose one or two to analyze. List questions that you have about the photograph(s).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Dragonfly Kids

Put the photograph(s) in a safe place to use later!