

Meet the ancestors

What makes you who you are? Part of the answer is in your family's past. Become a detective and find clues to your family history.

Read the text about family history and match the headings below with the correct sections in the text.

1. When you look in the mirror, do you see your father's smile? Maybe you take after your mother or look like a grandparent? That's because of DNA. Our DNA contains **genes** that make each person in the world different - no two people look, think or act the same. We pass down our genes through **generations**. Scientists can test your DNA to find out which part of the world your **ancestors** were from.
2. Your family's history may be a mystery to you, but there's a way to find out about it. It's called **genealogy**, and it's the study of the people you are related to. Genealogy helps you put together your family history. It starts with the relatives you know, such as parents and grandparents, and then you can learn about ancestors who lived and died before you were born.
3. It isn't difficult to learn about your past. You can begin by asking your relatives questions about your ancestors. While you are talking with family members, take notes. This helps you organise any information you get. Make sure you write down any names, dates or places people mention. Then you can draw a family tree with your name at the top. Then you would add all the relatives from you to your great grandparents so you can see how everyone is related.

Word Focus

gene: part of a cell passed from parents to children that determines how they look
generation: the people of about the same age in a particular family
ancestor: person related to you who lived a long time ago
genealogy: the study of family history

4. If there are any blank boxes in your tree it's time for some detective work! Many people begin at a library where they can look for family names in old newspapers. Public records are usually a very good thing to look at too. They have information about births, marriages and death certificates too. Some records show when people moved to a country. Sometimes, records tell you where people went to school and what their job was. You can also search the Internet. With every bit of research you do, you are discovering your family's history.

D Read the Exam Close-up. Then read the Exam Task below and underline the key words in the text.

Exam Task

Look at the sentences below about studying your family history. Read the text to decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect. Write T (True) or F (False).

- 1 We look the way we do because of the genes in our DNA. ☐
- 2 A DNA test can show where in the world our ancestors lived. ☐
- 3 You can find out the number of relatives you have in a DNA test. ☐
- 4 Genealogy is the history of our past and present family members. ☐
- 5 Relatives who are alive could have information about ancestors. ☐
- 6 A family tree shows how you are related to other people in your family. ☐
- 7 A detective can help you to find information about your family. ☐
- 8 It is possible to buy old newspapers at some libraries. ☐
- 9 Public records tell you when people were born. ☐
- 10 The text says that websites can help you find information about your ancestors. ☐