



How to...



DID YOU KNOW?

More than 100 million people have the last name Wang, which is the most common surname in the world.

Explore your family's history

Learning more about your relatives' past can be fun and rewarding.

Genealogy (the study of family history) is a popular hobby in the US and around the world. Finding out about your close relatives as well as your ancestors (family members who lived in past times) can help you learn more about your cultural background, feel closer to your family, and strengthen your sense of identity. Here's how you can get started.

Make a family tree

One fun way to begin is by making a family tree. This is a chart that lists people you're related to. (There are many templates online that will give you an idea of how the tree could look.) On a large piece of paper, write the names of the people in your immediate family (your parents and siblings) across the bottom. With help from a parent or other relative, fill in additional family members and draw lines to show how they're connected. Include grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins. Keep adding names as far back as you or your relatives can remember.

Research names

Last names, also called surnames, are one way families may be linked across generations. When you look at your family tree, you may see a few common last names. These surnames can give you clues about your family's history. Some last names are related to jobs people may

have held (for example, the name Smith was originally used by blacksmiths), while others might be related to where a family lived. You can find out more about surnames at houseofnames.com or familysearch.org.

Learn your traditions

One way many families honor their heritage is by passing down traditions, such as how you celebrate holidays. This may include food customs that might have originated in a country or region where your relatives once lived. Ask a relative to show you how to make some of your family's special dishes, and write down the recipes for safekeeping. Other traditions that may be passed down are family stories and sentimental items. You and your immediate family can also create new family traditions together.



Bring your loved ones together.

Plan a family reunion

One of the best ways to celebrate your family history and learn more is to get together with your relatives. Consider asking a parent or grandparent if they could help you plan a family reunion. Discuss a convenient location for everyone, whether it's at someone's home, a hotel or restaurant, or a local park. If it's not possible to have a reunion in person, you could plan a time for your relatives to join a video call. This could be a great opportunity to ask people to show photos, add to your family tree, or share their favorite traditions.

4 creative ways to use family photos

Display and reminisce over favorite old pictures with these fun ideas.

Create a collage

Before your next family gathering, ask everyone to bring copies of old family photos. Use them to create a group collage on posterboard.



Match baby photos

Another fun thing to do at a family gathering:

Put a baby picture of each person on the table, and write a number beside each. Have attendees guess who's who. The person with the most correct guesses wins!

Assemble a scrapbook

A scrapbook is a great gift for a special family member. Ask relatives to share photos, keepsakes, and memories to include.



Make your own gift tags

When you exchange gifts with your family

members, print out current or old photos of the recipients and use double-sided tape to attach them to wrapped presents. Everyone can quickly identify their gifts by checking out the photos!

