

# Make a Grandparent History Book

To a child, a grandparent is a timeless figure. But your child's grandparent had a childhood, youth, and adulthood full of interesting and wonderful stories! Encouraging your child to learn about her grandparent's past will not only strengthen family ties, it can be a great writing exercise, history lesson, and gift, rolled into one! Here's how to interview, write about, and present a grandparent narrative that will rock Grandpa's socks off.

## What You Need:

- A blank book
- Pen and paper

## What You Do:

1. Round up a grandparent or other older family member, or call them up on the telephone. Tell them you want to learn more about their lives—the parts that *don't* get repeated every Thanksgiving like clockwork, that is. Some people might be shy about sharing right away, but they'll warm up quickly when given the opportunity to talk to their grandchild! To help, ask specific questions, such as “What was your school like?” or “What did you like to eat as a kid?”, then move on to more general themes, like “Why did you become a musician?” and “How did you first meet my grandma?”
2. While your interview subject is talking, take notes. Make sure to include the general outline of what's being said and whatever details you think are interesting, important, or funny.
3. Next, the task is to organize your notes into a “narrative” - in essence, a story that tells what happened. Decide what part of your subject's story you want to tell: is it the childhood years, how he came to America, or how he first fell in love? Make a rough draft on the computer or a piece of paper that includes a beginning, middle, and end of the story.
4. To make your final draft polished and ready to be given as a gift, edit your rough draft for spelling errors and other things you might want to change. Then copy your narrative into a blank book, and give it a meaningful title that relates to the story. If you like, you can include photos or drawings by pasting them into the book as well, or decorate the outside cover.
5. At the next holidays, or you can make any day special, wrap up your book and present it to your grandparent! Nothing is better than a handmade gift from the heart, even if it doubles as writing practice!

