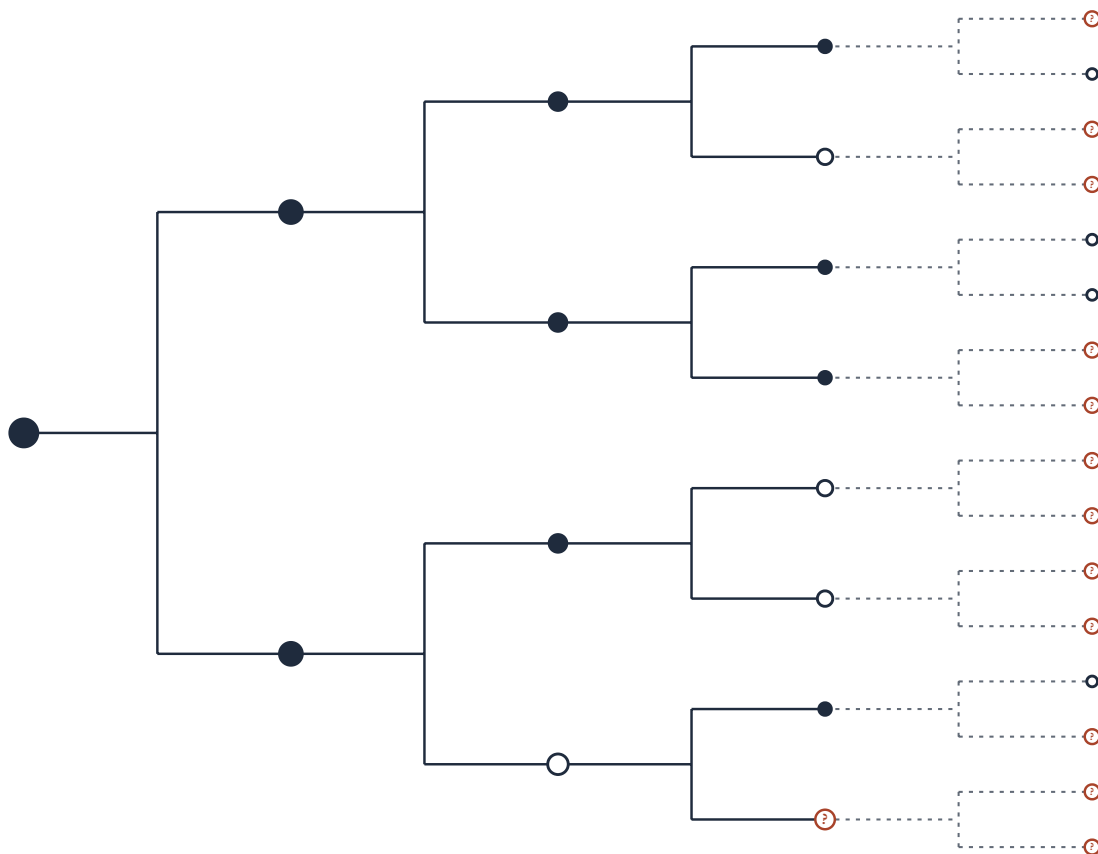




Fill In the Dots

A Family History Starter Map & Research Log

The three marks · a blank Starter Map · twelve questions to ask · six free places to search.

☐ Said ☒ Seen ☐ ? Not sure

Fill in the dots

Family stories are precious — and they drift as they're retold. Records can be wrong too. So beside every name, date and place, keep one small circle that shows *how you know it*.



Said

Someone told me, or I remember it. Not yet checked in a record.

Grandpa's birthday, as the family always celebrated it.



Seen

I have seen a record that says this, and noted where.

The date on a death certificate you've looked at — with a note of where it is.



Not sure

A guess, a gap, or two sources that disagree.

A maiden name someone half-remembers. Write a ? in the circle.

How to start today

1. Print the Starter Map on the next page (landscape, actual size).
2. Write yourself in box 1, then your parents and grandparents — as far as you can go from memory.
3. Leave every circle empty for now. Fill one in only when you have a record in your hands.
4. Take the map, and the questions in this sampler, to the oldest relative you can talk to.

Starter Map

b. born · d. died · m. married or partnered — date on the first line, place on the second. Write dates as 3 Feb 1929 and places from town to country.

☐ Said ☒ Seen ☐ Not sure

Map no. _____ Person 1 _____ Date _____

PERSON 1

1

b.

partner

m.

d.

PARENTS

2

b.

d.

other names

m.

3

b.

d.

other names

GRANDPARENTS

4

b.

d.

other names

m.

5

b.

d.

other names

6

b.

d.

other names

m.

7

b.

d.

other names

GREAT-GRANDPARENTS

8

b.

d.

9

b.

d.

10

b.

d.

11

b.

d.

12

b.

d.

13

b.

d.

14

b.

d.

15

b.

d.

Twelve questions to ask

Choose five or six. Ask one at a time, let silences sit, and write down who said each thing. Ask permission before you record.

- 1** NAMES AND THE PEOPLE BEHIND THEM
What was your full name when you were born? Who were you named after?

- 2** PLACES AND MOVES
What addresses do you remember living at? What were the houses like?

- 3** PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS
What do you remember most about your grandparents?

- 4** HOME AND EVERYDAY LIFE
What did a usual Sunday — or day of rest — look like when you were young?

- 5** SCHOOL, WORK AND SERVICE
Which schools did you go to? Do you remember a favorite teacher?

- 6** JOURNEYS AND ARRIVALS
Who was the first in our family to come to this country? Do you know when?

- 7** FAITH, TRADITIONS AND COMMUNITY
Did the family belong to a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other community?

- 8** PAPERS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND KEEPSAKES
Do you have any family photographs? Can we look at them together?

- 9** FAMILY STORIES AND LEGENDS
What story about our family has everyone heard?

- 10** NAMES AND THE PEOPLE BEHIND THEM
What were your parents' full names — including the surnames they were born with?

- 11** NAMES AND THE PEOPLE BEHIND THEM
What were your grandparents' names? What did you call them?

- 12** PLACES AND MOVES
Where did your parents and grandparents grow up?

The full kit has 50 questions in 10 themes, 5 more for photographs, 24 printable conversation cards, and an Interview Record for writing up what you hear.

Six free places to start

“Free” means different things. Each source below shows whether it’s free to search, free to see, and whether you need an account.

FamilySearch (historical records search)

The best free starting point for almost any family history search, from census records to church registers.

Free account needed to search

Some records only at a center or library

familysearch.org/en/search

FamilySearch Research Wiki

Learning what records exist for a place and where to find them online or offline.

Free to search

Index or guide only

familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page

Find a Grave

Finding where a relative is buried, a headstone photo, and links to family members’ graves.

Free to search

Records free to view

findagrave.com

1950 Census Website

Finding your parents or grandparents in the most recent census that is open to the public (1950).

Free to search

Records free to view

1950census.archives.gov

LAC Census Search (Census of Canada 1825-1931)

Free name search and free page images of every available Canadian census up to 1931.

Free to search

Records free to view

recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Census/Index

HeritageQuest Online (through your public library)

Using census images and old county history books free from home with your library card.

Library card needed

Records free with a library card

heritagequestonline.com

The full Free Records Directory lists 117 sources across the United States, Canada and the countries many families came from, with every access label explained.

Free to search isn't always free to see

Can I search it?	Free to search	No payment to search the names or catalog.
	Free account needed to search	Free, but you must sign in first.
	Paid to search	A subscription or fee is needed even to search.
Can I see the record itself?	Records free to view	You can see the page or its image at no cost.
	Some records only at a center or library	Some images open only on computers at a FamilySearch Center, affiliate library or archive.
	Pay to view each record	Searching is free, but each image or certificate costs money.
	Index or guide only	A list or a how-to guide — it points you to the record elsewhere.
Do I need an account?	Free account required	Make a free account with an email address and password.
	Paid account	A subscription is needed.
Do copies cost money?	Copies cost a fee	Official or certified copies are ordered and paid for, even when viewing is free.

○ Keep this page beside you when you search, and check the labels before you pay for anything.

THE FULL KIT

When you're ready for the next step

Start your family history with what you already know — and keep track of everything you find.

- **The Guide.** Seven unhurried sittings — gather, map, ask, plan, search, log and weigh — each with a worked example.
- **Forms to print or type.** Starter Map, Family Page, Interview Record, Research Plan, Records Checklist, Research Log and more, in US Letter and A4.
- **The Free Records Directory.** Where to search free in the United States, Canada and abroad, with honest access labels.
- **The Research Workbook.** A spreadsheet log, people list and directory for Excel, Google Sheets or Numbers.

US\$27 · One payment. Instant download. No subscription. · If the kit isn't useful to you, reply to your Gumroad receipt email within 30 days of purchase and ask for a refund. You'll get your money back — you don't need to explain or return anything.

fill-in-the-dots.wrenandcostudio.com

Fill In the Dots: A Family History Starter Map & Research Log · First edition, version 1.0.0 · © 2026 Wren & Co. · This sampler may be shared freely.