

Immigration

DNA & Family Trees: Who In Your Family Crossed the Border?

Subject: Science/History/Geography

Grades: 6-8

Skills:

- Measuring
- Mathematics
- Geography
- Brainstorming
- Interviewing/ Recording History
- Reading Maps

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Map
- DNA & Me, Reference Guide
- Pencil

Summary:

Each of us are composed of DNA, the genetic information that makes us up. Half of our DNA comes from our father and half from our mother—which means one quarter from each of our grandparents. By tracing our family tree, we can find out which of our relatives was the first to arrive in America, or was born Native American. We can then calculate approximately how much DNA we share with that person, and we can see where their DNA came from.

Discuss:

- How does understanding more about your family tree help you understand more about your ancestors?
- What if your ancestors have no records of entry to America, what might the reason for that be?
- Does understanding more about your family tree give you a better sense of the first immigrants' journey to America?

Instructions:

Using the worksheet provided, begin to fill out the family tree of your biological family members. As you identify family members, ask living relatives key points about themselves and about those they may have memories of. You might want to journal this as a record.

As you build your family tree can you determine who crossed the US border as an immigrant? Or, can you identify who was brought to America as a kidnapped individual bound for slavery? Are any of your relatives a Native American?

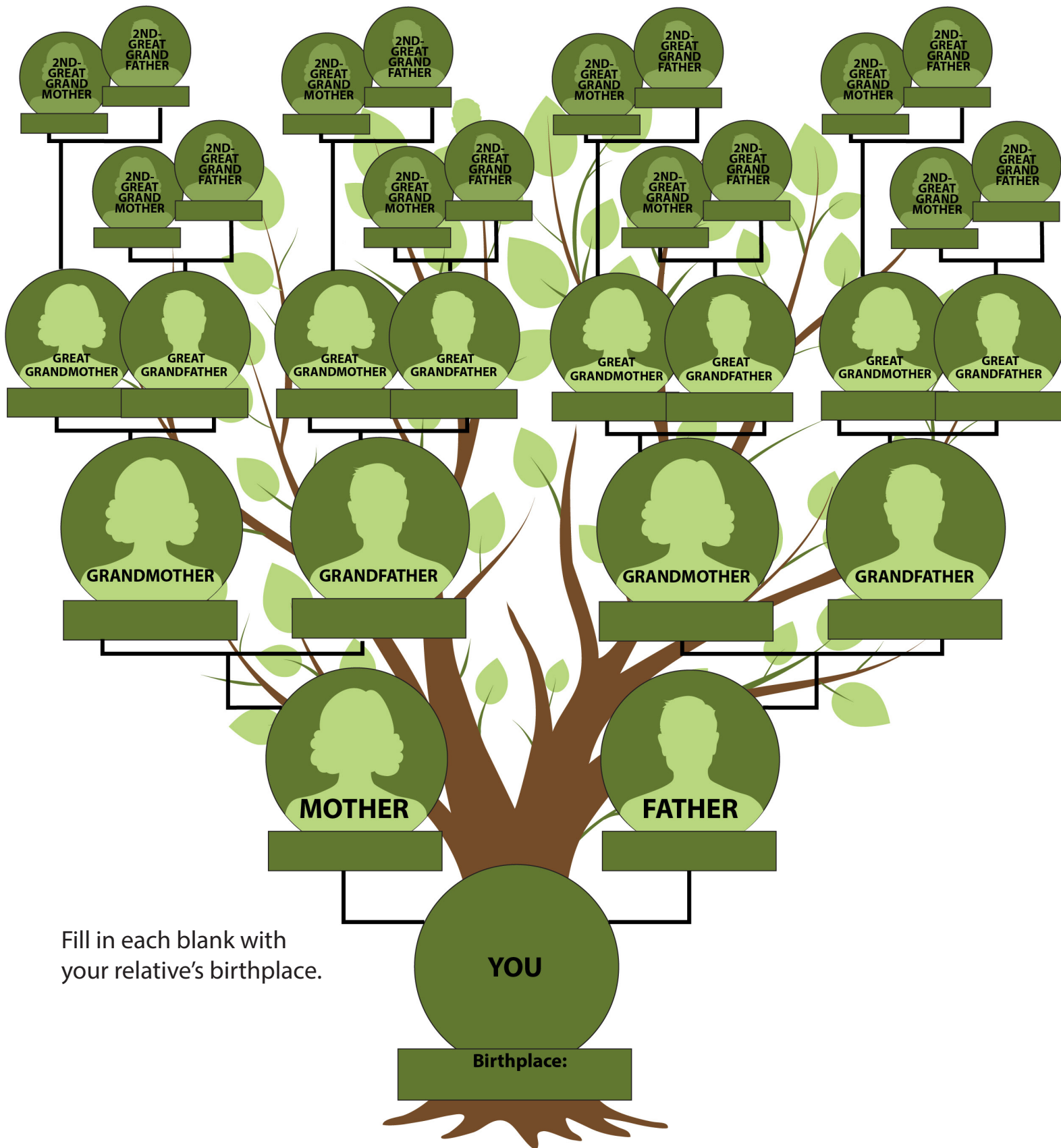
Once you identify one or more relatives that arrived as an immigrant (or refugee, etc.), study the map enclosed. Indicate on the map where first generation immigrants came from (those are the people who arrived in the US). Use the scale on the map to measure how far they, and their DNA, traveled to get to the location you stand in today. Imagine for a minute that your genetic information quite literally traveled this distance, many years ago, and today codes how your body is built and functions.

Using the DNA & Me Reference Guide, record on your family tree the percent of DNA you share with the relatives who first crossed the border.

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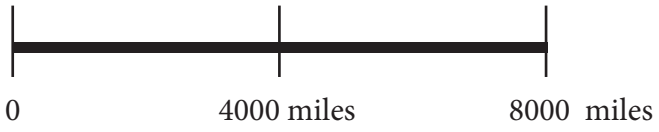
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Approximate scale:



DNA & Me, Reference Guide

