

Make a Family Encyclopedia!

Help your fourth grader affirm her place in the family, and in the march of recent history, with this fun family album project. Catalogue each family member's favorite things, birthdays, hobbies etc. By making a handmade family encyclopedia, your child will really get to know everyone in the family and she'll practice her writing abilities, which will help her develop valuable literacy skills. This also makes a great gift for a family member!

What You Need:

- Family Member Questionnaire (see our downloadable page here [Grownups, Kids](#))
- Pens and Markers
- 9x12" construction paper in rainbow colors
- Hole punch
- Ribbons, stickers, glitter
- Stamps and envelopes (or email)



What to Do:

1. Start by helping your child make a list of family members, either close by or far away, to include in her "Family Encyclopedia." Keep the list handy at home so that when answers come back, you can check them off your list.
2. Help her draft a letter of introduction to the project with a questionnaire page, asking each person to fill it out, glue on a photo, and send it back. (Give a deadline. It makes a huge difference!)
3. While you're waiting to hear back from everyone, one day have your child create a decorative cover using the 9x12" construction paper. Cover both the front and back of a piece of cardboard with construction paper and then decorate the cover using markers and any other special craft supplies your child likes, such as glitter, paint, or stickers. If she likes, she can also do the same for a back cover as well, to sandwich the pages in between.
4. You'll also want to help your child make a "table of contents" for the book. You can make one or two pages for this. One being a "family tree" showing who is descended from whom, and/or a list of each person's name with the page number that person's "biography" is on.
5. When the questionnaires come back, use a glue stick to attach each completed questionnaire onto a different piece of plain construction paper (without cardboard this time). If your family is large, you'll want to use both sides of each piece of paper. If not, you may only need to work with one side at a time.
6. Fasten your book together by making 4-5 holes along the side with a hole punch, and then use ribbon to make a loop with a decorative bow through each one. You'll have a stunning, one of a kind family encyclopedia.

Note: These directions lay out an old-fashioned, by-hand book but you can also "go digital" and support technology skill goals in your child's fourth grade classroom as well. Don't worry: you don't need an expensive service. Instead, use email to send the questionnaire, and request that relatives send their replies through the internet with digital photographs included if possible. Your child may also want to use computer graphics to lay out an attractive cover. However you decide to do this project, you and your child will have a blast enjoying the many responses to the questionnaire, and savoring the joys of seeing a family, page by page.