

Weave a Web

Grades 4-5

A history web is a way of connecting people and events.

What You Need

Large piece of paper or poster board (at least 3 1/2 ft. x 2 1/2 ft.)

Colored pencils, crayons or markers

What to Do

* As you walk around your neighborhood with your child, point out interesting buildings, statues or other features. For example, you might pick a place in your community that has always seemed mysterious to you—an old ball field; a store, strange house or courthouse; a church, fountain, monument, clock or school building. Have your child study the place and write in her history log what she sees and hears. For example, have her look for plaques, engravings or other marks on buildings, such as dates and designs, or for unusual features, such as bleachers, windows or bell towers.

—Help her to find information about the place by asking a librarian for resources, by searching the archives of the local newspaper, or by using the Internet. Tell her to be on the lookout for events that happened there, such as athletic records that might have been set or visits by a famous person. Also have her look for things that changed the place, such as the addition or removal of rooms, stairs or parking lots.

* Help your child locate people who have lived in your town a long time. Arrange for her to interview them using questions about the place she studied and the events surrounding it, and about any important events in the town's history that they remember.

* Help her draw a web. Begin by placing the name of the place she studied in the middle (like the spider who weaves a "home"). Then have her draw several lines ("strands") from the middle to show the major events in the life of the place. To finish, have her connect the strands with cross lines to show other related events. When the web is complete, talk with your child about the relationships among the strands.

* Have your child send her web to the editor of your local newspaper and ask to have it published. She can write about the web and ask readers to contribute more information to add to it. Tell her that this is exactly how "real" history is written!

* Newspapers often include timelines of events. Point these out to your child and talk with him about what they show.

Let's Talk About It

Ask your child:

When was the place you picked built?

How is the place you picked connected to other events in history?