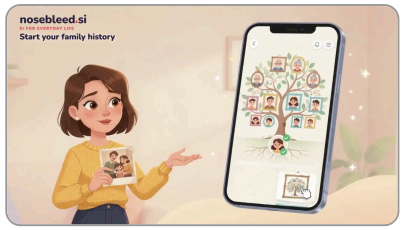
Start your family history



Use AI to plan where to begin, what to ask, and where the records are, then check everything it tells you.

By the end, you'll be able to:

- write down what you already know
- use AI to plan your next steps
- spot when AI has filled a gap with a guess

Warm-up How far back can you go?

Talk about it with your group. Do you know the names of your grandparents? Your great-grandparents? Where did they live?

1 Start with what you know

Fill in what you know, even if it's only a first name or a town. Leave a gap if you don't know.

	Name, and roughly when and where born
You	
Your mother	
Your father	
A grandparent	
Another grandparent	
A great-grandparent	

2 Ask AI for a plan

If you have a device, try this prompt. Use first names and rough dates only.

TRY THIS PROMPT

I'd like to start my family history. My grandmother Edith was born in about 1915, near Leeds, and married a coal miner called Arthur. Please give me a simple plan: what to ask my family, which records to look for, and which free sources might help. Please don't guess any facts about my family.

3 Fact or guess?

Here's part of an answer an AI gave. Some of it is a useful tip, and some is a guess presented as fact. Tick each.

	Useful tip	Guess
"Ask older relatives for names, dates and places, and look for old letters and photos."		
"Edith's maiden name was Edith Clarke, and she had four sisters."		
"Look for her marriage in the official birth, marriage and death indexes."		
"Arthur worked at Temple Newsam pit from 1931 to 1952."		

Talk about it: why might a guess like this be easy to believe? What could go wrong?

4 Your questions

Write three questions you could ask an older relative. For example: "Where did Grandma go to school?"

5 Good habits

- AI may invent names, dates and places. Check every fact in a real record.
- Write down where each fact came from, so you can find it again.
- Take care with living relatives' details. Ask before sharing them.

> **No device?** In pairs, interview each other about one grandparent for five minutes, and make notes.

Find out more: read the free step-by-step guide, with a 10-second video, at **nosebleed.si/ideas/start-your-family-history**

Teacher notes: Start your family history

Time: 45 to 60 minutes

Level: beginners; no AI experience needed

Group: any size; works well in pairs

You'll need: a copy per learner; phones or tablets with an AI chat app (optional)

Before the session

Try the prompt yourself. Edith and Arthur are made up. Some learners may not know their families, or may have painful family stories, so let everyone choose how much they share. Part 1 can be done about anyone.

Running order

5 min	**Warm-up.** How far back can we go?
10 min	**Part 1.** Write down what you know.
20 min	**Parts 2 and 3.** Try the prompt, then spot the guesses.
10 min	**Part 4.** Questions for a relative.
5 min	**Wrap-up.** Every fact needs a source.

Answers: Part 3

Useful tips: asking older relatives; looking in the official indexes.
Guesses: Edith's maiden name and sisters, and Arthur's pit and dates. The AI had no way of knowing these. They sound convincing, which is why they're risky.

Discussion points

- Family history mistakes get copied from one family tree to another. Check the original record.
- AI is good at plans, checklists and explaining old words, like job titles on a census.

Where the records are (UK)

- **Births, marriages and deaths:** the General Register Office indexes for England and Wales; ScotlandsPeople for Scotland; GRONI for Northern Ireland.
- **Census:** taken every ten years. In England and Wales, the most recent open to the public is 1921. The 1931 census was destroyed in a fire, so the 1939 Register helps fill the gap.
- **Free help:** local archives and libraries, and volunteer indexes such as FreeBMD.

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