Modern Family

GRADES:
8h through 12th

DURATION:
It will vary depending on the age group, and the number of activities you decide to do.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- Children will practice that data analysis and reporting skills buy studying a spreadsheet and creating a graph to illustrate the data;
- Children will develop their interview, communication and writing skills
- Children will be confronted with several different definitions of our closest social unit, the family, and are exposed to its diversity;
- Children will face the challenge of creating a definition for family that is inclusive;
- Children will recognize, identify and empathize with the feelings and perspective of others.

MATERIALS:
- Access to internet.
- Information provided in the Background section (below)
- Data Analysis Worksheet
- Interview Guided Notes
- Phone or other device to connect with family members or other people for interview
- Materials for note-taking or a recording device to collect information during interview.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
What once was considered the "average" family no longer represents the reality of millions of Americans.

The first definition for family by the Merriam-Webster dictionary reads:
Family - the basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/family).

You can find very accurate information about the present characteristics of families at the Pew Research Center: https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/12/17/1-the-american-family-today/.

Many researchers have been studying how families in the U.S. have changed. For example, Conrad Kottak in his book "Window on Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Anthropology", shows the following data:

	1970	2016
Numbers:		
Total number of households	63 million	126 million
Number of people per household	**3.1**	**2.5**
Percentages:		
Married couples living with children	**40%**	**19%**
Married couples living without children	30%	29%
Family households	81%	65%
Households with five or more people	21%	10%
People living alone	17%	28%
Percentage of single-mother families	**5%**	**12%**
Percentage of single-father families	**0%**	**5%**
Households with own children under 18	45%	27%

Source: Kottak, Conrad Phillip. 2018. Window on Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Anthropology. Eighth Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

The goal of this lesson is to research and create a new definition of family that considers and represents all families.

ACTIVITY OUTLINE:

Step 1 – Let the children read the information above, and give them the Data Analysis worksheet. Let them take their time to understand the table provided, and let them decide how they will represent the data in graphs or charts. They can use so of the templates in the worksheet or create their own. If they already know how to work with Microsoft Excel or other similar spreadsheet, they can transfer the data to them and create the graphs digitally. If they are not familiar with it, but you are, it might be a good opportunity to teach them how. For the basics of how to create graphs and charts, we suggest this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BkbYeTC6Mo. You can also let the children research how to do it on their own. Once they have analyzed the background information, the data and the graphs, they can move on the next step.

Step 2 –Now it's time to gather more information from the people around you. Children can interview parents, relatives and neighbors to learn more about what they think family is. The interviews can be conducted online, by phone or in person. They can refer to the Interview Guided Notes to help with their interview. We recommend at least three interviews per child (with people from two or three generations), but you can define what makes more sense to your children. Schedule times for the interviews if needed. Children must have access to a phone or video chat device. If they can record the conversation, let them. Encourage them to take notes.

Step 3 – Once all the interviews are completed, it's time for the children to review all the information collected and summarize what was learned. To finalize and assess the project, let them right and essay or prepare an oral presentation that proposes a new definition of family. They can use the Family Definition worksheet to organize their thoughts. The essay can be shared with family members, and the oral presentations can be recorded to be shared digitally.

ONE MORE THING:

Let us know how it went! Tag us on social media or email us at education@ohiohistory.org.

Data Analysis

Your name: _____

Analyze this Table:

	1970	2016
Numbers:		
Total number of households	63 million	126 million
Number of people per household	**3.1**	**2.5**
Percentages:		
Married couples living with children	**40%**	**19%**
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What are some of the changes you see from households from 1970 and households now?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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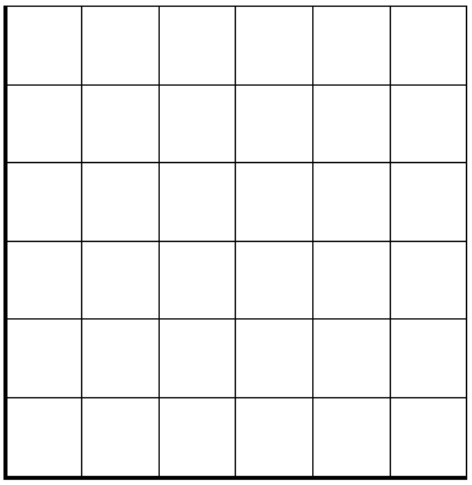
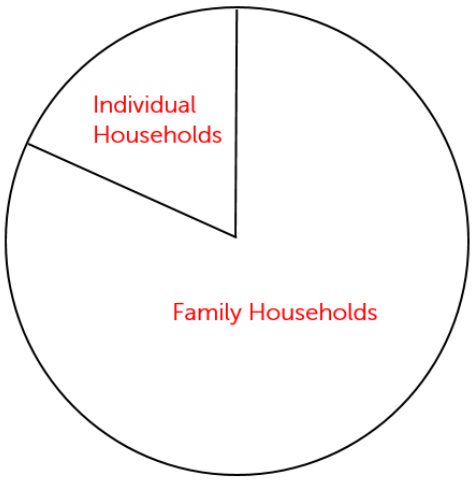
Can you represent some of these data in graphs or charts? If you need to revise how to make them, check this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BkbYeTC6Mo.

1. Decide which data you want to represent (see example).
2. Choose the type of graph that better represents your time of data.
3. Create your own, or use one of the templates below.

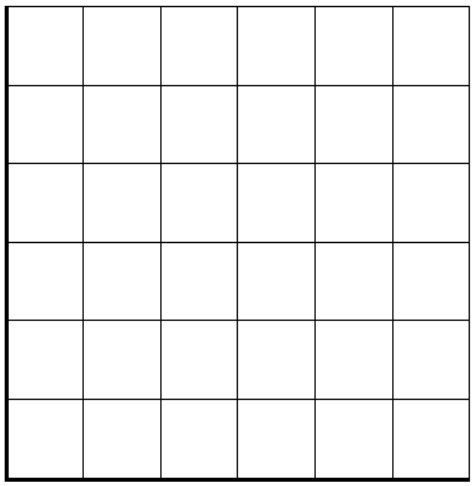
Title: _____



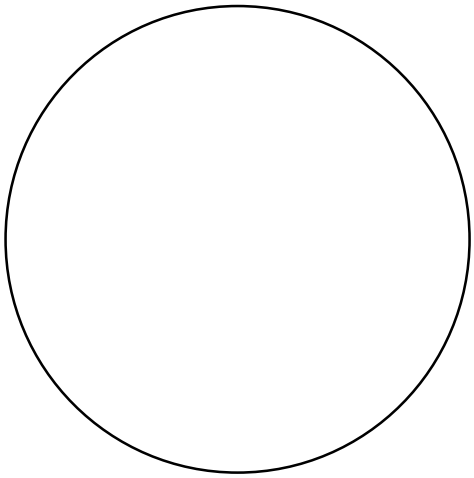
Example
Title: Households in 1970



Title: _____



Title: _____



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Interview Guided Notes

Your name: _____

Use the following questions to help you during the interview. Take notes in the box below.

1. What's your name?
2. How old are you?
3. When you were a child, how many people was part of your family, living with you at home?
4. Do you live with someone now, or do you live by yourself?
5. Who do you consider as members of your family?
6. Do you think that families have changed overtime? If so, how?
7. What is your definition of family?

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Your main take-away from this interview (what did you learn, what was the most interesting piece of information):