

# “Today I Am Here” Book Project

Students design, write, and illustrate a book about their family history. They conduct age-appropriate research (e.g., family members, library, Internet) to complete an illustrated book that explains why “today I am here.”

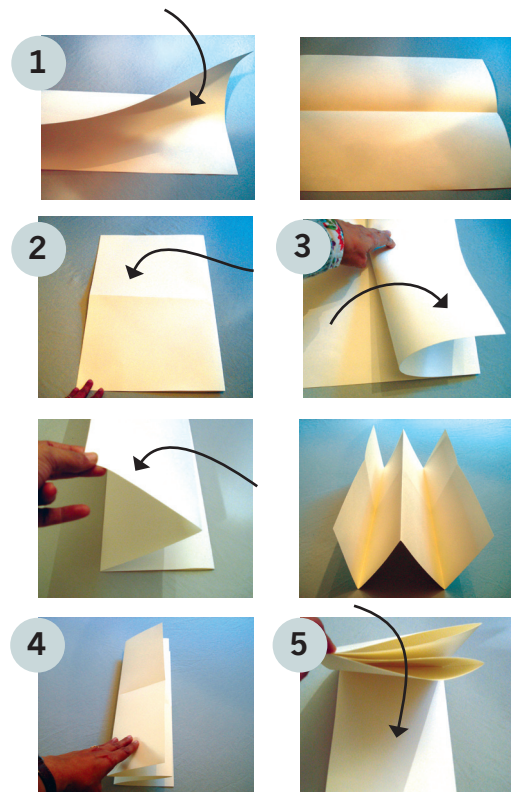
## Materials:

- 14” x 17” paper
- 8.5” x 11” card stock
- scissors
- gluesticks
- writing and drawing tools
- maps, photos, drawings etc.

**Prep Work:** Have students speak with family members to identify a place, person, object, and family memory in order to tell the story, “Today I am here because....”

## Make the Book:

1. Fold the paper in half horizontally. Crease, and open it back up.
2. Fold the sheet in half vertically by bringing the right short edge over to meet the left short edge.
3. Fold the top layer back to meet the folded edge at the right. Crease. Flip, and do the same on the other side. Crease. The sheet of paper should look like a W when placed on the table.
4. Tip the W to your right and flatten it. You will now have two folded edges on your left and one on your right.
5. Fold the top down in half to meet the bottom. Crease. The book is now ready to be filled in!



**Make the Cover:** Print the “me” stencil from page 2 on card stock paper. Cut it out and place it on the book’s cover so the hands reach the left and right edges. Trace the “me” on the cover. Using scissors, cut away the white spaces from the right and bottom of the figure.



Have students write, “Today I Am Here,” across the arms and body of the “me.” Now have them draw the face to look like themselves. Have them write their names and nicknames to decorate the rest of the body.



Draw or glue a map on the page directly below the “me” cover page, to situate the author on the map.

**Write the Story:** Students will use the inside pages to explore places, people, objects, family memories, and more, to tell the story of how they came to be here today. Have students title each inside page, “Today I Am Here Because, ...,” and fill in the pages with text and images to tell their story. Be creative with these categories. Suggestions for other topics include: traditional food, music, customs, holidays, hopes and dreams.

**Share the Book:** The books can be displayed as a chain of people with linked hands. Post pictures of your “Today I Am Here” books on the Smithsonian Heritage Programming Facebook page.



# “Today I Am Here” Storybook

“me” stencil (copy on card stock and cut out)

