Use the starter for one bounded question

Family History Starter | Free working edition 0.4 | November 2, 2026 | David Tom Publishing. All people, places, records, quotations and search results in this packet are invented. Nothing is an extract from a real archive or evidence about an actual family.

This packet has six blank worksheets, a six-page fictional worked sample, and this seven-page practice guide. The blank PDFs retain fillable fields for short notes; each field allows up to 120 characters. Use the continuation page or Word for longer responses. Download before typing, save a copy, reopen it and inspect the saved entries in your viewer.

Begin with GEN-START-01 to define a person, place, period and question. GEN-START-02 maps references without merging uncertain people. GEN-START-03 records optional interview choices. GEN-START-04 preserves sources, searches and limits. The new GEN-START-05 compares candidates and origins; GEN-START-06 records a revised conclusion and a separate sharing decision.

Try the fictional case before entering your own information. Read the supplied sources, fill what you can, then compare your reasoning with the sample. Exact wording need not match. A useful conclusion can remain unresolved.

Use person references and private locators for living people. Do not send completed family records to DTP. These worksheets organize a project; they are not a legal release or a professional genealogy finding. Reader, native Word/PDF viewer, physical-print and assistive-technology acceptance remain open. PDFs are untagged.

Fictional sources: the story and school entry

Question: Which school did P1, the Morgan Vale in a family story, attend around 1911? P1 and P2 are research references, not verified identities. Every locator below is an exercise reference.

S1 — Practice interview note. Creator: fictional interviewer Jamie, paraphrasing fictional participant Casey. Record date: 2026-11-02. Locator: S1, paragraph 1. Casey permits private written notes only; no recording, transcription service or public sharing agreed. Casey may skip topics, stop and review the paraphrase.

S1 paraphrase: Casey heard a story about Morgan Vale, a child in East Cedar around 1911. The story described Rowan Vale as Morgan's caregiver and mentioned a school near a river. Casey does not know the school's name, the source of the approximate date, or whether the caregiver relationship was legal, biological or informal. Casey did not witness the events. This is an invented paraphrase, not a historical quotation.

S1 supports the limited statement that Casey reports hearing this story. It does not independently verify the school, date, relationship or child's identity. "River School" is the researcher's hypothesis; S1 does not supply that proper name.

S2 — DTP synthetic Cedar School Register. Record date: 1911-03-01. Locator: practice page 7, line 3. Entry: Morgan Vale | age 11 | residence East Cedar | school Cedar School. No parent, caregiver or birth date is supplied. The exercise does not establish whether Cedar School was near a river.

S2 supports a statement about what the invented register contains. It does not establish that the named child is P1. A different school name from the researcher's guess calls for investigation, not an automatic correction to the story.

Fictional sources: candidates and a limited search

S3 — DTP synthetic East Cedar Household List. Record date: 1910-03-01. Locator: practice page 2, line 8. Entry: Morgan Vale | age 10 | residence East Cedar. No family relationship or caregiver is named. This is not an official census form or part of a real census collection.

S3's age and place are compatible with S2 one year later. Compatibility does not prove that both records describe one person or that either identifies P1. The packet does not establish whether one record copied information from another; do not assume independent corroboration.

S4 — DTP synthetic West Cedar Resident List. Record date: 1911-03-01. Locator: practice page 4, line 6. Entry: Morgan Vale | age 32 | residence West Cedar. Label this adult candidate P5 and keep it separate. The supplied material establishes no relationship between this candidate and the child in S2/S3.

L1 — Practice search log. Search date: 2026-11-02. Source: supplied synthetic school-name index exercise, year 1905 only. Terms: exact name Morgan Vale. No spelling variants, additional years or original registers searched. Supplied result: no exact match.

L1 is a constructed negative result, not a real search. It covers one name form in one year of one supplied index exercise. It does not cover the question's approximate 1911 period or establish that Morgan never attended school. Preserve the search limits with the result.

No further records are supplied. A proposed family-link search remains a plan. Do not invent a successful search, a missing relative or a relationship to make the packet appear complete.

Compare the evidence without closing the question early

A source statement describes what a source says: “S2 contains an entry for Morgan Vale at Cedar School.” A research conclusion applies evidence to your question: “P1 attended Cedar School.” The first statement is supported within the fictional packet; the second still needs an identity link.

Keep a small candidate comparison. The S2/S3 child has compatible age and place details across 1910 and 1911. The S4 adult has a different age and place in 1911. The supplied sources do not explain a family link among them. Record those differences rather than resolving them with an invented move, mistaken age or relationship.

Nor can two matching entries automatically count as two independent confirmations. Their information origins are not established here. GEN-START-05 keeps the copying/origin question visible without claiming that copying actually occurred.

A worked conclusion: supported within the exercise, S2 lists a child named Morgan Vale at Cedar School and S1 records a later family story. Tentative, S2 and S3 may describe one child. Unresolved, whether that child is P1 and which school P1 attended. P5 stays separate.

One next task is to seek evidence linking the known family to a candidate, inspect broader record context and examine the source of the information. That is a research direction, not evidence already obtained. An interview is optional; the supplied packet is enough to practice the distinction.

Correct a note and make a separate sharing decision

An interpretation can change without a new record. Suppose your first note says “S1 says River School.” Re-reading S1 shows that it says a school near a river. Preserve a revision note: “Corrected my paraphrase; River School was my hypothesis. No new source added.” Do not label this correction a newly discovered school record.

GEN-START-06 keeps the earlier note, reason for revision and current conclusion together. The correction improves accuracy but does not identify P1’s school. Both the identity question and the school question remain open.

Now suppose you want to share a paragraph based on S1 publicly. Casey’s recorded choice permits private written notes only. That choice does not supply public-sharing permission. Keep the paragraph private under the stated scope; any change of use needs a separate decision. The worksheet does not send a request, obtain agreement or decide legal rights.

Review the exact material and audience, not just whether a name has been removed. An alias does not by itself establish permission to share the story. Distinguish what was agreed from what you hope to ask later, and record any actual change rather than assuming approval.

For longer notes, label a continuation with the worksheet ID, field number, date and source references. Keep it with the same private master packet. In the short PDF field, write a useful locator rather than squeezing a long conclusion into the space.

Five practice questions with suggested answers

1. Does S1 name River School? Suggested answer: no. It reports a school near a river. River School is the researcher’s guess, not a source quotation or verified school name.

2. S2 and S3 have compatible age/place details. Do they identify P1 or prove independent corroboration? Suggested answer: neither follows from the supplied information. They may describe one child, but the family link and information origins remain unresolved.

3. Can S4’s adult be merged with the child solely because both are called Morgan Vale? Suggested answer: no. Keep P5 separate, preserve the age/place differences and seek evidence that can distinguish candidates.

4. Does L1’s lack of an exact match prove that Morgan never attended school? Suggested answer: no. L1 covers only an exact name in the supplied 1905 index exercise; it neither resolves the approximate 1911 question nor establishes absence.

5. May a public paragraph based on S1 be treated as approved because the private interview note was permitted? Suggested answer: no. The recorded choice is private written notes only. Public use is a separate unresolved decision; no request or agreement is performed by this packet.

What a successful exercise looks like: a source reference, an accurately limited claim, a visible unknown and a next question. You need not reach a final identity or school conclusion to complete the learning task.

Continuation and next-question sheet

Worksheet ID and field number: _____

Date / packet version / person references: _____

Source IDs and private locators: _____

Expanded note; distinguish source wording from your interpretation:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Current conclusion and remaining limit: _____

One next question or source to seek: _____

Original DTP fictional teaching material. No external source endorsement or actual research result. This continuation page is print-and-write; it has no PDF entry fields. Store completed notes privately with the master packet. Related editions: davidtompublishing.com/books-and-publications/.