



Unit 1 - Lesson 4 - Climbing Your Family Tree

Welcome to lesson four. In this lesson you will find out about the Pedigree Chart and how, when and why we use it. You will be introduced to the sundry types and formats of pedigree charts and finally you will complete a pedigree chart for your own use.

What does Pedigree mean?

So what exactly is a pedigree? The word pedigree itself originates from France as many of the earliest genealogists were French. The French “*ped de grue*” which translates as “foot of the crane” is a reference to how the pedigree chart resembles a crane’s footprint. The word pedigree as we use it today is the genealogical terminology for direct ancestry.

What is a Pedigree Chart?

Pedigree Charts, also called Ancestor Charts or Lineage Charts, show a graphic display of the family line from which you directly descend. They often use boxes and lines to keep relationships between individuals clear.

Pedigree charts can hold from 4 to 15 generations and are an excellent “at a glance” reference to use during your research. The four generation chart and six generation charts are the easiest ones to apply on a daily basis. One of the first things you will observe about a pedigree chart is that there is no room on them for siblings, previous marriages, or other family connections; this information is shown on your Family Group Sheets. The next thing that should be noted about a pedigree chart is that it provides no section to document your citations. A solution to this is to attach a separate sheet with source citations or file it with your family group sheets, which should contain any needed citations.

It is important at this point to understand that pedigree charts are meant to be used as research aids; you should think about them as visual comments or notes for continuing research. A pedigree chart is never the end goal of your ancestry search, nor should it be thought of as proof of your ancestry.

Pedigree charts come in a variety of styles and formats. There is no correct or incorrect form, so use the one that works best for you. It is common for genealogists to use more than one style of pedigree chart for different presentation purposes. Some pedigree charts are visually stunning and fabulous for framing. They can make breathtaking keepsake gifts.

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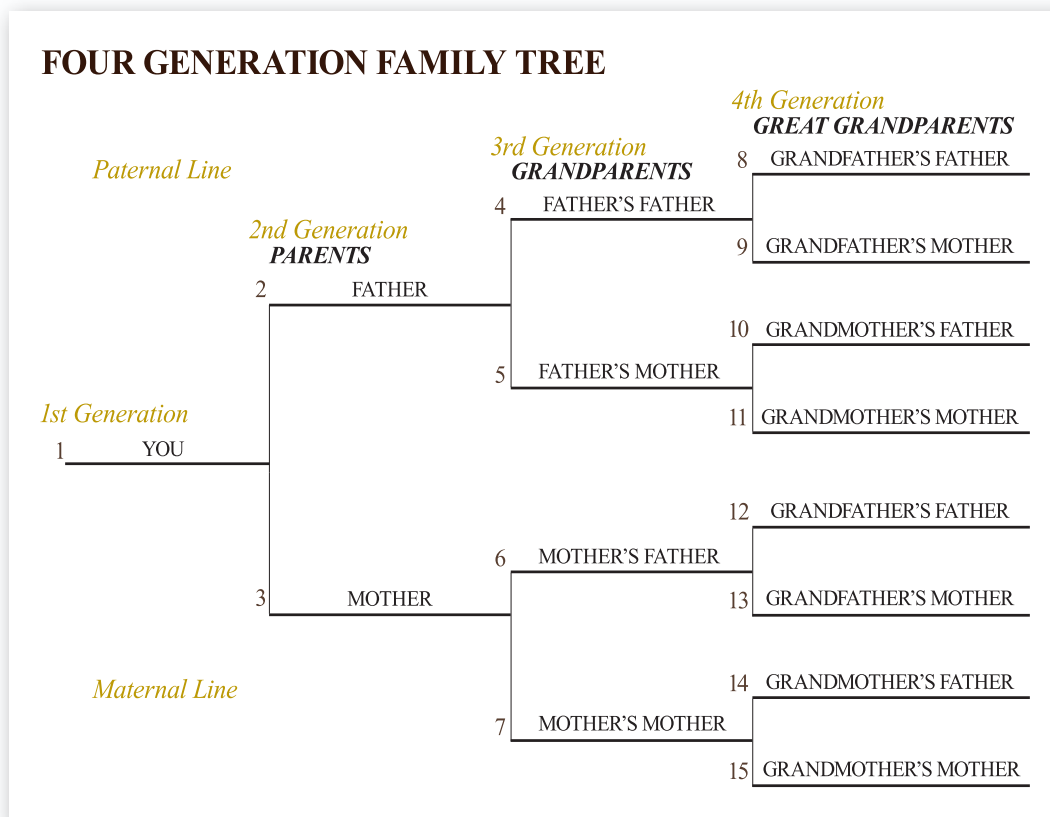
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Types of Pedigree charts

Ancestor Chart

An Ancestor Pedigree Chart obeys the universal rule of beginning with yourself and then follows an upper channel for your paternal line (father's) and a lower channel for your maternal line (mother's). When numbering your pedigree chart, you will be number one, your father will be number two and your mother will be number three. A neat little rule of thumb to help you remember this numbering system is that men are always even numbers and women are always odd numbers.

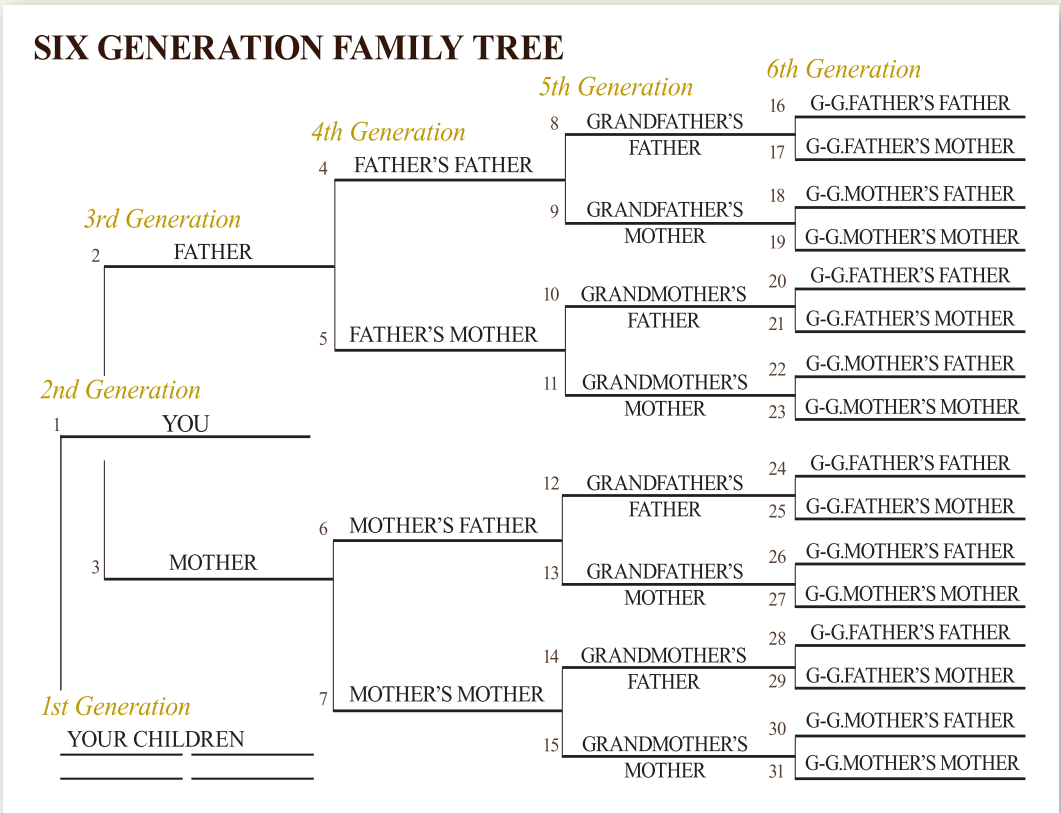


Notice that the upper half of the chart is for your paternal line (father's) and the lower half is for your maternal line (mother's).

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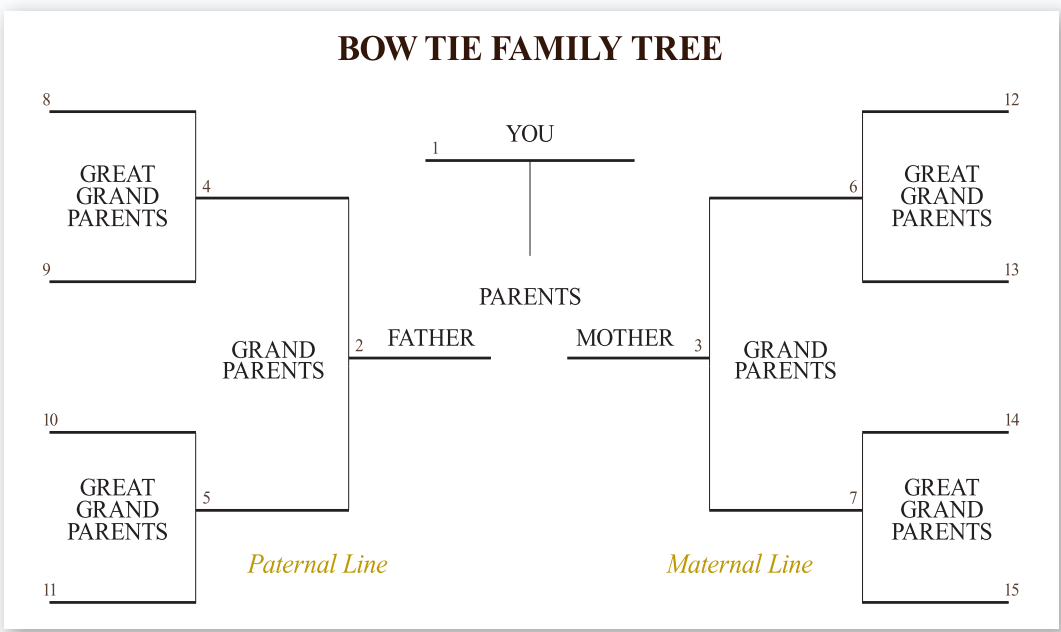
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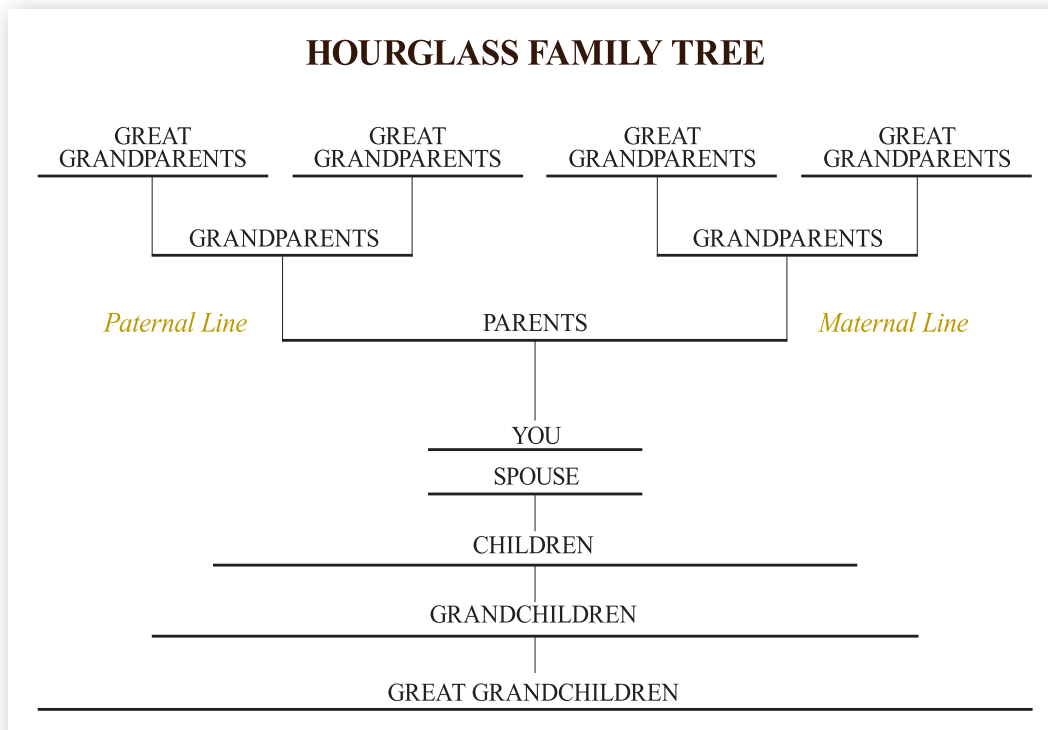
Bow Tie Pedigree Chart

A Bow Tie Pedigree Chart is an easy to follow chart that starts with you in the center, your paternal line to the left and your maternal line to the right. Each side fans outward to show your grandparents, great-grandparents and additional generations. This is also known as a Fan Chart.



Hourglass Chart

An Hourglass Pedigree Chart is a way of showing both your ancestors and your descendants. It begins with you in the middle, your ancestors above and your descendants below. Hourglass charts can also be shown in a “Bow-tie” format with ancestors to the right and descendants to the left. These charts generally show only a few generations of ancestors and descendants.



Practice

How to fill out a Pedigree Chart

Now that you are familiar with the various styles of Pedigree Charts you can decide which style you feel most comfortable using. For your practice exercise today you will be using the Six Generation Pedigree Chart. Follow this link to download yours: <http://www.genealogybeginner.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/GenBeg-6-gen-chart.pdf>

Gather your Family Group Sheets, then come back here and we will begin.

Have you downloaded your Pedigree Chart? If your answer is yes, we can begin.



Let's get started:

Working from your Family Group Sheets, fill in as many generations as possible. Before you get started please read the hints section of this lesson.

1. Begin by filling out the area for yourself and number yourself “1”. (Some charts are already numbered.)
2. Put your father’s name on the upper line and number him “2”.
3. Place your mother’s maiden name on the lower line and number her “3”.
4. Put your paternal grandfather’s name on the upper line after your fathers and number him “4”.
Your paternal grandmother will go directly beneath; number her “5”.
5. Put your maternal grandfather’s name on the lower line after your mother’s name and number her “6”.
Your maternal grandmother’s maiden name will go directly beneath and will be number “7”.
6. Follow suit for your great-grandparents if you have their information.

Hints

- Remember the “even number, odd number” rule for paternal and maternal lines.
- Always write out the person’s full name, it is preferable to using their initial(s).
- Always record a woman by her maiden name. If you do not know her maiden name, use an empty parenthesis. i.e. ()
- If one of your ancestors is well known by a nick name or pet name, put it in quotation marks after the full name. For example, it is customary in Scottish families where the name John is a common family name to use Jack or Jackie for the younger. i.e.: John McCallum the younger “Jackie”.
- When recording places use the order Town, County, State, Country. For example: Portland, Multnomah, Oregon, USA.
- Dates should be written as day/month/year, always use all of the digits for the year. i.e. 10 Aug 1885.
- Because your pedigree chart is a quick reference tool for your research, it is important to begin with good habits. Keeping it up to date by immediately adding any new information and correcting any errors will be a significant help in future research.


*Keep your chart up to date by immediately adding
any new information and correcting any errors to
help keep future research on track.*


Wrap-up

You should now have a good grasp of what a pedigree chart is and feel comfortable using one. At this stage you may want to choose a different style. Feel free to download other charts and fill them out to find your favorite. If you have any further questions or comments on this lesson, go to the forum Genealogy Beginner; Lesson four message board.

In the next lesson, we will cover some different types of research, such as Surname Research and One Name Studies.

Have fun, and see you on the forums.

Articles: <http://www.genealogybeginner.com/category/lesson-4-articles>

Glossary: <http://www.genealogybeginner.com/category/glossary>

Forum: <http://www.genealogybeginner.com/community/your-tree-starting-your-first-search-all-about-pedigree-charts-lesson-4/>

4 gen chart: <http://www.genealogybeginner.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/GenBeg-4-gen-chart.pdf>

6 gen chart: <http://www.genealogybeginner.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/GenBeg-6-gen-chart.pdf>

Bow tie pedigree chart: <http://www.genealogybeginner.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/GenBeg-bowtie-chart.pdf>

Hourglass chart <http://www.genealogybeginner.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/GenBeg-hourglass-chart.pdf>