

# Personal Heritage Check Sheet

	<b>Name:</b>	
	<b>Period:</b>	
<b>ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>Check when complete</b>	<b>Teacher check</b>
<b>*Interview Questions/Answers</b>		
<b>*Family Tree</b>		
<b>*On Your Birthday</b>		
<b>*Chinese Orphan Article</b>		
<b>*Family Recipe</b>		
<b>*How I Became Me</b>		
<b>*Cover Sheet</b>		
<b>Pick 3 of the following options:</b>		
>Special Times		
>Your Family		
> Life Messages		
>Highs/Lows		
>Family Crest		
<b>(* required)</b>		
<b>*Pre-Write</b>		
<b>*Research Paper</b>		

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Who are you interviewing?:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Interview Questions**

**1) When and where were you born?**

**2) What is your cultural makeup? (example: Irish, Polish, Scottish)**

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**3) What are some of your family customs? (Food, music, holidays)**

**4) What religious or spiritual beliefs are influential in your culture and for your family?**

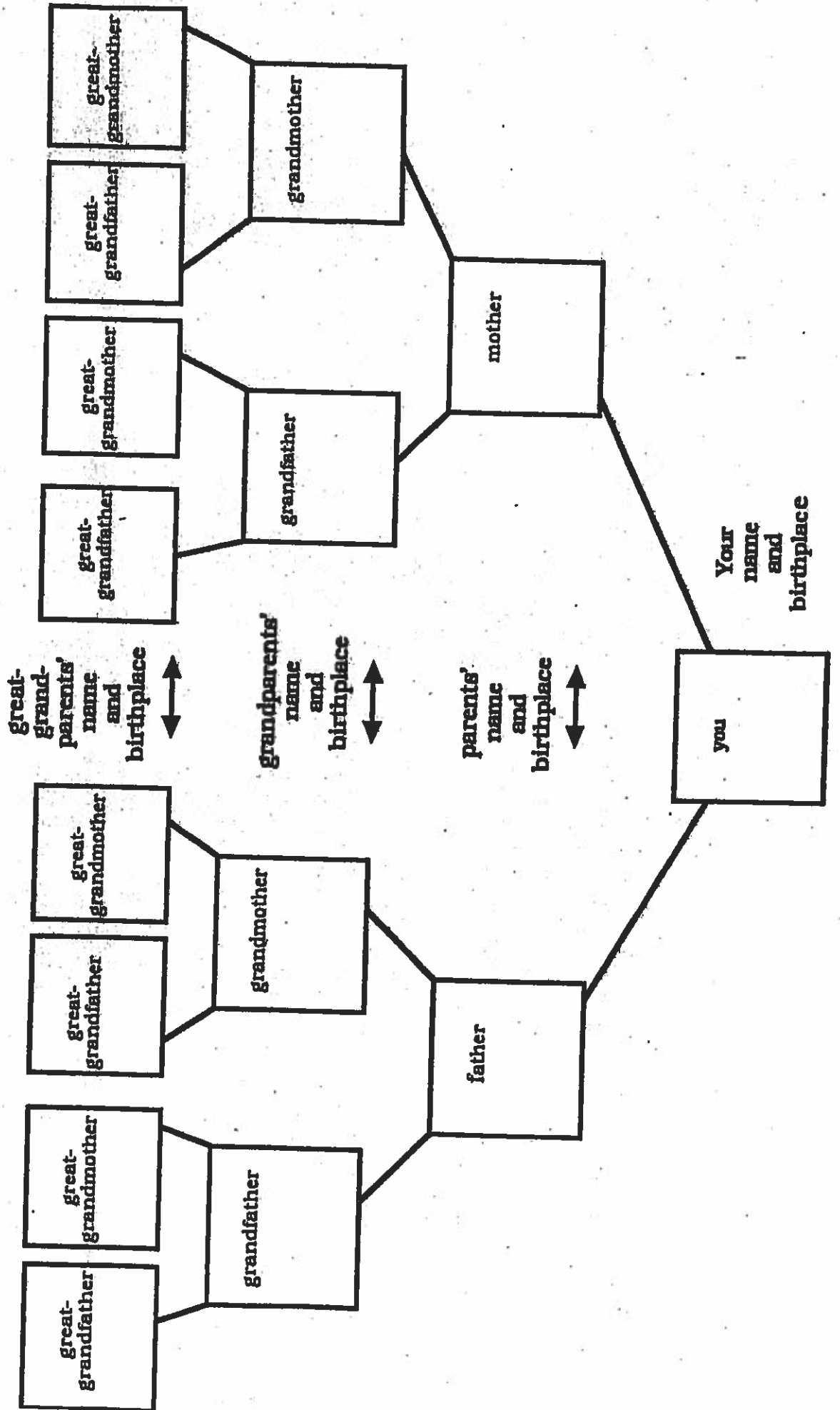
**5) What do you know about your family surname?**

**6) Are there any stories about famous or infamous relatives in your family?**

**7) Are there any special heirlooms, photos, or artifacts that have been passed down?**

**Come up with at least 3 questions of your own to ask:**

# WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?



# On Your Birthday

"People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them."

James Baldwin

What was the world like the day you were born? What was happening that year? Visit the library and/or your local newspaper office to find a newspaper from the day you were born. Find popular magazines from the year you were born, as well as an almanac and/or any other useful materials.

## Getting started

Choose from the questions below to help you write:

1. On the day you were born, what happened in your community, in the United States and in the world?
2. What were the major news events the year you were born?
3. What were the hit songs the year you were born? What were the Oscar-winning movies? Which actors were popular? Which books were best sellers? Who were the sports heroes?
4. What other interesting information can you find about the year you were born? For instance, who was president of the United States?



March 9, 2007



Teacher

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# Chinese Orphan's Journey to Jewish Rite of Passage

By ANDY NEWMAN

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## Knowledge Tools:

Turn Vocabulary On: Link words to the Merriam-Webster Collegiate® Dictionary.

Turn Geography On: Link countries and states to the Merriam-Webster Atlas®.

Of the 613 laws in the Torah, the one that appears most often is the directive to welcome strangers. The girl once known as Fu Qian has been thinking about that a lot lately.

Three weeks ago, she stood at the altar of her synagogue on the Upper West Side and gave a speech about it.

Fu Qian, renamed Cecelia Nealon-Shapiro at 3 months, was one of the first Chinese children — most of them girls — taken in by American families after China opened its doors to international adoption in the early 1990s. Now, at 13, she is one of the first to complete the rite of passage into Jewish womanhood known as bat mitzvah.

She will not be the last. Across the country, many Jewish girls like her will be studying their Torah portions, struggling to master the plaintive singsong of Hebrew liturgy and trying to decide whether to wear Ann Taylor or a traditional Chinese outfit to the after-party.

There are plenty of American Jews, of course, who do not “look Jewish.” And grappling with identity is something all adopted children do, not just Chinese Jews.

But seldom is the juxtaposition of homeland and new home, of faith and background, so stark. And nothing brings out the contrasts like a bat mitzvah, as formal a declaration of identity as any 13-year-old can be called upon to make. The contradictions show up in ways both playful — yin-and-yang yarmulkes, kiddush cups disguised as papier-mâché dragons, kosher lo mein and veal ribs at the buffet — and profound.

Yet for Cece, as everyone calls Cecelia, and for many of the girls like her, the odd thing about the whole experience is that it's not much odder than it is for any 13-year-old.

“I knew that when I came to this age I was going to have to do it, so it



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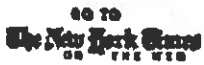
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was sort of natural," she said a few days before the ceremony at Congregation Rodeph Shalom, a Reform synagogue on West 83rd Street where she has been a familiar face since her days in the Little Twos program. Besides, she said with a shrug, "Most of my Chinese friends are Jewish."

As Zoe Kress, an adoptee in Mt. Laurel, N.J., said about her approaching bat mitzvah: "Being Chinese and Jewish is normal for me. Thinking about being Chinese and Jewish is a little strange."

Olivia Rauss, a girl in Massachusetts who celebrated her bat mitzvah last fall on a day when the Jewish harvest festival of Sukkot coincided with the Chinese autumn moon festival, said she saw no tension between the two facets of her identity either.

"Judaism is a religion, Chinese is my heritage and somewhat my culture, and I'm looking at them in a different way," she said. "I don't feel like they conflict with each other at all."

While no statistics are kept on the number of Chinese children adopted by Jewish families, over all, there were about 1,300 Chinese children adopted into American families from 1991 to 1994, another 17,000 in the second half of the '90s, and 44,000 since then, according to the State Department.

Cece was born on Jan. 29, 1994, in Jiangxi Province in southeastern China. She was abandoned to an orphanage because of China's one-child rule, and adopted by a lesbian couple, Mary Nealon and Vivian Shapiro. (The couple later adopted another Chinese girl, Gabie, now 5.) Cece has been drawing double-takes for a while, like when she used to ride on Ms. Shapiro's lap on a packed crosstown bus and would burst into the Passover standard "Dayenu."

Ms. Shapiro, an advertising buyer, was brought up by atheistic Jews; Ms. Nealon, a school nurse, was raised a Roman Catholic. But after they met, they were drawn to Judaism and decided to give Cece a relatively traditional upbringing.

"That was my hope when I started her in day school," Ms. Nealon said, "that when she got up on the bimah" — the lectern where the bat mitzvah girl reads from the Torah — "she would feel like she had the right to be there."

The countdown to the big day was the typical blur of lessons and studying, sit-downs with cantors and tutors, caterers and party planners. There was a thick dossier of Jewish history to master — history that Cece confessed did not feel like hers. "I just really try to learn it," she said. "I don't try to think of whose history it is."

And, of course, there was shopping to be done.

"In my fantasy," Ms. Nealon said, "we'd take her to Chinatown and

have this incredibly beautiful Westernized Chinese dress made.”

But Ms. Shapiro said: “She wanted no part of it. For her, this has nothing to do with being Chinese.”

Cece set her cantor’s reading of her Torah portion to “repeat” on her iPod. She met with the head rabbi at Rodeph Sholom, Robert N. Levine, an affable, animated man with an office full of books and baseball memorabilia.

“So, Cece,” Rabbi Levine said, “what do you connect to most about your Judaism?”

Cece had transformed into the archetypal opaque teenager.

“I think I like the holidays, and, um, yeah,” she said, looking down.

The rabbi asked her to recite for him. She did.

“I love it,” Rabbi Levine said. “You have a beautiful voice. Your Hebrew is perfect. The only thing I need you to do, Cece, is project. Just give me a ‘Baruch’ like you’re singing in the shower.”

“Baruch,” Cece said, a bit louder.

On Feb. 17, nearly 200 of Cece’s friends and relatives filed into the vast Romanesque sanctuary of Rodeph Sholom. A box of commemorative yarmulkes with the yin-and-yang pattern sat by the door. Six alumnae of Cece’s orphanage — they call themselves the Fu sisters — had flown in from all over the country.

To the side of the altar, on a red throne, sat Cece, resplendent in a long black patterned dress with a scoop neck.

Ms. Shapiro laid a prayer shawl over Cece’s shoulders, a symbolic transfer of power. Cece and the other bat mitzvah girl that day, Sadie Friedman, lifted their voices and let loose a Hebrew welcome song that Cece had sung with the synagogue choir from the time she was 7.

Rabbi Levine preached from the day’s reading: “ ‘Let the stranger in your midst be to you as the native, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.’ ”

Cece and Sadie approached the ark, the enclosure, flanked with marble columns and topped by carved lions, where the Torah scrolls are kept. The cantor, Rebecca Garfein, handed them the oversize scrolls, dressed in maroon and gold fabric. The girls held them like bagpipes.

Cece laid her scroll on the bimah and read in Hebrew, in a loud, clear voice, from Chapter 21 of Exodus, a compendium of commandments on the treatment of servants and slaves.

Then she moved to her English speech.

"This long journey to becoming a bat mitzvah today has provided me with so many ways of learning," she said. "The part that will always stay closest to me is the importance of caring for strangers. Just like Jews were once strangers in the land of Egypt, we have all been, or will be strangers at some point in our lives."

Cece finished, touched the fringe of her shawl to the Torah and kissed it. She returned to her throne and sat down, cheeks red, looking exhausted and relieved.

That night — the eve of the Chinese year of the pig, as fate would have it — Cece and her guests reconvened at the Faculty House at Columbia University. The outer room was set up like a casino, with Cece-backed playing cards and Cece-faced play money. Inside, the music throbbed, the D.J. yelled, the fog machine billowed. Cece and her friends traded their shoes for white socks and pogoed across the floor.

After dinner — kosher Chinese for the kids, steak for the adults — the D.J. cranked up "Hava Nagila." Cece, in a chair in the middle of the dance floor, was lifted up, up, up until she bumped her head on the Chinese umbrellas hanging off the chandelier.

Then she was back on the floor, dancing with her mothers and little sister and singing along with the recording: "Hava neranena, venis'mecha," or: Let us sing and be glad.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Period: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Chinese Orphan’s Journey to Jewish Rite of Passage”

After reading the New York Times article answer the questions below, using complete sentences.

- 1) What law is most repeated in the Torah?
- 2) How does this law apply to the topic of the article?
- 3) What is a bat mitzvah?
- 4) Have you gone through a rite of passage? If so what is it? If not, will you experience <sup>one</sup> ~~one~~ the future? Describe it.
- 5) How were aspects of Cece Nealon-Shapiro’s identity represented and joined at her bat mitzvah?
- 6) How do you interpret Zoe Kress’s comment that, “Being Chinese and Jewish is normal ~~to~~ to me. Thinking about being Chinese and Jewish is a little strange.”
- 7) What is the result of China’s one-child rule?



## Family Recipe

**One important element of any family's culture or heritage is FOOD!  
You are to bring in a family recipe to share with your classmates. We will  
collect all the recipes to put together into a class book. This should be  
representative of your personal heritage or culture.**

**Name of the Recipe:**

**Ingredients:**

**Steps to prepare the dish:**

**Who gave you this recipe?**

**Country or culture recipe came from:**

**Tell the story behind your dish... Why did you choose this recipe? (ie. "This  
recipe reminds me of my Nana...")**

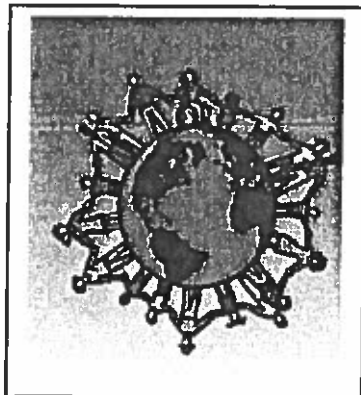
**Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_**

## **“How I Became Me” Poem / Song**

**Your poem / song should focus on some of the following ideas:**

- **Where were you born?**
- **Where were your parents born?**
- **Where do you live**
- **With which race/s do you identify?**
- **What language or languages do you speak?**
- **What religion do you practice?**
- **What aspects of your life illustrate your culture, race, or heritage?**
- **What interests or hobbies have shaped your life up to this point?**
- **What are some traditions that you and your family follow?**
- **What are the five most important events that have made you who you are today?**
- **...**

- **Your song / poem should be a minimum of 10 – 15 lines long.**
- **Use sensory images in a fresh interesting way. Describe sights, sounds, smells, feelings, and tastes.**
- **Include at least one example of figurative language, such as simile and metaphor.**
- **Include poetic devices such as rhyme, rhythm and repetition.**



**Personal Heritage Research Paper**  
**DUE FRIDAY, MAY 6**

Behind every individual is a world of culture and history waiting to be discovered. Your ancestors have created a path of culture and identity that you will soon walk down. To help understand your heritage, you will write a research paper that will encourage you to make connections. You will write a three paragraph essay that includes one source that will give the reader further information about your culture.

**First paragraph:** the first paragraph is where you will describe your family tree and explain some of the questions/answers from the interview. The interview includes many questions, so choose a few to discuss here.

**Second paragraph:** the second paragraph will include the research aspect of this essay. You will have to cite one quote in proper MLA format. Find some research about the history of your country or culture. Relate to this your personal heritage. (background, people, customs, lifestyle, society)

**Third paragraph:** the third paragraph will be where you make a personal connection to your cultural background. How do you connect with your culture? Are there certain holidays or traditions you and your family celebrate? If you could describe your culture to someone how would you do it?

You will be given an outline to help organize your thoughts and research. When choosing research for your essay, make sure it is from a credible source. This project will allow you to make connections to your culture while adding to your personal heritage.

# Focus Area Rubric

Due Date: Friday, May 6

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ period: \_\_\_\_\_

	Points Possible	Points Given
<b>1. 3 paragraphs</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minimum of 7 sentences</li><li>• All parts submitted</li></ul>	<b>3</b>	
<b>2. Content</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence of family tree and interview</li><li>• Research about culture</li><li>• Personal connection</li></ul>	<b>10</b>	
<hr/>		
<b>3. MLA Format</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proper citation of quote</li><li>• Works Cited page</li></ul>	<b>4</b>	
<b>4. Use three transitions</b>	<b>3</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Used properly in the text</li></ul>		

Total Points: \_\_\_\_\_

Late (-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Improvement areas:

Strengths:

# Useful Transitions and Linking Expressions

## Transitions which can be used to show location:

above	among	beneath	in front of	on top of
across	around	beside	inside	outside
against	away from	between	into	over
along	back of	beyond	near	throughout
alongside	behind	by	off	to the right
amid	below	down	onto	under

## Transitions which can be used to show time:

about	first	until	soon	then
after	second	meanwhile	later	next
at	third	today	afterward	in the meantime
before	prior to	tomorrow	immediately	as soon as
during	till	yesterday	finally	when
		next week		

## Transitions which can be used to compare two things:

in the same way	likewise	as
also	like	similarly

## Transitions which can be used to contrast things (show differences):

but	yet	on the other hand	although	otherwise
however	in the meantime	still	even though	counter to
even so	nevertheless	on the contrary	conversely	as opposed

## Transitions which can be used to emphasize a point:

again	indeed	for this reason	truly
to repeat	with this in mind	in fact	to emphasize

## Transitions which can be used to conclude or summarize:

as a result	consequently	accordingly	in short
finally	thus	due to	to sum up
in conclusion	therefore	in summary	all in all

## Transitions which can be used to add information:

again	and	furthermore	next
also	besides	likewise	finally
additionally	equally important	moreover	as well
in addition	for example	further	together with
another	for instance	furthermore	along with

## Transitions which can be used to clarify:

that is	put another way	to clarify
in other words	stated differently	for instance