



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Singing Game COPLAND "I Bought Me a Cat"

### FOLK SONGS & TRADITION



This version of "I Bought Me a Cat" is an **arrangement** of an old American folk song by a well-known American composer, Aaron Copland. An arrangement is a reworking of a piece of music. In this case, the original piece of music was a folk song. **Folk songs** are pieces of music that are passed down from generation to generation by oral tradition, which means passed down by singing or speaking, rather than by something written down. Because of this, there was not one "correct" version. Several versions of the lyrics existed, but there was no part written for an instrument, like the piano part in Copland's version. Copland decided to write the song down, compose the piano part for it, and publish it in a collection of pieces he arranged called *Old American Songs*.

Buddy mentions "Old MacDonald" as another example of an American folk song. What are some other folk or traditional songs that you know?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Folk songs reflect the culture of the specific people who create them, including that group's history, traditions, values, activities, and often the natural landscape in which they live. Because of this, a folk song from the United States like "I Bought Me a Cat," and those of other countries may sound nothing alike, but all are still considered folk songs.

Often times, folk music is started by family groups as a pastime and a way to pass down stories between generations. **Bluegrass**, a type of folk music that comes from the central eastern region of the United States known as Appalachia, developed this way. Does your family play or listen to music together? Is there a type of music, an artist, or some specific songs that are important in your family?

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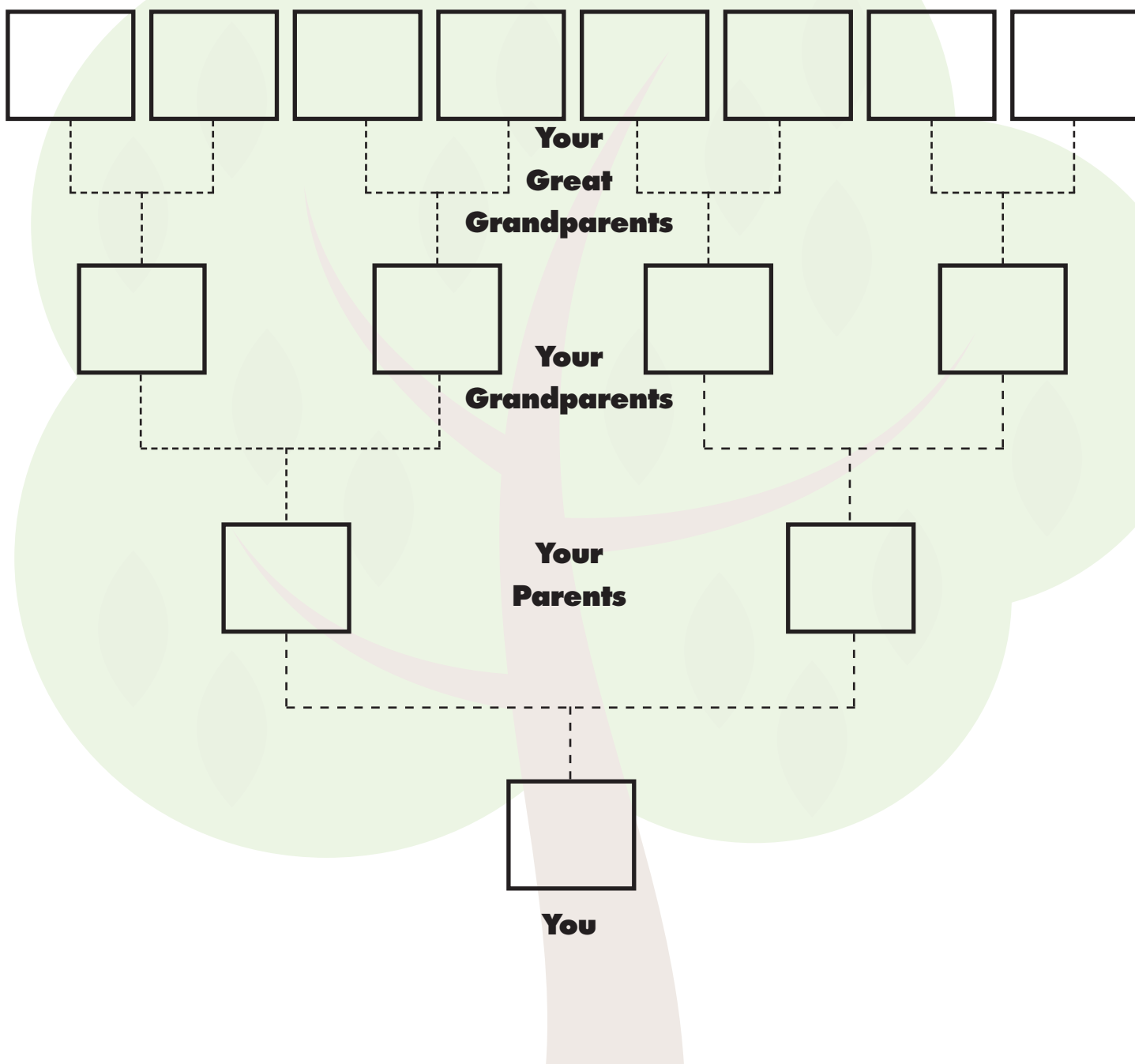
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## YOUR FAMILY CULTURE

Let's learn a little more about your own culture by exploring your family history. Start by filling out your family tree! Write your name in the bubble at the bottom, and include your parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. Ask your parents for help.

### FAMILY TREE





## YOUR FAMILY CULTURE

What do you know about your relatives? Ask two relatives to tell you their favorite family story and write them down below. Be sure to ask why the story is important to them.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Values and traditions are also passed down through folk music, including important beliefs and activities.

What are some of your family's traditions?

- Daily traditions (eating dinner as a family, stories at bedtime, etc.):
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Birthday traditions:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Holiday traditions:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Other traditions (walks in the park, football on the weekends, etc.):
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_