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Student Reading 2.1: Grandma's Pictures

It was a rainy Saturday afternoon. Sally was bored. Her mom was cleaning out the old cedar chest, so Sally went to see how it was going.

Mom had pulled out stacks of old pictures. Sally started looking through them. The first one she picked up showed a little girl in a frilly dress. The picture was in black and white. "Who's this?" Sally asked her mom. "Why, that's your grandmother." Mom said. "No, it's not, THIS is Grandma" replied Sally, pointing to a color photograph of an older woman with white hair. Mom laughed. "Actually, they are BOTH your grandmother. The pictures were just taken at different times of her life. Let's pull out several pictures of her and see the changes."

They spent a few minutes sifting through photos, until they had uncovered five different photos of Grandma, taken at five different points in her life. "Now, Sally, see if you can put these pictures in the order that they were taken. Let's start with the youngest Grandma, and end with the oldest." Sally thought this



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was pretty easy, and she was soon finished with the challenge. Mom looked over Sally's work. "This is great!" she said. "I remember this photograph – it was taken in the 80's." "The 80-whats?" wondered Sally. "The decade of the 80's.", Mom answered. "Huh?" wondered Sally, "What's a decade?"

"Well," explained Mom, "we divide time into chunks, don't we? You know about the difference between a second, a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, and a **year**. A group of 10 years is called a **decade**. We group decades using the tens place in their date. So the decade of the 80's was between 1980 and 1989."

"Oh, I get it!" exclaimed Sally excitedly. "What other group names do we use?" "Well, how many years would ten decades take up? That's ten groups of ten." "One hundred years! What's that called?" "One hundred years is called a **century**." Mom explained.

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“Now I know just what to do with these pictures! Someone wrote the year in which they were taken on the back of each one. I am going to put them in order by the year, the decade, or maybe even the century!” Sally decided. And that is exactly what she did. When she was done, she called Mom over to look.

“Wow, it’s like a timeline of Grandma’s life!” Mom said. “What’s a timeline?” asked Sally. “A **timeline** is a chart that shows a series of events put into the order in which they happened. It helps us to see the order of things, and how much time passed between events. How about if we take these photos and create a timeline? Let’s start by getting a piece of poster board and drawing a straight line down the middle of it. Then we will divide the line into equal sections, and draw a dividing line at the beginning of each section. Grandma is 70 years old, so let’s make our timeline show eight decades all together. We will divide it into eight even sections. What will the time covered by each section be called?” quizzed Mom. “A decade!” shouted Sally.



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“Perfect!” exclaimed Mom. Let’s label the decades. Grandma was born in 1945, so let’s start with the decade of the 1940’s. Then we will have the 1950’s, 1960’s, 1970’s, 1980’s, 1990’s, the 2000’s and the 2010’s. Phew! Now we are ready to put in some important dates.”

Mom and Sally filled in the dates when Grandma was born, when she graduated from high school, when she got married, when Mom was born, when Sally was born, and today’s date, when they made the timeline. Then they pasted the photos above the dates they were taken. When they were finished, Mom said, “Now we have a picture of Grandma’s life. A timeline helps us see how much time passed between important events, and sometimes we can see what things happened around the same time. It helps us make sense of the past.”

“I love it!” said Sally.