



TEACHER NOTES - MY OWN TIME MACHINE

A timeline is a table using text and graphics to depict events, ordered chronologically, for a specific period of time. There are many types of timelines and they vary greatly in purpose and form. They can be historical or geological; they can span millions of years or one day; they can be horizontal or vertical.

Timelines are valuable to genealogists because they sort and record family history data. They are also valuable because when timelines include political, religious, and economic events, they can show how family decisions were made based on those events.

Examples of timeline tables can be found in print in atlases, history books and encyclopedias. Many examples of timelines also exist on-line - see below in the [resources section](#) for links to some of these. You can also watch a video to [see how Microsoft Excel can be used to create timelines](#).

Gather examples of various timelines and use these examples to show the children that a timeline has the following criteria:

- A timeline table has a **title**, the **date** it was created and the **name** of the creator
- A timeline table has a **scale** where a unit of distance is equal to a set amount of time
- A timeline table has dates, data and graphics arranged in **chronological** order
- A **vertical** timeline table usually has all the dates on the left side of the line and the data on the right. A horizontal table usually has the all dates above the line and the data below.
- **Graphics** can be on either side of the line and should be as close as possible to the event they depict.

Have the children gather their facts, perhaps on small pieces of paper or Post-It Notes, and lay them out in chronological order to create a timeline. Younger children may just fasten these notes to the [My Own Time Machine](#) table; older children should re-write the facts on the [My Own Time Machine](#) table and add illustrations or photos. Older children will see that a timeline is a spreadsheet. They may wish to follow the criteria for timelines using a computer spreadsheet such as Excel and generate their own table - see [Timelines...Lifelines](#) for some examples of timeline tables created in Excel.

RESOURCES

[My Own Time Machine](#): A blank timeline table with decades, for recording important events in your Family History. Provided by the Victoria Genealogical Society.

[BC's Time Machine](#): A sample timeline table, showing events from British Columbia's history. Provided by the Victoria Genealogical Society.



GENEALOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Resources for Students and Teachers

REFERENCES

[Timeline of Canadian History](#): Wikipedia provides a year-by-year highlights in Canadian history.

["My Timeline" Reference and Form](#): from Library and Archives Canada.

[The Perspective of Timelines](#): An article from Ancestry.com.

[Timelines...Lifelines](#): A video from Midwest Genealogy Centre, outlining the benefits of using timelines in your research, and examples of how to use Excel as a tool for generating timelines.