



A timeline is a visual display of a series of events. We often use timelines because they make it easy to view many events spread out over a period of time. Timelines are simple to make. There are some basic rules to creating a good timeline.

Be sure to leave enough room to add in the dates and events.

- Add the dates in chronological order (dates should be listed in order of occurrence). If you are creating a timeline of your life, start with the date of your birth at the left side of the line and add dates as they happened along the line.

**Example:** 1968 (I was born) 1974 (I started school) 1980 (I entered sixth grade). not: 1974 (I started school) 1968 (I was born) 1980 (I entered sixth grade).

Remember to keep time and space relative. That is, distances

- along the timeline should be in relation to the time that has past.

For instance, let's say you have a line that is one foot long (12 inches). If you mark the left end of the line as 1980 and one inch to the right you make another entry, 1981, then you have specified that each inch will be approximately one year. If you make another entry one inch to the right of the last entry, it should be 1982. In other words, if you are going to make one inch equal to a time span of one year keep it that way throughout the timeline. The reason for this is so that you do not confuse the person viewing the timeline. Once someone connects a certain distance to a certain span of time, he will expect that distance to equal the same span of time throughout your timeline. Of course, you do not have to be exact - but you should be close.

There are only a few simple steps to follow to make a timeline:



1. Draw a straight line across a long piece of paper.
2. Add events in chronological order.
3. Be sure to make the important events clear and readable!
4. Be creative. Instead of a line, draw a bar, or a wavy line. Add pictures to your timeline. Remember, a timeline is a visual tool and should catch the attention of the person viewing it.

Here are some examples of timelines that you could create:

- Your life (birth, school, first tooth lost, trips taken, etc.)
- A famous explorer's trip
- A pet's life
- Skills learned in school
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## The Assignment

Develop a timeline of the how the Iditarod got started.

Resources: <http://www.iditarod.com/learn/history.html>

**Something to think about:** How could you use a timeline in a presentation to classmates?

This lesson plan was prepared by New York Elementary School teacher Terry Burton.

Editor's note. This lesson has been revised to provide the resources necessary for research on the timeline, as reflected in the information now available at [www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com)

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