

HOW TO MAKE A TIMELINE EASILY

<http://heartofthematteronline.com/how-to-make-a-timeline-easily> by Terri Johnson, the creator of Knowledge Quest maps and timelines.

FORMAT

A timeline can be constructed in a variety of formats, but there are three major categories – wall timeline, book timeline and computer timeline.

A **wall timeline** would be attached to or hung upon the wall. When no longer in use, it may be taken down and stored by folding like an accordion or rolling it up. A wall timeline can either be a finished product for reference purposes only, a pre-printed banner with date increments only, or entirely homemade. As interesting as a reference timeline can be for adults, it is not the educational tool that the latter two options provide.

A **book timeline** as well can be a finished product, such as the *Wall Chart of World History*. This is a fabulous book and a great reference for adults or teens. Again, it is not the ideal educational tool for students in 4th through 12th grade, because students in this age bracket need a tangible activity to cement their learning. *(As an aside, timelines do not have significant meaning for students 3^d grade and under. At this age, they are still grasping the concept of time.)*

The **other options for book timelines** would be a pre-printed hardcover book with date increments only, a binder with printed timeline sheets, or a homemade timeline book assembled in a notebook, scrapbook or sketch book. A computer timeline requires software, which can be anything from the most basic of applications such as Microsoft Word or Excel (or similar word processing and spreadsheet applications) to a program that has been developed specifically for the purpose of creating historical timelines on the computer. Two such programs are the Easy Timeline Creator and TimLiner 5.0. Both of these programs have been developed for students to make timeline creation at the computer desktop a snap.

SPACING

Once a format has been decided upon, the time period and date increments need to be mapped out. Decide if your timeline will cover the span of recorded history (generally from early civilizations around 5000BC to the present) or just a segment of history (for example: World War II – 1939-1945). This next part is subjective, but you will need to decide how much space you would like to allot to your timeline. You may be limited by wall space and this factor might play into your decision about which format to use as well. If you are working with a book format or on the computer, space is not particularly an issue. One rule of thumb, however, is to give yourself more space the more recent the history being studied. For example, a page per one or two hundred years is sufficient for Ancient history, *(in fact using this amount will result in many blank pages towards the beginning)* but you will need at least a page per decade for the 20th century. Perhaps even more.

Below are some guidelines to get started.

As much as possible, determine to keep date increment spacing consistent on your planned timeline project. If you are using a wall timeline, consider choosing a time period rather than the whole span of recorded history. You can change out timelines when you have filled up the first one.

For the wall:

Time Period	Date Increments	Space Needed
Ancient History	allow 3-6 inches of space per 100 years	This will be over 10 feet of timeline if you cover as much as 5000BC – 400AD
Medieval History	allow 10 – 12 inches of space per 100 years	This will result in 10 -12 ft. of timeline if you cover as much as 400AD – 1600AD
Renaissance or New World History	allow 12 inches of space per 25 years	This will result in 10 feet of timeline if you cover as much as 1600 – 1850

Modern History	allow at least 8 inches of space per decade	This will result in 10 feet of timeline if you cover as much time as 1850 – 2000
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Note: Before you begin to mark the date increments on your homemade wall timeline, draw a straight line horizontally along its length. Use butcher paper, computer printout paper or the unprinted ends of a newspaper roll (ask for this at your local paper – it is either free or cheap). Also note that Knowledge Quest sells wall timelines with the date increments pre-marked. Click [here](#) for details.

For a book:

Time Period	Date Increments	Space Needed
Ancient History	allow a page for every 100 – 200 year span	With 100 years per page, your book will number at least 54 pages if you cover 5000BC – 400AD
Medieval History	allow a page for every 50 – 100 years	50 years per page will result in 24 pages if you cover as much as 400AD – 1600AD
Renaissance or New World History	allow a page for every 10 – 25 years	25 years per page will result in 10 pages and 10 years per page will result in 25 pages if you cover as much as 1600 – 1850
Modern History	allow a page for every 5 – 10 years	10 years per page will result in 15 pages and 5 years per page will result in 30 pages if you cover as much as 1850 – 2000

Note: Before you begin to mark the date increments in your homemade timeline book, draw a straight line horizontally along the mid to upper portion of each page. Use notebook paper, scrapbook papers or an artist's sketchpad Also note that Knowledge Quest sells a blank timeline book entitled *Wonders of Old* which has the date increments pre-marked. Hardcover book or CD-ROM available. Click [here](#) for details.

One final idea for your book timeline is to insert blank half pages between the full pages that you have created above to allow for expansion if your student runs out of room on the pages provided. The concept of the half pages is that the page would sit below the running line on the full pages giving the page its date increments.

For the computer:

The beauty of a computer generated timeline is that it only uses the space that it needs. It can expand to include as many details as your student would like to include on it and there are no empty holes where information has been left out. This writer is greatly impressed with the software program *Easy Timeline Creator*. It is flexible and user-friendly and great for the student who would prefer to build his timeline from the computer. Click [here](#) for more details.

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The final and perhaps most important question is... What should go on our timeline? The short answer... anything that your student is currently studying that falls within the time period that she is charting. This can be historical events, political figures, artists and musicians, discoveries, inventions, scientists, religious figures and events, literature, great writers, etc. Anything that is worthy of studying is worth recording on the timeline as the timeline gives the snapshot perspective of when things happened and in what order. A related question that pops up is *where on the timeline should people be recorded* – at their birth, or date of significant achievement? There is no right answer. And a good argument can be made for either alternative or for recording both.

Information can be recorded on timelines by writing events down by hand, drawing pictures, sticking stickers, or gluing on pictures or pre-drawn timeline figures. The greater learning experience would come from drawing pictures and writing captions down by hand.

Pictures for your timeline can come from magazine clippings, Google images, clip-art books and CDs. There are companies that have produced historical timeline figures so that you can have everything you need stored in one place for easy retrieval. I am very impressed with the timeline figures drawn by Amy Pak entitled *History Through the Ages*. She has hand-drawn over 1,620 figures that include captions, ready to cut and paste onto your timeline. Sets are provided for ancient, medieval/renaissance and modern history. They are available as hardcopy sets or on CD-ROM. For more information on timeline figures from *History through the Ages*, click [here](#) for details.

NADENE'S EXERCISE BOOK TIMELINE FOR SHORT HISTORICAL PERIODS

We will study American History this year. Because this is a fairly small section of the timeline, I felt it would work well in a book format. I used a 72 page **Nature Study** exercise book for our study on These books have a **lined page** (great for notes), with a **blank facing page** (for illustrations, maps or clipart.)

We started at 1400 AD.

From 1400 – 1800 we used 1 page for 25 years. I numbered in 5 year intervals down the middle of the book, using 1 line per year.

From 1800 – 1900 we assigned 1 page for 20 years. I numbered in 5 year intervals every 6 lines down the time line.

1900 onwards we gave 1 page for every 10 years. I numbered every year down the timeline using 3 lines for every year,

If any page is too small for the information we want to place on the timeline, we will insert a flap page on the outside edge so that the pages can be opened out and we can see the full spread of information.

For an **introduction lesson**, I ask younger children to write their names on their birth date. They can then write in other family members' birthdays, as well as any other important event they remember in History. Now the Book of Centuries is *theirs*, a personal historical keepsake.

I also find that it is helpful to jot in a few **key historical events** at the beginning of our timeline studies. We will pass them many times as we continue to fill in events and information during our studies. This gives the child a "bird's eye view" of the period of history we are studying. (e.g: We may write in American War of Independence, The American Civil War, WW1 and WW2. These events and dates help the child associate other events, and they may say, "This took place **before** the Civil War.")

BOOK OF CENTURIES

from [Simply Charlotte Mason](#)



A Book of Centuries is like a timeline in a notebook. As its name suggests, each two-page spread in the book is devoted to one hundred years — a century — of history. Each student creates his or her own book, recording historical events and names of importance, along with pictures, poems, quotes, and anything else that makes the book individual. You can also add written narrations, illustrations from the Internet, or titles of books you've read that are set in that time period.

If your children are not yet old enough to take on the responsibility of their own Books of Centuries, you can create one together as a family.

Books of Centuries can be as simple or elaborate as you desire. If you want a simple one, download this Book of Centuries document that labels each two-page spread with a date (in hundred-year increments) from 4000 B.C. to AD. 2099.

Putting Your Book of Centuries Together

1. Once you download and print the Book of Centuries file, sort the pages into two identical piles, with the same dates opposite each other.
2. Three-hole punch one pile of copies on the right side of the paper and the other pile, on the left side. Now you should have each of the two pages with identical dates laying beside each other, holes facing each other on the inside edges of the pages.
3. Put the pages in chronological order into a three-ring notebook. The first two pages in the notebook should be 4000–3901 B.C. and the last two pages should be AD. 2000–2099. (Remember that the B.C. dates count backwards and the AD. dates count forwards. So your book should start with 4000 B.C., 3900 B.C., 3800 B.C., etc. Once you get to 100–1 B.C., start counting forwards again with AD. 0, AD. 100, AD. 200, up to AD. 2000.)

