

## Unit 1, Lesson 5: Creating Chronologies

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### Lesson Overview

In this lesson students create and analyze timelines to draw inferences about causes and effects, learn about how certain types of timelines can lead them to incorrect conclusions about causation, and learn a variety of ways to organize information chronologically.

There are many ways to organize information chronologically. This lesson focuses on three common ways – horizontally, pigeon foot, and vertically. Teachers are encouraged to explore other ways with their students.

### Delaware Standard(s)

- **History Standard 1a, 4-5 [Chronology]:** Students will study historical events and persons within a given time frame in order to create a chronology and identify related cause-effect factors.

### Big Ideas

- Chronology, cause, effect.

### Essential Questions

- How might I organize timelines differently and be able to analyze them? Can timelines trick me?

### Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that there are a variety of ways to organize chronologies (e.g., horizontally, vertically, pigeon foot) and that they should be attentive to common misconceptions triggered by timelines (e.g., one event necessarily causing another)

### Resources

- [Lesson 5 Google Slides](#)
- [Resource 1: Timeline of George Washington's Life](#)
- [Resource 2: Timeline of Events in My Life](#)
- [Resource 3: Analyzing Timelines to Identify Causes and Effects](#)
- [Resource 4: Using Timelines to Uncover Causes and Effects](#)
- [Resource 5: Creating a Pigeon Foot Chronology](#)
- [Resource 6: BLANK Creating a Pigeon Foot Chronology](#)
- [Resource 7: Examples of Ascending and Descending Vertical Arrangements](#)
- [Resource 8: Create a Vertical Timeline](#)
- [Resource 9: Check for Understanding, Blank Vertical Timeline](#)

### Procedures

1. **Introduce the Lesson.** Tell students that they will be “doing history” today. There are a lot of things involved in doing history but today we will focus on creating chronologies.

- a. Teachers may choose to use one or both of the following YouTube videos to introduce students to creating and using chronologies: YouTube videos [here](#) and [here](#).
2. **Horizontal Chronologies or Timelines:** tell students that the most common type of timeline is a horizontal timeline. On a horizontal timeline, you organize events by putting the event that occurred first on the left side of a line and the ones that occurred more recently to the right side of the first event. Share the example that appears on [Resource 1: Timeline of George Washington's Life](#) and talk the students through the dates, events, and organization of the timeline.
3. **Application Activity:** Ask students to create a list of important events in their lives. *Suggestion: to save time in class, have students do this for homework the night before or use their timelines from lesson 4.* Distribute copies of [Resource 2: Timeline of Events in My Life](#). Have them practice creating a horizontal timeline using the events that they viewed as important in their lives – placing the oldest events to the left and the more recent ones to the right. You may need to offer scaffolded guidance e.g., ask them to get out a piece of paper, draw a horizontal line, identify the event that happened furthest back in time and write that on the far left side of the line.
4. **Using Timelines to Identify Causes and Effects** – tell students that timelines can be very useful to historians and others. One way that they can be very helpful is by pointing us to possible causes and effects of events. Project or distribute copies of [Resource 3: Analyzing Timelines to Identify Causes and Effects](#). Have students work with a partner to identify one CAUSE and one EFFECT on the timeline.
  - a. Consider the following questions if the students need prompts or scaffolds:
    - i. What caused Ramona to study for her history test? [[teacher announced a test](#)]
    - ii. What caused Ramona to get an “A” on her history test? [[she studied](#)]
    - iii. What was an effect of the teacher telling students that there would be a test on Friday? [[Ramona studied](#)]
    - iv. What was an effect of Ramona studying for her test? [[she earned an A](#)]

Emphasize to students that, on a horizontal timeline, **the cause of an event can never be to the right of that event.** Conversely, **the effect of an event can never be to the left of that event.** A cause always comes before an event occurs. An effect always appears after an event occurs.

5. Turn the students’ attention back to the timeline of events in George Washington’s life on [Resource 1](#). Ask them if they think that there might be something on the timeline that may have caused something else on the timeline [[e.g., GW becoming General caused the victory in the war for independence. Or, because GW led the nation to victory, people elected him President](#)].
  - a. **IMPORTANT Misconception Alert 1:** students often suggest that any event to the left of another event is a cause of that event. The same holds true when students are asked to look for effects on horizontal timelines. Be sure to address these misconceptions using

GW's birth then marriage. His birth certainly did not cause his marriage. Nor was his becoming General an effect of him getting married.

6. Independent Practice and **Misconception Alert 2**. This next activity is designed to counter another **misconception** commonly caused by horizontal timelines i.e., that every event has one cause and one effect. Teach students early on that almost every event has multiple causes. The following activity offers additional guided practice in creating horizontal timelines while also helping students understand that many if not most events have multiple causes and multiple effects.

Distribute copies of [Resource 4: Using Timelines to Uncover Causes and Effects](#). Have students work with a partner to complete Activities 1-3 on the resource.

7. **Debrief the Bike Accident activity**. Ask students what caused the bike accident. Note that there may have been many causes. Do the same with effects. Then, have the students work with a partner to think about the following: what kind of timeline could you create that would show more than one cause and/or more than one effect of an event in a clearer way?
8. **Pigeon Foot Timelines**: tell students that another way to organize events chronologically is by using a "pigeon foot" timeline. Have students look at an image of a pigeon foot (like the one seen [here](#)) and then look at the two ends of the pigeon foot timeline. Do they understand how this timeline got its name?

A pigeon foot timeline allows you to show multiple causes and multiple effects.

- a. **Guided Practice**: distribute copies of [Resource 5: Creating a Pigeon Foot Chronology](#). Use the bulleted list of events on Resource 5 and below to co-construct a pigeon foot timeline.
    - i. Event: Michelle is late for school
    - ii. Causes: could not sleep, woke up late, missed the bus
    - iii. Effects: missed homeroom, got a late pass, had to make up work
  - b. **Independent Practice**: Have students create a pigeon foot timeline using the information from [Resource 4: Using Timelines to Uncover Causes and Effects](#). See [Resource 6](#) for a blank Pigeon Food chronology that students can use.
9. **Vertical Timelines**: students will also see chronologies organized vertically in books and should be introduced to the vertical design structure at this time. Vertical timelines are often used when there is more information to add for each event. Note that events on a vertical timeline can be presented in one of two ways described below. The choice depends on personal preference or what the creator of the timeline wants to draw most attention to. The two orders are:
    - a. **ascending order** from longest ago (at the top) to most recent (at the bottom)
    - b. **descending order** from most recent (at the top) to longest ago (at the bottom)

Show the examples of ascending and descending vertical timelines on [Resource 7: Examples of Ascending and Descending Vertical Timelines](#) and guide students through their arrangements.

10. **Independent Practice** – See [Resource 8: Create a Vertical Timeline](#). Have students read “Martin’s Saturday” then create a vertical timeline using the events described in the reading. Ask volunteers to share/present one vertically ascending timeline and one vertically descending timeline. Have the rest of the class check to make sure the timelines are correct.

**Check for Understanding, Resource 9.** Ask students to make a list of 5-6 things that they did today (e.g., they woke up, they brushed their teeth, came to school, ate breakfast, did math problems, ate lunch, when to recess, created a timeline etc.). Try to include at least one thing that caused another event on the timeline to happen (the latter of which will be an effect). Then have them create a vertical timeline that organizes the events chronologically.

### **Debrief**

- One of the things that historians do and that we will be doing during history time is focus on WHEN things happened.
- Once they find out what happened, historians organize that information in chronological order.
- There are many ways to organize information chronologically e.g., through horizontal timelines, vertical timelines, and pigeon foot timelines.
- By placing events in chronological order, it helps us draw inferences about what may have caused events to happen and what may have been some effects of what happened.