

Lesson 1:

What is history and why is it important?

Unit 1
Grade 4

What is history?

We are going to spend a lot of this year studying history.

We need to think about what is history and why it is important.

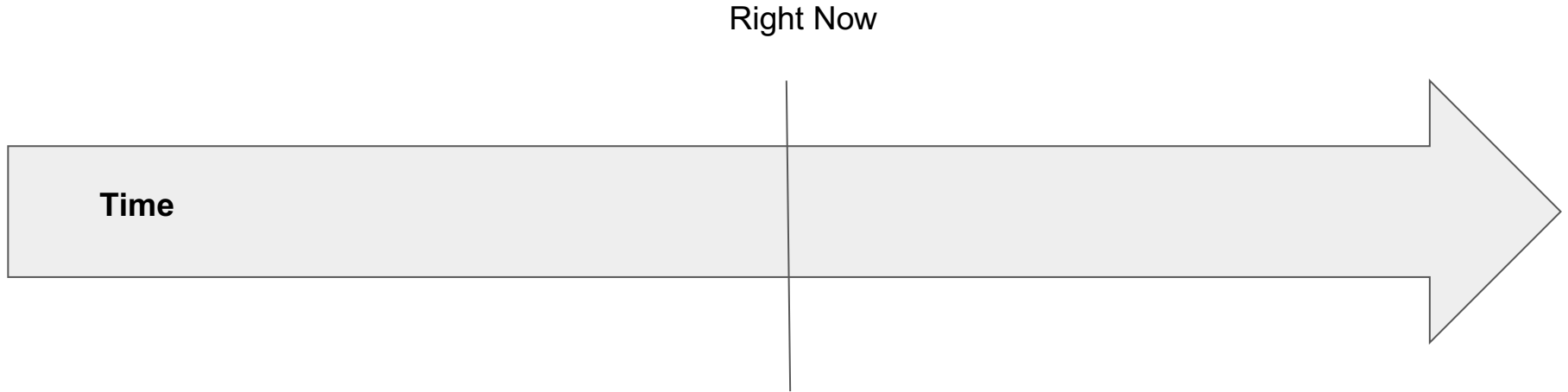
I do not want to give you the answer!

During this lesson, you will complete a few activities to see if you can figure out the answers for yourself.



All of these people study history.

Past, Present and Future



Past

Time before now. Anything that happened before right now.

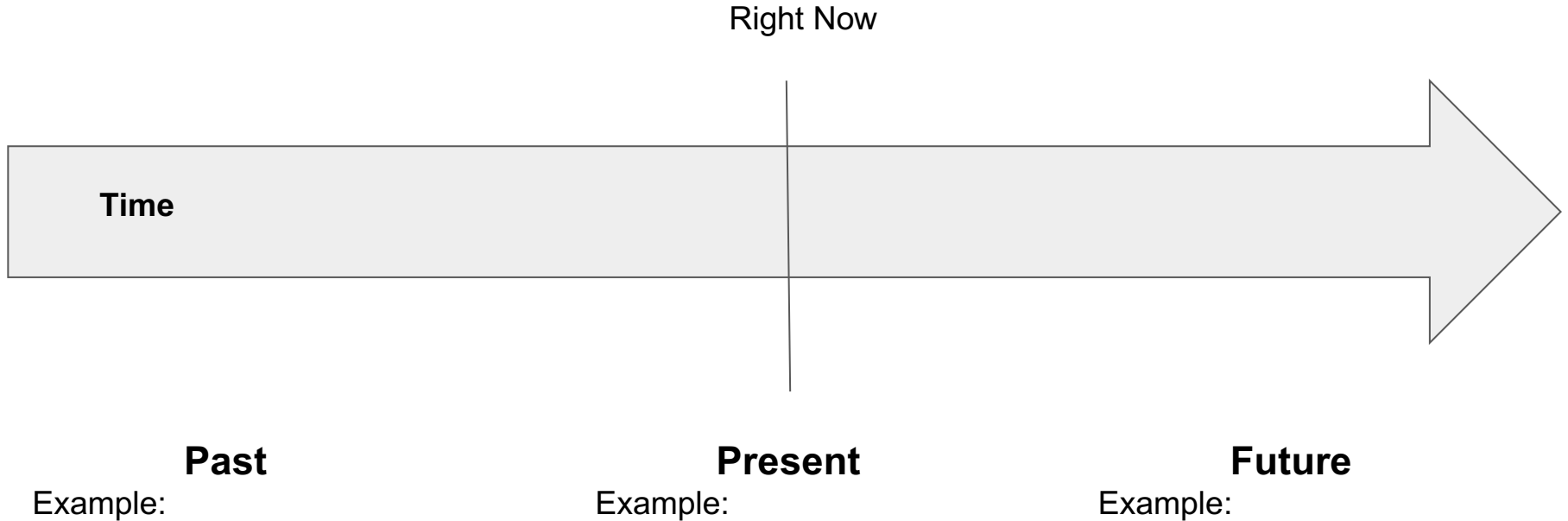
Present

What is happening right now.

Future

What will happen, but has not happened yet.

What are some examples of past, present and future?



Three Categories of Time

Let's see if you understand the three categories of time and if you can place some events accurately into the three categories of time. Read each of the numbered sentences below then put the number of each sentence in its correct category.

1. Luiz is eating his lunch.
2. Barack Obama used to be our President.
3. Erin will be in grade 5 next year.
4. Shayan is outside playing basketball.
5. Isabella was born 9 years ago.
6. Ryan is going to be an airplane pilot someday.
7. Garrett Morgan invented the traffic light in 1923.
8. Your teacher is wondering if anyone needs help right now.
9. Ellen Ochoa became the first Hispanic woman to go into space in 1993.
1. Next year will be the year of the tiger on the Chinese calendar.

Past	Present	Future

Resource 2: What do historians do?

Ashanta is a historian. This is what she has been doing over the last two weeks:

1. Ashanta interviewed her grandparents to learn about what life was like when they were children.
1. Ashanta wrote a book about what the world was like when dinosaurs were around.
1. Ashanta went to the library to read books about what Vice-President Kamala Harris was like as a student when she was in 4th grade.
1. Ashanta took a field trip to the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC to learn about the people who lived in Delaware before Columbus came to the New World.

Ashanta is a historian.

You just read about what she does.
Based on what Ashanta does as a
historian, how would you explain what
history is and what historians do?

Check for Understanding

Which of the following best describes what historians like Ashanta do?

- a. they study the past
- b. they study the present
- c. they study the future
- d. they study all of these

Based on what Ashanta does as a historian, which of the following best describes what history is?

- a. history is the study of the past
- b. history is the study of the present
- c. history is the study of the future
- d. history is the study of all of these.

Resource 3: Why is it important to learn and do history?

1. Olivia accidentally touched a hot stove when she was three years old. She burnt her hand badly.
2. Ahmad plays baseball. He has not been hitting the ball lately. He read a book about Hank Aaron. The book described things that Hank Aaron used to do to hit better. Ahmad practices Mr. Aaron's ideas and is now the best hitter on the team.
3. Dakota is very smart, but he never talks in class. One day at lunch a classmate asked Dakota why she never talks. Dakota explained that, one time in first grade, she answered a teacher's question, and everyone laughed at her.
4. In 1923 a Black man named Garrett Morgan invented a traffic light with the colors red, yellow, and green to let drivers know when they had to stop, slow down, and go. Now they can be seen on almost every street in the United States.