

# NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

**6-8**

Subject

**Social Studies**

Lesson Title

**Making Your Own Cultural Timeline**

**Activity Description:** Timelines are used universally to keep track of things from important historical dates to personal events in our lives. It is a way to remember things long after they happen. This activity is a guide to making a cultural timeline for young people to record the significant moments in life where they learned cultural traditions. This can be done as a family or in a classroom setting.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- WiFi access (optional)
- Paper or poster board
- Pencil or pen
- Family or elder guidance
- Markers for decorating (optional)
- Pictures or printed images (optional)

## STEPS

Timelines are used universally to keep track of things from historical dates, upcoming events, and even our personal lives. In this activity, you will create a timeline of the cultural experiences and learning that has happened in your life. For example, you may include your first powwow or the first time you cooked a tribal food such as frybread, your first jingle dance or when you competed in your first tribal competition. This activity is adapted from Middle School Idea #5 on the [Muscogee Creek Native Edge Distance Learning Platform](#) and is easily done at home.

### Activity Steps:

1. If WiFi is available, watch this video to learn about making timelines: [“Timelines for Kids”](#) by Clarendon Learning.
2. To have more information for your timeline, ask your parents, caregiver, or other family member to help you.
3. Start with the year you were born. Then list the years of your life to the present.
  - a. This will be a brainstorm so do not worry about keeping your information neat or organized yet.
4. Think of the earliest time you remember experiencing or learning something from your culture.
5. Place those events under the years when they happened. Ask others for help with remembering more dates.
6. Think of as many events as you can that helped you experience or learn your culture. These can also be events that happened in your community.
  - a. As you are making your timeline notes, think about the significance of each of these moments in time.
7. Now, use your paper or poster to draw a line. Number the years, starting with your birth. If you have a lot of events, you can number each year individually or count them by intervals 3-5 years.
8. On your notes, place the events in your list in order; then, record them on the timeline. If desired, leave space for decorating or adding pictures.
9. Once all your events are recorded, add color, pictures, or even small objects to your timeline.
10. Share this with your family and elders and encourage them to make one too!

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## HELPFUL TIPS

**Parents and caregivers:** Creating a family cultural timeline is a critical part in recording and passing on cultural heritage and identity. This is also a valuable tool for a community to do together as well. Share this activity with your family specific to your tribal or community culture. Each member in the family can make a timeline and then place all the timelines together to share the cultural history of the whole family.

For a broader timeline of Native American history and cultural events, visit this [digital timeline from Native Voices](#) by the National Library of Medicine. This timeline features North American historical events from before time to 2011. Because there is a large amount of information here, the site can be revisited often.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

**Families and educators:** This is a valuable activity even for the classroom. This allows students to see the story of how each classmate acquires their culture and ask each other questions. This also helps teachers gain a better understanding of their students. It is important to share with young people that our lives do not develop in a linear way but instead are connected to each other across many dimensions. However, for us to visually understand how time progresses, a timeline allows us to “see” how events build in our lives. For additional learning, visit the links below:

- To share an example of a national timeline and the importance of recording timelines, explore this [digital, interactive timeline from National Geographic](#) that features events from 1880 to the present
- For other cultural-based activities for distance learning including this timeline activity, visit the [Native Edge Distance Learning Platform](#) by the Muscogee Creek Nation .

### Activity Adapted from:

- Muscogee Creek Native Edge Distance Learning Platform <https://www.mcnstep.com/wetumka-year-1-2-work>
- “Timelines for Kids” YouTube video posted by *Clarendon Learning* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o50HA6QTxj0>

### Additional Resources:

- “Timeline” by Native Voices from the *National Library of Medicine* <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/timeline/index.html>
- Interactive timeline from *National Geographic* <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/timeline/>