



Family History – Timeline activity

Accessing World Book Timelines: Using your library's subscription to World Book Online, login and click on the Timelines icon.  Ask the friendly staff at your library if you have any trouble.

Why learn about your family history?

Learning more about our family history helps us to understand more about who we are, where we come from and our connection to the world. It also teaches us about the past and how the world has changed.

Why build a Timeline on your family history?

A Timeline is an outline of your life or the life of your ancestor.

Creating a timeline of your personal history or that of your ancestor, helps serve as a basic outline of your history. A timeline can help you arrange the life of your ancestor into key events offering a clearer understanding of their life and what milestones shaped their life.

A timeline can also reveal any possible mistakes in the information you have about an ancestor. For example, an ancestor who died in 1848 cannot be alive when the census was taken in 1850. Also, if an ancestor has a child born in England in 1911, they are unlikely to have a child born in Melbourne in 1911.

Getting started with your timeline:

Interview your relatives

Start with a close relative such as a parent or grandparent and find out a bit more about them. Then interview other relatives such as aunts and uncles, cousins, great aunts and uncles etc.

Ask them questions about their life – here are some examples:

- When and where were you born?
- Do you have any siblings? What are their names? When and where were they born?
- When were your parents born and where?
- *If they were born in a different country or city, ask when they moved? Also ask if there was a particular reason they moved?*
- What are some of the major events that have occurred in your life – personal (including births, deaths, marriages, schooling, career), historical, political, economic?
 - What was your childhood like?
 - What school did you go to? When did you start and finish?
 - What activities did you do for fun as child? What sports or arts did you do – were there any major achievements or moments? When did they take place?
 - Tell me about dating and getting married (if married). Ask for date of marriage etc.
 - If they have children, ask when and where were they born
 - Have you had any health issues e.g. major accidents or broken bones? When did they happen?
 - How has the world changed?

- Tell me about the friendships you have had. Are there any particular memories?
- Have you travelled? What places have you visited and when?
- Are there any major events that have impacted or shaped your life? E.g. wars, natural disasters, government policies, economic situations
- Have you or anyone in your family served in the military? If so, find out the branch, rank, and years of service (if possible).
- What do you know about our ancestors? E.g. who were your grandparents, where are they from and what did they do? Are there any other key pieces of information you know about our family history you can share?

Important things to remember when interviewing and collecting information:

Remember to collect dates (approximate dates are fine) and names where possible.

Give them a chance to talk while you listen. A tape recorder is a good way to record and remember the information.

Ask if they have any photos you can scan and use in your timeline. Be careful with any photos or objects they share with you.

Once you have completed your Timeline, don't forget to share it with them.

Create your timeline

Choose one ancestor or multiple ancestors to create a timeline on. Using World Book Timelines, start piecing together the information from your research and interviews. Start with the key events. For example: Births, deaths, marriages, major political/historical events occurring, education, movement, health issues.

You may want to include more than one ancestor in your timeline. You can create a timeline that leads to your life. It's up to you!

Understanding more about your ancestors

It is important to have an understanding of what your relative has told you about their life or that of your ancestor. To help get a better understanding, research key areas they have told you about. *You can use your library's subscription to World Book Kids, Student or Advanced.*



- Research the countries or cultures your family come from. Locate these countries on a map and compare the distance to where you live.
- Learn more about the Australia your ancestors lived in or what it was like when they first arrived in Australia.
- Did any of your family members serve in the military? Learn more about where they served e.g. World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Iraq, or Afghanistan or any other wars.
- Learn more about their profession and type of work they performed.
- Learn about key events in history that occurred during your ancestor's lifetime. E.g. wars (World Wars I & II, Korean War, Vietnam, Cold War), political events (e.g. civil rights, women's rights, Cold War), natural disasters, eras or major events (e.g. Industrial Revolution, The Great Depression, 1960's).