

## 2.1 USING TIMELINES TO EXPLORE PATTERNS IN HISTORY

### How do timelines enhance our understanding of history?

<b>C3 Framework Indicator</b>	<p><b>D2.His.1.6-8.</b> Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.</p> <p><b>D2.His.15.6-8.</b> Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.</p>	
<b>Staging the Compelling Question</b>	This inquiry give students the opportunity to explore timelines to understand the chronology, visualize patterns, and organize information about East Germany’s history.	
<b>Supporting Question 1</b>	<b>Supporting Question 2</b>	<b>Supporting Question 3</b>
What is chronology and how does it help us understand what has happened?	What is a historical timeline?	How can timelines help us understand how events further in the past impacted later events?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
Using assigned events, each group will determine what historical event is represented. Next, form a „living“ timeline.	Student groups will create a visual for assigned events from 1945 to 1990.	Using the timeline created in Task 2, ask each group to examine the timeline and determine if some events further in the past caused later events to take place.
<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>
<p><b>Source A:</b> Handout 2.1.1</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Seeing Time</p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> Handout 2.1.2</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Paper (4 × 6)</p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> Timeline developed in <b>Formative Performance Task 2.</b></p>
<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	<p><b>Argument:</b> Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical or contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p><b>Extension:</b> Select a period in German history (fall of the Weimar Republic, World War II, the Cold War) and create an illustrated timeline of the most significant events. Share with classmates.</p>	
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<p><b>Understand:</b> Timelines enable us to visualize history.</p> <p><b>Assess:</b> Select a period of time or an event of significance in the history of your town, state or province.</p> <p><b>Act:</b> Create a timeline of the selected time period or event. Share with your school or community.</p>	

## ? COMPELLING QUESTION

- How do timelines enhance our understanding of history?

### INQUIRY OVERVIEW

This inquiry gives students the opportunity to explore timelines to understand the chronology, visualize patterns, and organize information about East Germany's history.

### TEACHER BACKGROUND

A grasp of chronology, simple as it may seem, is a fundamental skill of any historian. The C3 Framework for Social Studies indicates, “Historical thinking requires understanding and evaluating change and continuity over time, and making appropriate use of historical evidence in answering questions and developing arguments about the past. It involves going beyond simply asking, ‘What happened when?’; to evaluating why and how events occurred and developments unfolded. It involves locating and assessing historical sources of many different types to understand the contexts of given historical eras and the perspectives of different individuals and groups within geographic units that range from the local to the global. Historical thinking is a process of chronological reasoning, which means wrestling with issues of causality, connections, significance, and context with the goal of developing credible explanations of historical events and developments based on reasoned interpretation of evidence.”<sup>1</sup>



Timeline analysis allows students to make connections, organize information, and visualize and recognize patterns in a series of events. According to the National Standards for History, “Chronological thinking is at the heart of historical reasoning. Without a strong sense of chronology—of when events occurred and in what temporal order—it is impossible for students to examine relationships among those events or to explain historical causality. Chronology provides the mental scaffolding for organizing historical thought.”<sup>2</sup>

Chronology is important because the exact order in which events occur helps us understand the cause and the effect of those events, and thereby allows us to step back and view the big picture of history—how and why events unfold in the way they do, and how they are related.<sup>3</sup>

**🕒 TIME:** Two to three 45-minute class periods

1 C3 Framework for Social Studies. (n.d.). History. p. 45. Retrieved December 11, 2020, from <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf>.

2 UCLA. (2021). History Public History Initiative. Chronological Thinking: Public History Initiative: National Center for History in the Schools. [phi.history.ucla.edu/nchs/historical-thinking-standards/1-chronological-thinking/](http://phi.history.ucla.edu/nchs/historical-thinking-standards/1-chronological-thinking/).

3 Conolly-Smith, Peter. (n.d.). *Chronology*. Writing on History at Queens College. Retrieved October 20, 2021, from <https://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/writing/history/considerations/chronology.html>.

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

- Revolutionary War Timeline (**Handout 2.1.1**)
- East Germany Timeline (**Handout 2.1.2**)
- Independence Hall Association. (n.d.). Timeline of the American Revolutionary War. Retrieved April 12, 2021, from <https://www.ushistory.org/declaration/revwartimeline.html>.
- Johnson, Richard. (n.d.). *Seeing Time*. Beacon Learning Center. Retrieved April 12, 2021, from <http://www.beaconlearningcenter.com/Weblessons/seeingtime/index.html>.



## INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Share a timeline (school year, daily schedule, holidays, etc.) where the students are familiar with the events. Discuss the elements of the timeline: dates, events, sequence. Ask how the timeline would help someone unfamiliar with the event(s) understand what happened.

## ? SUPPORTING QUESTION 1

*What is chronology and how does it help us understand what has happened?*

### ► Formative Performance Task

Divide the class into small groups of four or five. Give each group the same number of events (not in chronological order, from **Handout 2.1.1**), one for each member in the group. Ask each group to determine what historical event is represented. Ask each group to then share their conclusion. Next, form a “living” timeline. Ask each group member to take one event and join their classmates in a line with the event dates in order.

As a class, determine what big picture is represented by the timeline. Ask how placing the events in order or sequence helped them to understand what happened.

Introduce the word *chronology*: an arrangement, as of events, in order of occurrence <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chronology>).

For a greater understanding of timelines and chronology, teachers may want to access the online lesson *Seeing Time* and work through the activities with the class.

### ► Resources

- Revolutionary War Timeline (**Handout 2.1.1**)
- Johnson, Richard. (n.d.). *Seeing Time*. Beacon Learning Center. Retrieved April 12, 2021, from <http://www.beaconlearningcenter.com/Weblessons/seeingtime/index.html>.

## ? SUPPORTING QUESTION 2

*What is a historical timeline?*

### ► Formative Performance Task

Create a timeline on the wall or floor for the years spanning 1945 to 1990.

Divide the class into five groups and assign to each group three events (not consecutive) from **Handout 2.1.2**.

For each assigned event, the group must create a visual on a 4 × 6-inch sheet of paper divided into four sections that includes the date(s) of the event, a brief description, the type of event (political, sports, etc.), and an image that represents the event.

Each group will add their event visuals to the wall or floor timeline, sharing information about the events and answering any questions.

Discuss how seeing the timeline provides a greater understanding of the historical event.

► **Resources**

- East Germany Timeline (**Handout 2.1.2**)
- Paper (4 × 6)

**? SUPPORTING QUESTION 3**

*How can timelines help us understand how events further in the past impacted later events?*

► **Formative Performance Task**

Students stay in the same groups as for **Formative Performance Task 2**. Using the timeline created in **Formative Performance Task 2**, ask each group to examine the timeline and determine if some events caused other events to take place.

Each group will then record their findings. The entire class will go over each group's findings and discuss how the timelines enabled a comparison among events.

If time allows, ask students to make predictions about how the timeline might be different if certain events had never happened.

► **Resource**

- Timeline developed in **Formative Performance Task 2**

**✓ SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK**

*How do timelines enhance our understanding of history?*

Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources, while acknowledging competing views.

**+ EXTENSION (OPTIONAL) TASK**

Select a period in German history (fall of the Weimar Republic, World War II, the Cold War) and create an illustrated timeline of the most significant events. Share with your classmates. To view a timeline of the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall, see **Inquiry 2.5**.

**★ TAKING INFORMED ACTION**

**Understand:** Timelines allow us to visualize history.

**Assess:** Select a period of time or an event of significance in the history of your town, state or province.

**Act:** Create a timeline of the selected time period or event. Share with your school or community.

**CONCEPTS LIST**

- Chronology
- Timeline
- Historical
- Federal German Republic (FRG)
- German Democratic Republic (GDR)
- West Germany
- East Germany