

Timelines that Teach



Does your child build a timeline but not seem to understand the relevance of the dates and events? Many moms I have talked to find this a perplexing problem. Here are five ways to use timelines that will keep your child's interest fresh and learning high. ~ Sheila Carroll

- 1. Use smaller increments of time.**

Most timelines encompass the sweep of history from creation to the 20th Century. Children in lower elementary grades do not have a sense of centuries and millennia of time. The concept of large blocks of time does not develop until a child is in the upper elementary grades or later. Still, a timeline is a valuable tool. Create a timeline for specific time periods, like the Middle Ages, or the seasons, or the life cycle of a butterfly, or the sequence of happenings in *Little House on the Prairie* are just a few examples. If your child is passionate about a certain book, person or time period, making a timeline is sheer fun.
- 2. Make giant timelines**

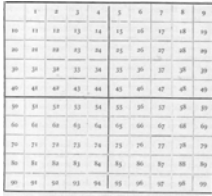
Sometimes the little numbers and lines on the page are just too darn small. Kids like to "get into" history. Make an oversize wall timeline. Put it on the floor, sometimes, and ask the kids to "take a walk through history." Amy Pak of [Homeschool in the Woods](#) has high-quality, historic figures and timelines that can be printed out large or small.
- 3. Narrate with timelines**

Use a biography timeline (or other short increment of time) for narration. A favorite at our house is to finish a biography, create the biographical timeline and narrate the entire book from it. A further extension of the activity would be to write the narration. The timeline and written narration are saved together in a notebook.
- 4. Create a timeline with index cards.**

Take a pack of 4X6 and 3X5 index cards, colored markers and your history timeline. On each large card write the name of a major historical period. In American history for example the time periods are: Early Explorations, Colonial Times, Revolutionary War, Growth of the Nation, Westward Expansion and so on. On the smaller cards, write the dates in one color and people/events in another color. As your child explores each new period in your reading, have him go back and assemble the card-timeline, putting the dates and people/events under the appropriate heading, then tell you something about the time period.
- 5. Use a Century Chart (see free download)**

One of the members of Charlotte Mason's Parent's National Education Union wrote an essay on the use of the century chart as a tool for teaching chronology. We include the chart as a free download. To read the article in full, see the link below.

Free Download --Century Chart



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

Living Books Curriculum has created a downloadable Century Chart exactly like the one recommended in the PNEU *Parent's Review*, Vol. II, No. 2.

Dorothea Beale, a friend and colleague of Charlotte Mason, introduced the Century Chart as a means of teaching a child their part in history.:

"...we want to show that the life of each child forms part of history; then we may lead him on to see that the whole world is different for each man that has lived, better for each noble life, and to feel quite early that God has sent him into the world with some work ready for him, and that his business is to do that work. we want to show that the life of each child forms part of history; then we may lead him on to see that the whole world is different for each man that has lived, better for each noble life, and to feel quite early that God has sent him into the world with some work ready for him, and that his business is to do that work."

LBC created two sizes of the Century Chart. One is [11X17](#) and the other is [8.5X11](#). Click on the size you want to download. To read the directions for using the chart, see [The Teaching of Chronology](#)

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