**TimelineJS TUTORIAL**

*TimelineJS* is an open-source tool created by Knight Lab that enables you to build visually–rich interactive timelines.

View an example timeline here

**Before you begin,** you’ll want to be sure you have a Google Account, because TimelineJS uses a Google Spreadsheet. If you have a Gmail email address, you already have a Google Account. To create a new Google Account, you can go to [accounts.google.com/signup](http://accounts.google.com/signup). Once you’re set up with your Google Account, you’re ready to get started with TimelineJS.

**Now you’re ready to create a timeline.** Go to [timeline.knightlab.com](http://timeline.knightlab.com).
First, you'll want to download the Google Spreadsheet template provided on the TimelineJS website. This will be automatically placed into the Google Drive connected to your Google Account.

You can re-name the spreadsheet if it helps you better organize your files.

Drop dates, text and links to media into the appropriate columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/1/1808</td>
<td></td>
<td>Abolition of the international slave trade</td>
<td>An Act Prohibiting the Importation of Slaves was passed in the United States in March 1807, but took effect in 1808. This federal law stated that no new slaves were permitted to be imported into the US. <a href="https://www.gilderlehrman.org">https://www.gilderlehrman.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.gilderlehrman.org">http://www.gilderlehrman.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you want to do anything fancy, like italicize text or hyperlink to a URL, you’ll need to type in HTML language in this step, but don’t be intimidated if you’re new to HTML. All you really need to know is a few basics. Visit our website for a [basic HTML tutorial](https://www.gilderlehrman.org).
A word about the “media link” -- Videos that are hosted on YouTube or Vimeo already have links - just click “share” on YouTube or Vimeo and copy and paste the URL link. For images, you’ll need to make sure they are hosted online and use the image URL (web address), which almost always ends with JPG, GIF, PNG or BMP. Keep in mind that the image URL does not usually match the web address of the page where the image appears. In this box, you can also add links to Tweets, or media entries such as Wikipedia, or even a Google Map...the possibilities are endless.

Here’s a helpful note to prevent errors in your spreadsheet: Don’t change the column headers, don’t remove any columns, and don’t leave any blank rows in your spreadsheet.

Once your timeline is more or less finished, the next step is to click “publish to the web.” Under the File menu in the Google Spreadsheet, select “Publish to the Web.”

In the next window, click the blue “publish” button. When asked, “Are you sure…?” click “OK.”

The URL that appears in the center of the window is the public link to your timeline. In order to embed your timeline on a website, you’ll need to put it into HTML language. Luckily, you don’t need to know HTML to do this – TimelineJS has an embed code generator. Just go to the website, scroll down to step 3, and paste your URL into the generator box.
The code produced by the generator can be placed wherever you want your timeline to live on the web.

A great feature of this tool is that you can continue to update the Google Spreadsheet with new events, or edit current events, and the timeline embedded on your website will automatically update.

**That’s it! It’s really that easy.** Timelines are useful tools for putting anything in an order - they help us to visualize time. Of course, they are great tools for teaching history, and TimelineJS takes your typical timeline to another level by allowing it to be interactive. You can create a timeline as a teaching tool, or have your students create their own timelines as part of an assignment.

For inspiration, check out [ap.gilderlehrman.org](http://ap.gilderlehrman.org), which has timelines for all nine periods in American history designed for students studying for the AP US History Exam.