

TimelineJS TUTORIAL

[TimelineJS](#) is an open-source tool created by Knight Lab that enables you to build visually-rich interactive timelines.

Timeline

1525
The rise of the Atlantic slave trade

The first record of a [slave trade voyage](#) direct from Africa to the Americas is for a ship that landed in Santo Domingo, on the island Española (Hispaniola), in 1525.

Watch Philip Morgan on the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1500–1800

1517
Religious battles in the New World

1540
Spain authorizes Coronado's conquest

Sketch of the hold of a slave ship from Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-trade* (London, 1808).

The Gilder Lehrman Institute

Timeline events:
- 1500: Columbus reports on his voyage
- 1510: Encomienda system established
- 1517: Religious battles in the New World
- 1525: The rise of the Atlantic slave trade
- 1540: Spain authorizes Coronado's conquest
- 1550: Las Casas subjugates Indians

[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. 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.

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.

1 Build a new Google Spreadsheet using our [template](#). You'll need to copy the template to your own Google Drive account by clicking the "Use this template" button.

Create your spreadsheet

Drop dates, text and links to media into the appropriate columns. For more about working with our template, [see our help docs](#).

Get the Spreadsheet Template ←

Note: Don't change the column headers, don't remove any columns, and don't leave any blank rows in your spreadsheet.

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.

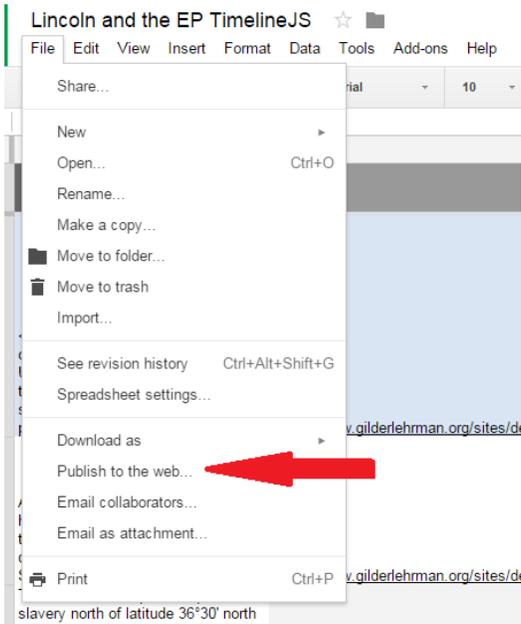
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Start Date	End Date	Headline	Text	Media	Media Credit	Media Caption
1/1/1808		Abolition of the international slave trade	<i>An Act Prohibiting the Importation of Slaves</i> was passed in the United States in March 1807, but took effect in 1808. This federal law stated that no new slaves were permitted to be imported into the US.	https://www.gilderlehman.org	http://www.gilderlehman.org	http://www.gilderlehman.org Printed in Thomas Clarkson, <i>The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade by the British Parliament</i> , Vol. 2 (London, 1808)

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](#).



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.

3

Copy/paste spreadsheet URL into the box below to generate your timeline. (Make sure you've published the spreadsheet.)

Generate your timeline

Google Spreadsheet URL	1cWqQBZCkX9GpzFtxCWHoqFXCHg-yITVUW	Width	100%	Height	650
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Optional settings (show)

Set language, fonts, starting slide and more.

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Grab the embed code and paste it on your site where you want your TimelineJS to appear (just like a YouTube video).

Embed the code into your website

```
<iframe src='https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline/latest/embed/?source=1cWqQBZCkX9GpzFtxCWHoqFXCHg-yITVUW1nrdYmzKUI&font=Bevan-PotanoSans&maptype=toner&width=600&height=600' width='600' height='600' frameborder='0'></iframe>
```

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, which has timelines for all nine periods in American history designed for students studying for the AP US History Exam.