

Autobiographer: Making a Timeline

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, students will think like an autobiographer and describe what a timeline is.

Activity

Teacher note: This activity is long and can be completed across multiple days. If you are completing it across multiple days, complete Steps 1-3 on day 1 and 4-5 on day 2.

Step 1: Background Information on Autobiographers and Timelines (10 min)

- Show [Video: Making a Timeline](#).
- Explain to students that autobiographers often create timelines to put important events from their lives in order.
- Show [Handout: Information in an Autobiography](#).
- As a class, discuss how information in an autobiography should be true, in order, and on topic. Discuss what would happen if someone put information that wasn't true in their autobiography!

Step 2: Brainstorming Ideas for a Timeline (10 min)

- Tell students that today they will be creating a timeline of their own lives.
- Give students [Handout: Making a Timeline](#).
- Read Step 1 together. Discuss examples of events: moving to a new house, getting a baby brother/sister, getting a pet, first soccer game, going to Kindergarten, playing a new game in gym class, learning something new at school.
- Give students examples of events that should and should not be on their timeline. Remind them that events should be true, in order, and on topic.
- Give students a few minutes to brainstorm and write (or draw) important life events in the boxes.
- As a class, read Step 2 and have students circle 3 events from their list that they want to include in their timeline. Remind students that autobiographers pick events that are true and on topic.
- Read Step 3 together. Have students put the events in order by writing 1,2 or 3 above their circled choices.

Step 3: Building a Timeline (20 min)

- Explain to students that they will now create their timeline. Their timeline will not be a regular timeline that is on paper. Instead, students will create a three-dimensional timeline.
- Explain that “three dimensional” means that you can walk around something on every side of it. It is not flat.

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- Show [Handout: 3-Dimensional Items](#).
- Next, provide students with a 12 inch strip of construction paper. Have students draw a line down the middle.
- Then, have students cut out the 3 boxes with their 3 timeline events. Have students glue or tape them onto their timelines.
- Next, explain that students will build 3-dimensional versions of the events that they chose.
 - Example materials: clay, pipe cleaners, yarn, popsicle sticks, tinfoil, egg cartons, milk cartons, bottle caps, recyclable materials, paper, glue, markers, construction paper
 - Give students an example of how to build a model of one of their life events. “If one of my important life events is that I moved from an apartment to a house, I might try to build a model of my new house. I could use an empty milk carton and glue construction paper on to the sides. I can draw a door and windows onto the house.
- Have students set up their 3-dimensional events on their timeline when they are finished.

Step 4: Writing about the Timeline (15 min)

- Explain to students that they will write a description to go with each model on their timeline.
- Give students the [Handout: My Timeline Writing](#). Explain to students that they need to write what happened and how old they were. They can also include their reaction to the event with how they felt and any additional information that is important to explaining the event.
- Read sentence frame on handout: When I was ____ I _____. I felt _____.
- Provide examples if students need more support:
 - When I was 5, I got my first pet fish. I felt so excited. I named him Harry!
 - If students need help coming up with words or idea, make a class word bank on the board with feelings, events, ages, or any other words students could use in their timelines.
- When they are finished writing, students can cut out each box and attach it beneath their 3D model on the construction paper.
- Finally, have students label the top of the construction paper with “_____’s 3D Timeline”

Step 5: Museum Exhibit: 3D Timelines (10 min)

- Explain to students that they will now have a chance to learn more about their classmates lives!
- Have students set up their 3D Timelines on tables around the room. Tell students this is for a new exhibit in a museum. Students will quietly (as if in a museum) walk around to read and observe the different timelines of their classmates.
- Optional (if extra time) Bring students together and have them share a fact they learned about a friend!

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Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: Making a Timeline
- Handout: Information in an Autobiography
- Handout: Making a Timeline
- Handout: Pictures of Flat versus 3-Dimensional Items
- Handout: My Timeline Writing

Not Provided online (each student or group needs):

- Art and building supplies
- Construction paper
- Tape
- Scissors

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