

B3. Massachusetts Studies Project Teaching Tools for Local History:

** TIMELINES **

Introduction: A timeline is an ordered representation of events, generally displayed on a time scale. Many teachers have discovered the value of using timelines to help put curriculum in perspective. Timelines are efficient graphic organizers that provide a tool for studying periods of time ranging from a day, a year, a century, or the span of an individual's life or of era.

General Teaching Tips: Researching and creating timelines appeals to students' visual, mathematic, and kinesthetic intelligences. Timelines can organize research materials in a variety of ways, from storing primary source data about a topic over time to documenting the timeframe of a novel or the span of an individual's life gleaned from an oral history interview. Completed timelines can include multimedia elements and can be effectively displayed in a variety of formats, from wall hangings, to 3-dimensional "clothesline timelines", to computer slideshows.

Basic Questions

What is the purpose of this timeline?

What is the basic unit of measurement for this timeline - hour, day, month, year, century?

What local events were occurring during the period represented by this timeline?

Critical Thinking Questions (for older students)

What trends, or changes over time does this timeline suggest?

Would the trends look different if the scale, or unit of measurement, were changed?

Select 2 events on the timeline and explain what they do and do not have in common.

How were events selected for this timeline? What was left out? Would missing elements change the timeline's representation of this time period?

Which events on this timeline "caused" other events to occur? Explain.