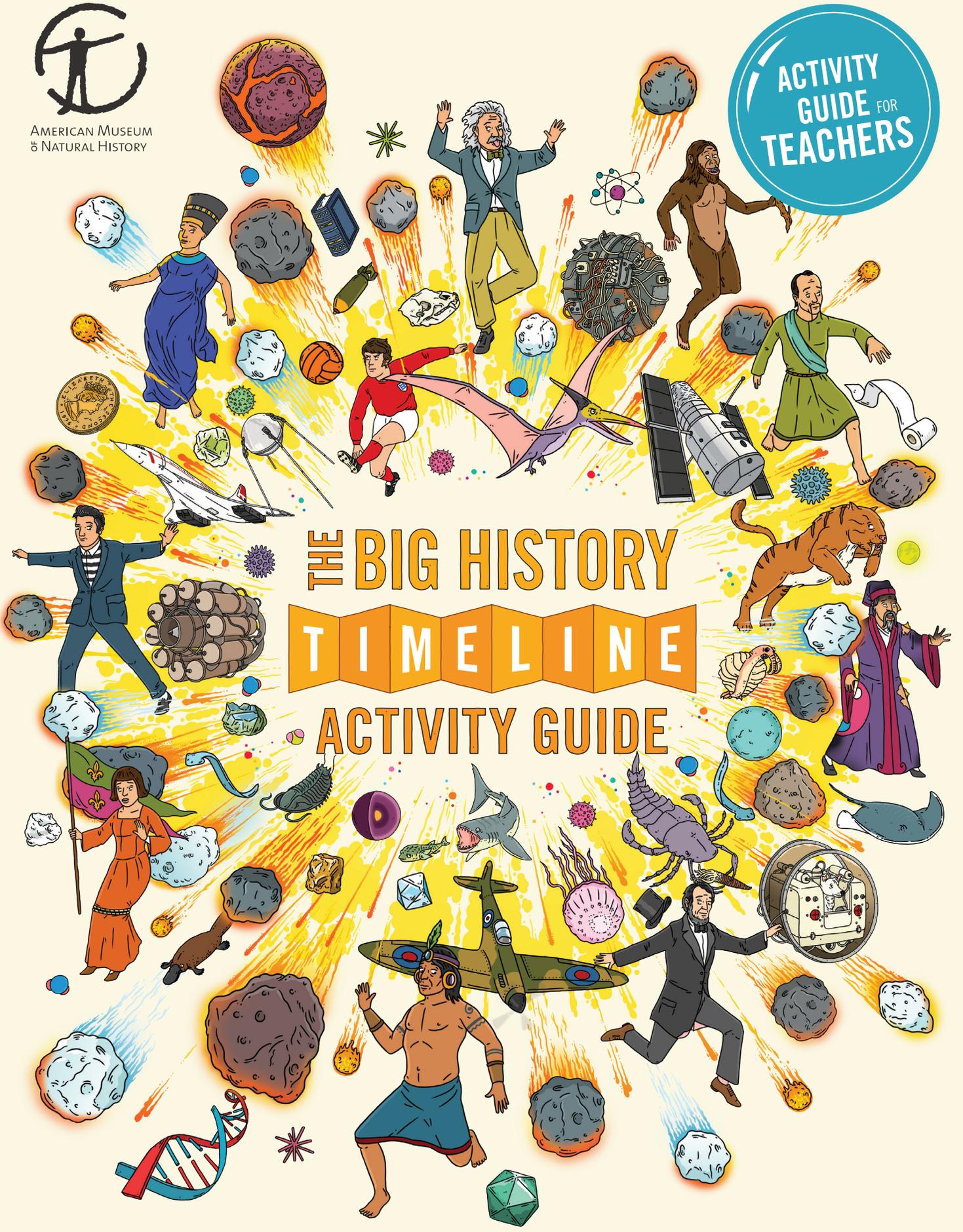
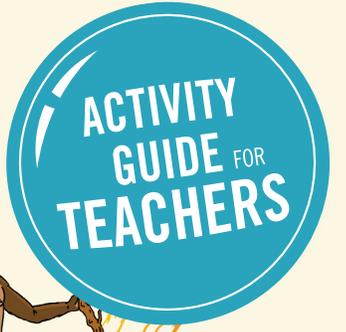




AMERICAN MUSEUM
OF NATURAL HISTORY



THE BIG HISTORY TIMELINE ACTIVITY GUIDE

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Dear Educator,

This activity support pack is designed to be used in conjunction with a unique book on world history called the **Big History Timeline Wallbook**, published in collaboration with experts at the American Museum of Natural History.

On the six-foot-long timeline we've told the extraordinary story of the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day. The first six coloured streams – Space, Earth, Sky, Sea, Land and the Stone Ages - represent natural history. The second six tell the story of human civilizations beginning with Asia, the Middle East (and North Africa), Europe, the Americas and Australasia. Choose any date on the timeline beneath and you can easily see what is happening anywhere in the world, at any given moment!

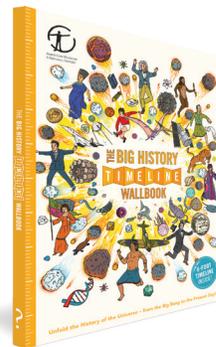
But there is so much more to this amazing book that meets the eye! It can be used in countless ways to help students connect knowledge together and develop their own critical thinking skills. This Activity Pack, which is aligned to common core standards, suggests various ways of using the Big History Timeline Wallbook in class or as a curriculum-enrichment strategy.

We hope you will have as much fun using these activities and we have had making them! And if you have any ideas for more activities based on the using the Wallbook in class, then please feel free to email us at info@whatonearthbooks.com so that we can include them in future editions.

Very best wishes!

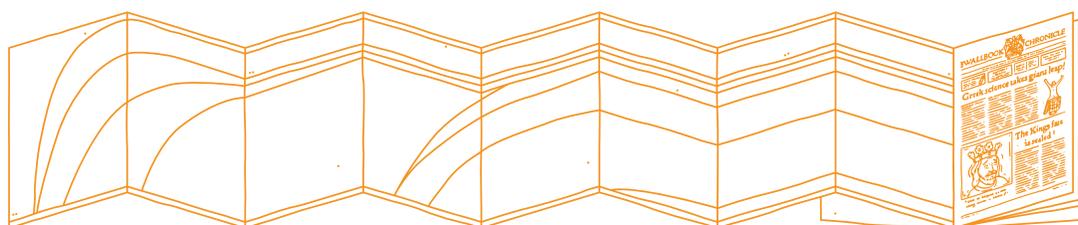


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Cover

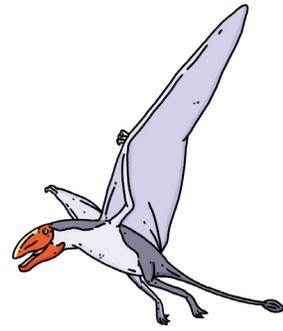
Big History Timeline Wallbook



Fold out Timeline Wallbook

Chronicle

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INTRODUCTION

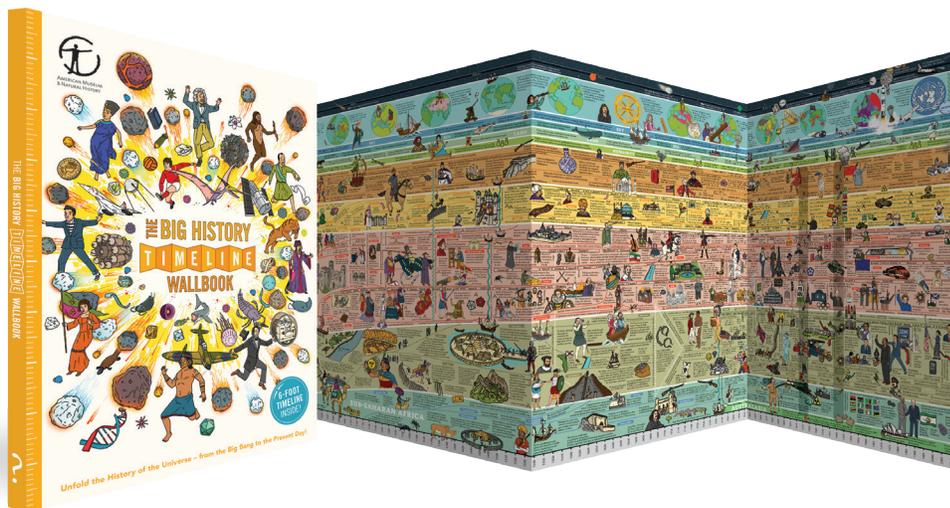
A Curiosity Manifesto!

Because earning a living no longer means doing the same job for life but rather adapting to a changing world, young people must be equipped with two critical pieces of equipment when they launch into the world. The first is a treasure trove of **general knowledge**; the second, a **lifelong love of learning**.

A free-wheeling study of history—one that encourages students' natural curiosity and teaches them to make unexpected connections—can help create and empower young adults with grit, flexibility, and a hunger for knowledge that will stand them in good stead throughout their lives. The Big History Timeline Wallbook and the others in the Timeline Wallbook series from What On Earth Publishing are designed to help you encourage your students along this path.

History is not a set of individual, isolated events but a long stream of moments—really simultaneous streams in different parts of the world— with each event leading to the next and no hard stops in between. That reality is portrayed visually in the format of The Big History Timeline Wallbook. A six-foot fold-out Timeline presents an interconnected history of the world from the beginning of time through to the present day.

Each stream depicts events in a specific environment: **Space, Earth, Sky, Sea, Land,** and the **Stone Ages** representing natural history, and **Asia, North Africa** and the **Middle East, Europe, the Americas, sub-Saharan Africa,** and **Australasia** depicting the history of human civilizations.



Big History Timeline Wallbook - Cover and timeline

In your classroom, the **Timeline serves as a visual narrative** that allows your students choices to begin and pause in their journeys where and when they want. Along with the chronology as a guide for their discoveries, your students are encouraged to see the bigger picture and follow the development of ideas, of ways of life, of countries, governments, and humanity's quest to move forward over time. On any page, your class can note the differences between life in various places at the same time, broadening their vision of the world.

They will discover, for example, that at about the same time the Pilgrims were settling into North America, Galileo was arrested in Europe for saying that the Earth orbits the Sun. Or they can follow a subject of special interest, let's say architecture, and on one Timeline panel note that in 2500 BC a great pyramid was built in Egypt; in about 550 BC a great pyramid was built in La Venta in the Americas; and in 550 AD the Great Pyramid of Cholula was built also in the Americas. Other students might follow their own curiosity to track subjects like modes of transportation, costumes, or kinds of leaders.

In addition, the Wallbook Chronicle blows the dust off history with articles as fresh as today's newspapers that cover key events and ideas—from archaeology (“King Tut reveals Egyptian riches”) to sports (World’s largest amphitheater opens with festival of blood, guts, and gore”) to science (“Iron horses fire new transportation era”). This guide offers a series of activities that extend learning, connect to curriculum, and support common core state standards. Curriculum ties are noted at the start of each activity, common core standards at the end of each activity. Surround your class with history and enjoy the journey together.



COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS CODE

grade 6



Reading for information



Writing



Speaking and Listening



Reading History

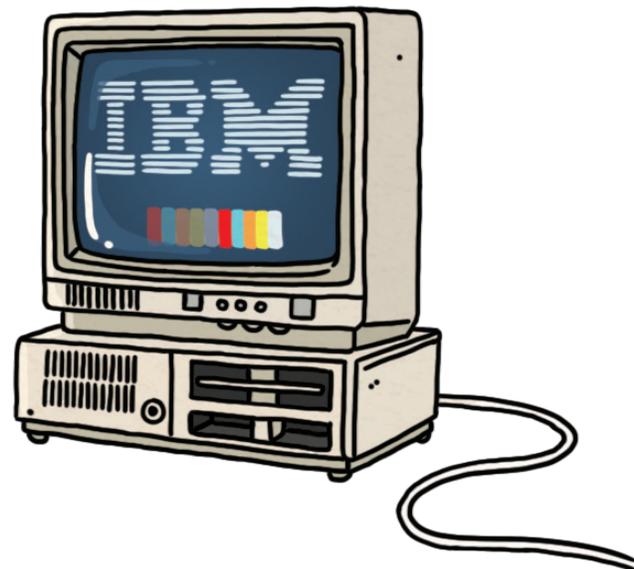
grade 8



Reading for information



Writing History
Social Studies,
Science, and Technical
Subjects



ACTIVITY 1

Finding new words

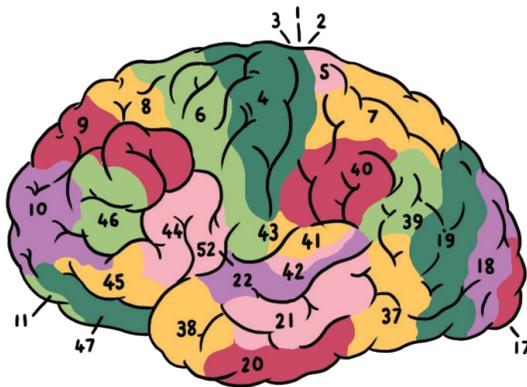
Language arts - Vocabulary



The Big History Timeline Wallbook contains many words and phrases that your students will be encountering for the first time. As they scan through the Timeline and read articles, they should take note of unfamiliar words or phrases, putting each at the top of a 4x6 index card, followed by the sentence that word appears in. On the back of the card, they should write what they think the word means based on how it is used in the sentence.

They can begin the speculation with the words: "I think the word means..." Next, they should look up the word in a dictionary and write the definition down. As a fun additional step and to cement the meaning of the words in their minds, they can write their own sentences using the words and quiz one another on their meanings. Cards should be alphabetized and kept in a Timeline Wallbook Vocabulary Box.

RI- 6.4



ACTIVITY 2

Diving deeper: Extending the book with research and presentation

Language arts - Reading, Writing, Research; Speaking and Listening;
Social Studies - World History; Cooperative Learning, Visual Arts;

RI

The Big History Timeline Wallbook gives your students a snapshot of great moments in history. As your students scan through the Timeline, each should look for one particular historical event that intrigues him/her.

W

SL

Using the entry as a starting point, they should research that event to find out more about it. Who were the main movers?

RH

What led up to it? How did it or will it affect future events? Does an event that occurred hundreds of years ago have an effect on today's world? Then using their research, they can write a series of articles in the same manner as The Wallbook Chronicle.

WHST

Their articles can be reported as written newspaper stories, or, for a collaborative experience, they can be scripted and either presented live or videotaped as TV news programs with students taking turns directing the presentations, operating the camera, and appearing as the correspondent.

Another option is to have students create graphic novels of their researched topics and show them as power point presentations.

RI- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.5 / 6.6 / 6.7

W- 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.4 / 6.6 / 6.7 / 6.8 / 6.9

SL- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.4 / 6.5 / 6.6

RH- 6-8.1 / 6-8.2 / 6-8.3 / 6-8.5 / 6-8.6 / 6-8.7

WHST- 6-8.2 / 6-8.3 / 6-8.4 / 6-8.6 / 6-8.7 / 6-8,8 / 6-8.9

ACTIVITY 3

What if? An exploration of alternative History

Language arts - Reading, Critical Thinking, Writing;
Social Studies - History

RI

After reading the Wallbook Chronicles with your class, propose to them “What if” questions. For example, What if the Roman Empire hadn’t come to an end? What if the South had won the U.S. Civil war? What if Adolph Hitler had been killed in the fighting of the First World War?

W

RH

Students should write short stories or poems describing how different the world might be. Open up a class discussion: would it be better? Worse? Or just different?

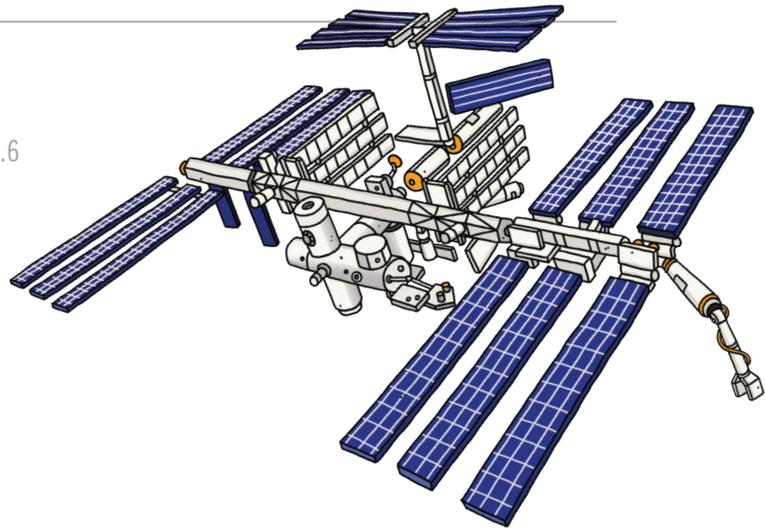
WHST

RI- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.6

W- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.4

RH- 6-8.1 / 6-8.2 / 6-8.3 / 6-8.6

WHST- 6-8.1 / 6-8.2 / 6-8.4



ACTIVITY 4

A great debate: Are we destined to repeat the mistakes of History?

Language arts - Critical Thinking, Speaking and Listening;
Social Studies - History

RI

History can be seen as a series of recurring themes. For example, over the millennia, rulers, emperors, and despots have sought to conquer other lands in the name of unification. Similarly,

SL

your students' reading of the Timeline should make it clear that one scientific discovery leads to another then another, and the development of styles of art is a continuum of experiments,

RH

technological advancements, and individual vision inspired by the work of those who came before. Both human history and natural history can be viewed as being reinvented over and over again.

Have your students use the Timeline to identify recurring themes, such as assassinations, the rise and fall of empires, and cycles of climate change. Discuss with your students the idea of history repeating itself and whether it is possible to avoid the mistakes of our forbearers? Divide the students into two groups, with one group taking one side of the question and the other group taking the other side. There is an excellent website that provides the rules for debating in the middle school: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/636>

After discussing with your class the proper procedure, set up the debate: Does history repeat itself, and can we avoid mistakes in the future by studying the past? They can debate as individuals or as debating teams.

Once your students get the hang of debating, you can extend the activity to other topics that are relevant to them today. The website below lists topics for middle school students to debate. There should be many from the list that your students are interested in.

RI- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.8

SL- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.4 / 6.6

RH- 6-8.1 / 6-8.2 / 6-8.3 / 6-8.8

ACTIVITY 5

Where our own lives fit in: Family history in context

Language arts - Reading, Writing, Research;
Social Studies - History

RI

As your students read *The Big History Timeline Wallbook*, they are sure to be affected by the grand sweep of history and wonder where they fit into the larger scheme of things. A great way for them to put history in perspective is to create a family tree that covers as many generations as possible.

W

RH

WHST

Work with your students to come up with questions they might need to ask other members of their family in order to research their ancestors. Information gathering should include birth dates, siblings, husbands or wives (including where and when they met), and children.

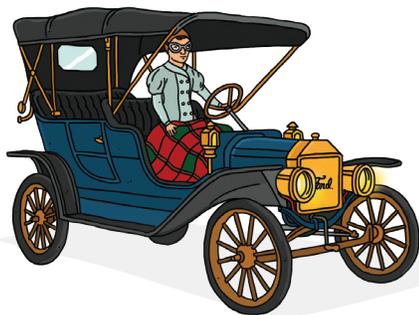
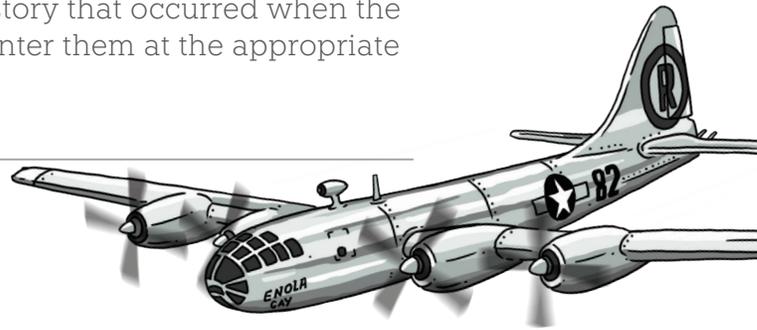
A sample family tree is provided below. For each entry, your students should use the *Big History Timeline Wallbook* to identify key moments and events in World History that occurred when the ancestor was the student's age then enter them at the appropriate place on their family tree.

RI- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.7

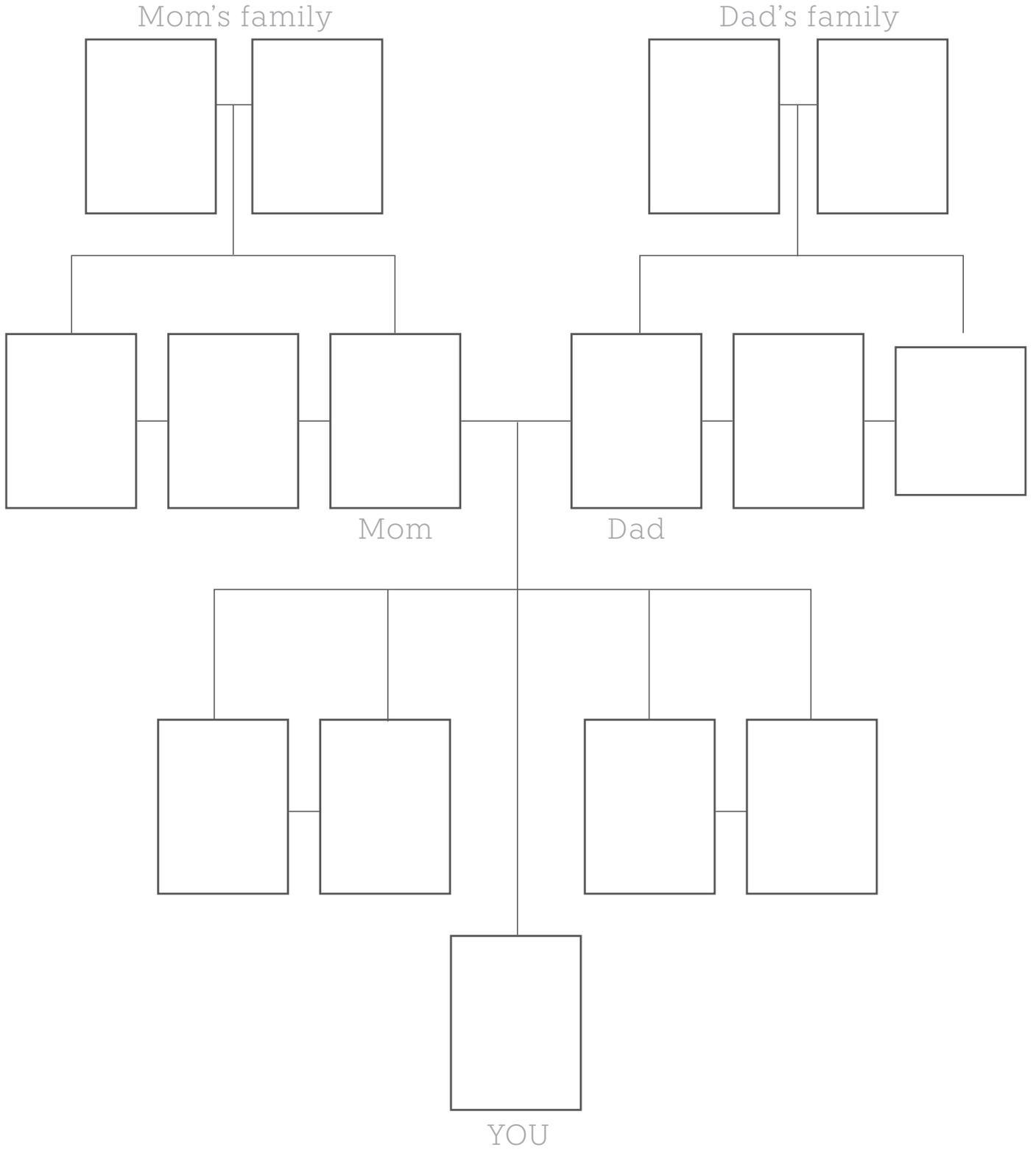
W- 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.4 / 6.5 / 6.7

RH- 6-8.1 / 6-8.2 / 6-8.3 / 6-8.7

WHST- 6-8.2 / 6-8.3 / 6-8.4 / 6-8.5 / 6-8.7



MY FAMILY TREE



ACTIVITY 6

Into the Future: Tracking History as it's made

Language arts - Writing

Social Studies - World History, Current Events

RI

W

RH

WHST

As an addendum to the last panel of the Big History Timeline Wallbook, have your students create their own timeline of what is happening over the course of the school year. Working individually, every month (or weekly, if you prefer) they should access newspaper articles, TV, radio, or Internet news sources, or do direct Internet searches to find worthy events for each of the six continental streams that are defined in The Big History Timeline Wallbook: Asia, North Africa and Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Australasia.

Students can choose to follow the same sequence of events each month or select new ones. Their Timeline will have horizontal and vertical components. Monthly entries will be horizontal, and events for each stream will be entered vertically. Each entry must have a written description or explanation and an illustration. When the project is finished at the end of the year, your students will have a visual presentation of concurring events that have happened in every corner of the world when they were in the 6th grade.

RI- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.7

W- 6.2 / 6.4 / 6.6 / 6.7 / 6.8

RH- 6-8.1 / 6-8.2 / 6-8.3 / 6-8.7

WHST- 6-8.2 / 6-8.4 / 6-8.6 / 6-8.7 / 6-8.8

ACTIVITY 7

Quiz time!

Social Students - History, Research

Language Arts - Speaking and Listening; Cooperative Learning

RI

At the end of The Big History Timeline Wallbook, there are fifty “brain-teasing” big history questions. All of the answers can be found in the foldout Timeline. For fairness to all of your students and to ensure that all of the questions are answered, have a lottery to see which student is responsible for answering particular questions. Write numbers from one to fifty on slips of paper.

W

SL

RH

WHST

Each student will draw out two numbers. He/she will have to search through the Timeline for the answers to his/her questions. Students may wish to learn more about their assigned questions. Their answers should be presented to the entire class along with what they learned from further research. Presenters should be prepared to answer questions from their peers about the event or person that was the subject of their query.

RI- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.4 / 6.7

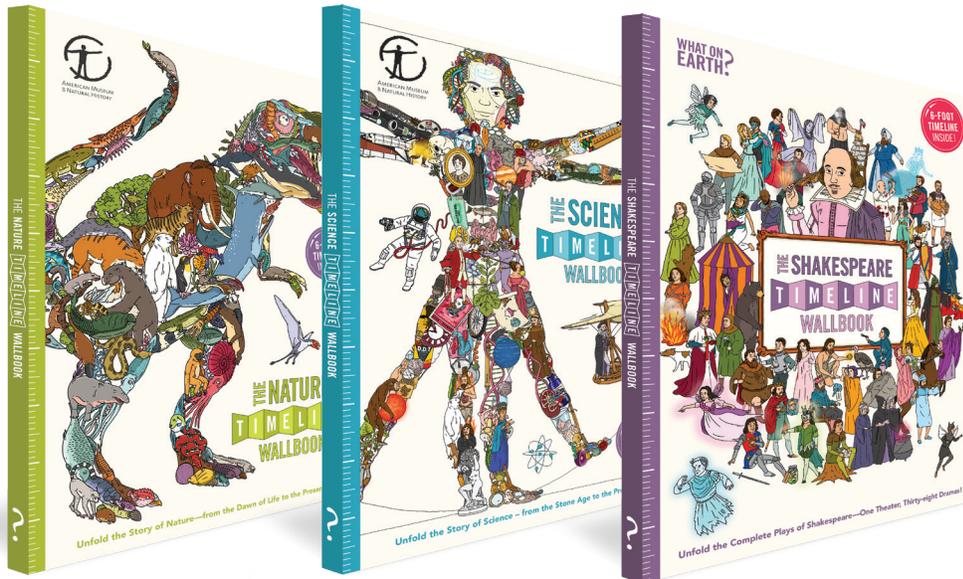
W- 6.2 / 6.4

SL- 6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.4

RH- 6-8.1 / 6-8.2 / 6-8.4 / 6-8.7

WHST- 6-8.2

OTHER WHAT ON EARTH? TIMELINE WALLBOOKS



Nature

Science

Shakespeare

All our timeline books are available at great prices from www.whatonearthbooks.com.

Each one has its own free-to-download Activity Guide.

We also produce giant highly-durable laminated editions specifically for use in school classrooms - these are called **Posterbooks** – please see our website for more details.

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