

Create a timeline using Microsoft Office Excel

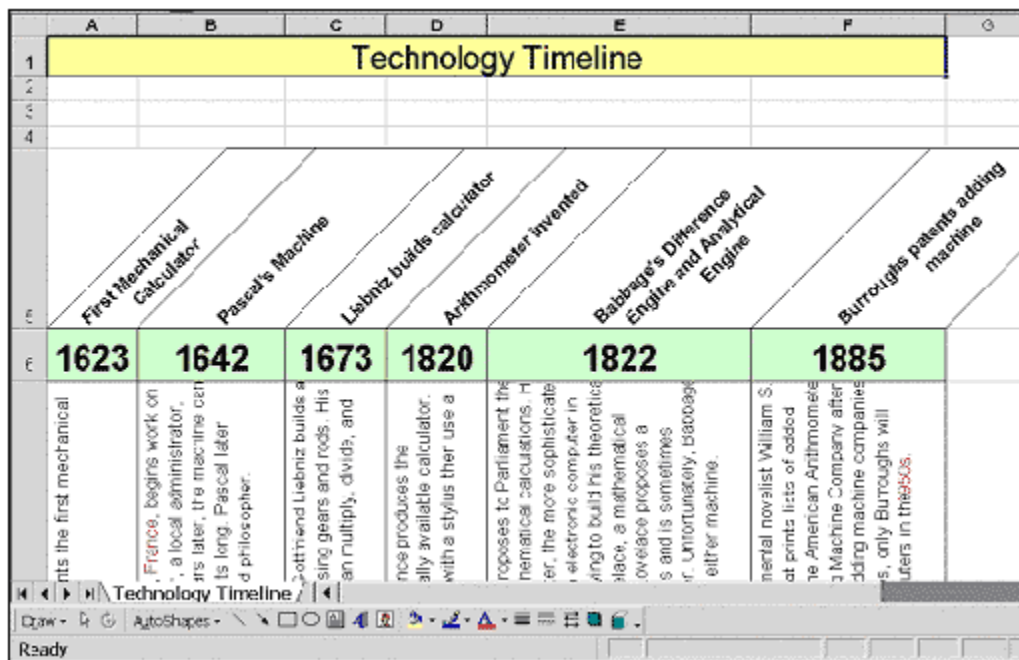
A timeline can represent information from many different curriculum areas, such as science, social studies, mathematics, and language arts. Timelines often show changes over time in areas such as transportation, technology, space travel, and so on. They also work well when representing people's lives (for example, the life of a student, a character from a story, or a famous person) and events throughout history.

Using a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet makes creating an accurate and attractive timeline easy and fun. You can designate periods of time by utilizing fill colors to fill in groups of cells. Text can even be entered sideways to mark the events being represented. If students are feeling creative, they can enter text inside a drawing, such as a rectangle, or add pictures to enhance the timeline. Younger students might use pictures instead of words to represent events on their timelines. Take a look at the four sample timelines for more ideas.

Sample timelines

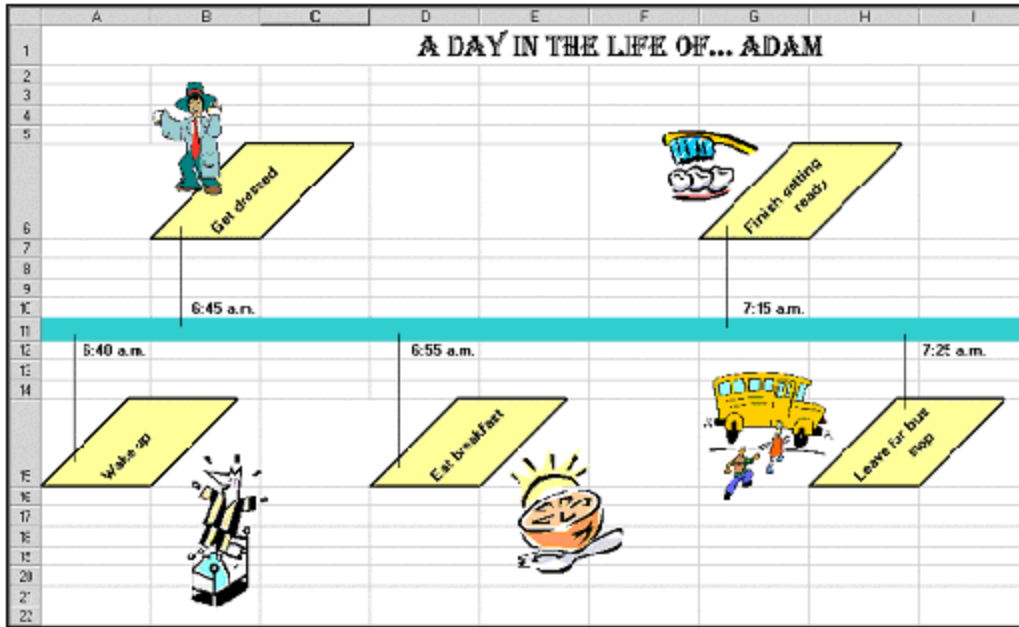
Sample 1: Technology Timeline

This timeline features rotated text within cells, borders around the cells, and cell fill colors.



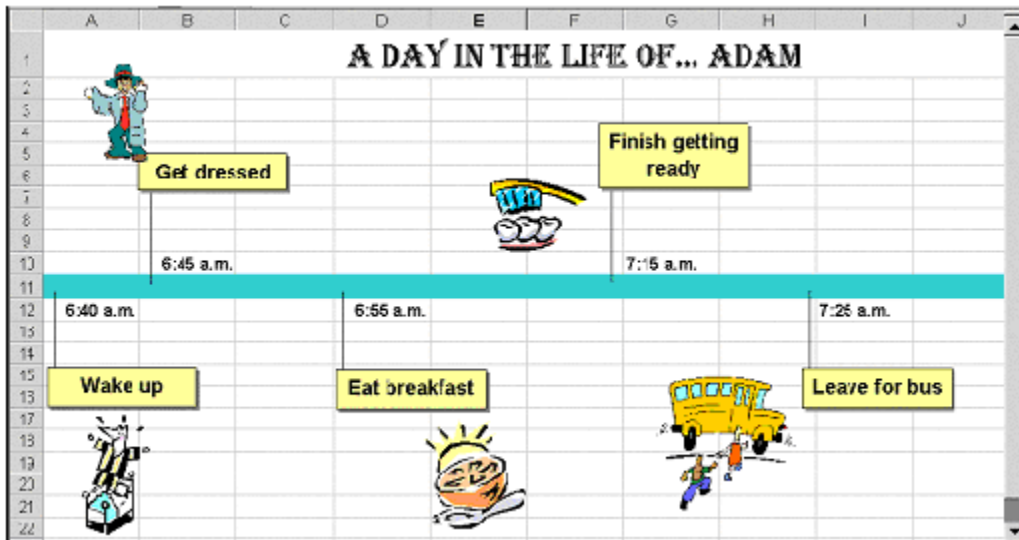
Sample 2: A Day in the Life of...

This timeline features rotated text within cells, cell fill colors, and clip art to enhance the appearance. Also, lines attach an event with its time.



Two variations on these timelines:
Sample 3:

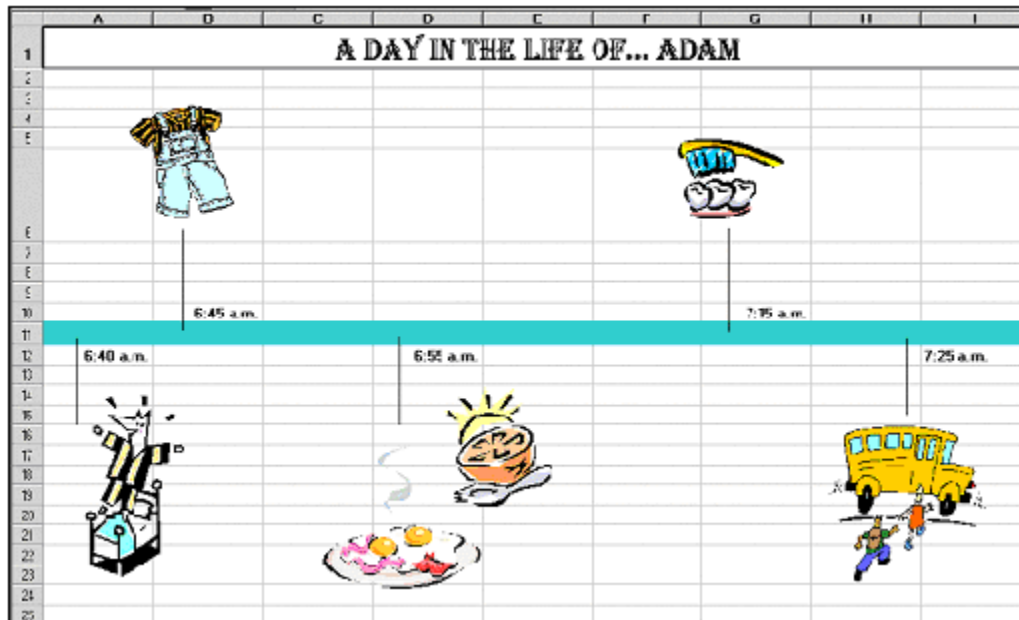
This timeline uses drawings (rectangles) with text typed inside.



[See full-sized image](#)

Sample 4:

This timeline uses clip art to represent events and has lines attached to specific times.

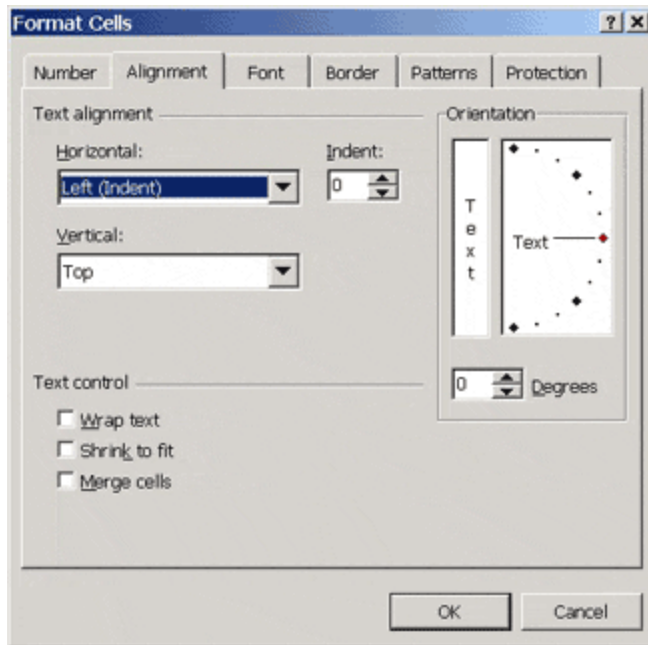


LEARNING TASK

Use a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet to create an **e-commerce timeline**. Here's how:

Create a timeline

1. Plan your timeline. Do any necessary research, and then sketch out the timeline on paper.
2. Start Excel with a new, blank spreadsheet open.
3. Type a title across the top of the spreadsheet, and format the text as you like.
4. Skip several rows, and then type the first date or time of your timeline. You might want to wait to format all the dates or times at once.
5. Type a short description above or below the date or time cell, whichever works best for your timeline.
6. To format the description so it is turned sideways, on the **Format** menu, click **Cells**. In the **Format Cells** box, click the **Alignment** tab (see picture). Select the orientation for the text by clicking the picture sample or by typing a number in the **Degrees** box. Change the Text alignment (horizontal or vertical), and then click **OK**.



Tip: You might want to format a group of cells (for example, all cells that should be rotated) at the same time. First select the group of cells, click **Cells** on the **Format** menu, apply the formatting you want, and then click **OK**. All selected cells will now be formatted the same. Type your text in those cells and press **ENTER**. The cells will be rotated automatically because you preformatted them.

7. Finish typing the text for your timeline and format the cells as needed (font, size, color, and so on). If you want to add a box around a cell or group of cells, click **Borders** on the **Formatting** toolbar.
8. You can change the width of your columns as wanted. Position the mouse pointer on the lines separating any two column headings (between the column letters), and then drag the line right or left to change the column's width.
9. Fill in cells with color. First, select the cells you want to color. Then, click **Fill Color** (paint bucket) on the Drawing toolbar. (If the Drawing toolbar is not visible, click **View**, then **Toolbars**, and then **Drawing**.)
10. If you would like to add pictures to your timeline, select them from the clip art selection or another source (such as the Internet, a picture CD, a scanner, or a digital camera). Resize and move them as needed.
11. Save your timeline frequently.