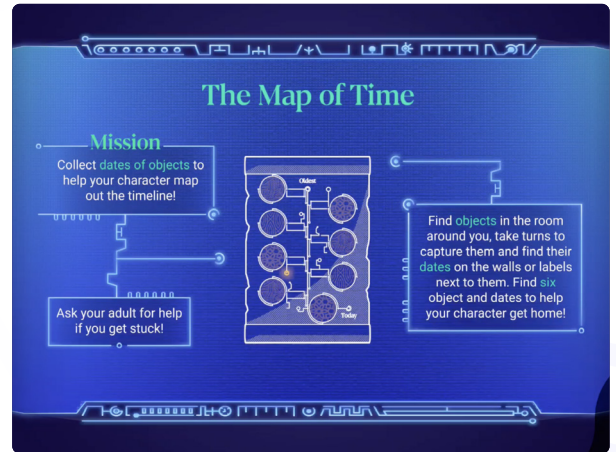


Time Odyssey Dates & Time Guide

Help your students understand dates and time on museum labels!

The **Map of Time** challenge invites students to explore objects from a variety of historical periods by examining museum labels to find out when each item was made or discovered. It is designed to help students build their **chronological understanding of different time periods**. However, museums often present time in different ways—such as timelines, centuries, or specific dates. Use this resource to familiarise yourself with the activity and discuss key time-related concepts with your class before the visit.



Understanding BC/AD or BCE/CE

Term	Stands for	Meaning	Notes
BC	Before Christ	Years before 0	Older system, Christian origin
AD	Anno Domini (Latin for "in the year of our Lord")	Years after 0	
CE	Common Era	Same as AD	More recent, secular dating system
BCE	Before Common Era	Same as BC	



Photo: David Madden

Talking about centuries

A **century** is a period of **100 years**. However, the century number is **one more than the years** it covers.

For example:

The 19th century refers to the years 1801–1900, even though those years start with “18”. This can also be described as “the 1800s”, which is a more informal way to say it.

Century	Years it covers	Also called
1st century	AD 1-100	
10th century	AD 901-1000	
17th century	AD 1601-1700	The 1600s
19th century	AD 1801-1900	The 1800s
20th century	1901-2000	The 1900s
21st century	2001-2100	The 2000s

Other terminology

Circa (c.) - a Latin word meaning “around” or “about”. If we don’t know the exact year, we use this to show it’s an estimate e.g c. 300 BCE

Late 4th century CE – means sometime between 375 and 400 CE. “Late” means the end part of the century.

BP (Before Present) – a scientific way to say how long ago something happened. “Present” means the year 1950.

Date of creation – first record of the object being created

Date of acquisition – when the museum collected the object / began control over its ownership

Date of accession – the specific date when an object officially becomes part of the museum’s collection

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