

## Understanding Chronological Order

Understanding chronological order helps you to view history as a series of related events. Chronological order arranges events in the sequence in which they happened, from first to last. Knowing the order in which events occurred can help you understand the causes and effects of a particular event.

### TIPS FOR UNDERSTANDING CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Here are some ways you can keep track of the chronological order of events in a history text:

- **Notice dates.** Make notes of important dates as you read. They will not always be presented in chronological order. You can rearrange them as needed after you have finished.
- **Note how long a period of time lasted using dates or numbers.** You may see a date with a reference to a period of time, such as *for 200 years*, or *over the next decade*. Keep track of these references to help establish the sequence of events you are recording.
- **Look for words establishing sequence.** These include words such as *first*, *next*, *later*, and *last*.
- **Look for words or phrases which indicate cause and effect.** Words or phrases such as *caused*, *led to*, *because of*, *as a result of*, and *consequently* indicate a relationship between two events. Note which event acted as a cause. The cause comes before the effect in chronological order.

In some cases, it can still be difficult to figure out the chronological order of events. One option is to pick one event, record it, and then determine what happened immediately before and after it. If you start with one date and one event, you can work backwards and forwards to establish chronological order.

**PRACTICING CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**

Read the following excerpt from your textbook. Then use what you have learned about chronological order to answer the questions that follow.

Finally, after centuries of political confusion and cultural change, China was reunified. The man who finally ended the Period of Disunion was a northern ruler named Yang Jian. In 589, he conquered the south, unified China, and created the Sui dynasty.

The Sui dynasty did not last long, only from 589 to 618. During that time, however, its leaders restored order and began the Grand Canal, a canal linking northern and southern China.

1. What are the dates, words, and phrases in this excerpt that would help you build a chronological order?

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2. How long did the Period of Disunion last?

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3. Did work on the Grand Canal begin before or after 589?

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4. If you were making a time line based on this excerpt, which event would you put first? Which event would you put last?

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