

Lesson Plan

Tricky Timelines

Book: *The Battle of Little Bighorn*

Series: Major Battles in US History

Level: Navigator

Objective

To help students explore how documentation (or lack thereof) impacts our knowledge of historical events and our writing about the past.

Supplies

- *The Battle of Little Bighorn*
- Pencils and paper
- Whiteboard

Four online biographies of Crazy Horse:

- Crazy Horse Memorial: <https://crazyhorsememorial.org/crazy-horse-the-man.html>
- History.com: <http://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/crazy-horse>
- National Park Service: <https://www.nps.gov/libi/learn/historyculture/crazy-horse.htm>
- National Plains Reservation Aid: http://www.nrcprograms.org/site/PageServer?pagename=airc_bio_crazyhorse

Before the Activity

Read through *The Battle of Little Bighorn*, or assign it to the students to read on their own.

Activity

Ask the students to turn to the timeline on page 16 of *The Battle of Little Bighorn*. Sitting Bull was an important leader during the Battle of Little Bighorn. This timeline shows key events in his life. Ask the students to identify what kinds of events this timeline includes. Then ask the following questions:

- Why was each of these events an important part of Sitting Bull's life?
- Why do you think the author chose to include each of them in the timeline?

Split the students into four groups. Each group will need access to a computer. The students in each group should work together to make a timeline about the life of Crazy Horse. Assign each group a different online article to use as a source. The students should read their assigned article, taking notes about any important dates or events. They should choose six events to include in their group's timeline. The timeline should include a short description of each event,

as well as the year in which it happened. If the article gives a more specific date (such as “May” or “June 25”), students should include that, too.

When all four groups have completed their timelines, have each group read their timeline out loud to the class. Then ask the following questions:

- Were there any dates mentioned that were not in your group’s article? Which ones?
- Did some events have different dates in different groups’ timelines? Which ones?
- Why do you think that is?
- Did you expect that these dates would be easy to find?
- Why do you think we know some dates about Crazy Horse’s life and not others?
- If you were making a book about Crazy Horse, how would you choose which dates to use in your book’s timeline?

After the group discussion, work together as a class to create one comprehensive timeline on the whiteboard. It should still have just six events, so the students will need to select and combine the best information from each source.

Evaluation

Using the attached answer key, give the students one point for each event in their timeline that accurately reflects the information in their group’s article. Most articles have more than six events that students can choose from. The answer key includes all these potential answers.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards’ reading informational texts standards, grades 6 and 7 (RI 6.9; RI 7.9) and the National Council for Social Studies subject matter standard II.

Timelines Answer Key

Crazy Horse Memorial

- **1843 (?):** Crazy Horse is born around this time.
- **1847 (at age four):** Crazy Horse loses his mother when he is four years old.
- **1847 or 1848 (at age four or five):** Crazy Horse has likely mastered riding horses and using tomahawks and bows.
- **1855 (at age 12):** Crazy Horse sees Lieutenant J.L. Grattan attack a Brule-Oglala camp.
- **Around 1858 (in his mid-teens):** Crazy Horse becomes a full-fledged warrior.
- **1876:** Crazy Horse leads Lakota warriors in a fight against the US cavalry battalion led by General George A. Custer.
- **1877:** Custer goes to Fort Robinson under a flag of truce and is killed on either September 5 or September 6.

- **History.com**
- **Early 1840s:** Crazy Horse is probably born around this time.
- **1865:** Crazy Horse fights against US soldiers for the first time on July 25.
- **1866:** Crazy Horse defeats Lt. Col. William J. Fetterman in an ambush.
- **1876:** The US military tries to force the Plains Indians to move onto reservations.
- **1876:** Crazy Horse fights back against the US military at Rosebud Creek on June 17 and at Little Bighorn on June 25.
- **1877:** Crazy Horse surrenders to federal troops at Fort Robinson on May 6. He is arrested and killed on September 5.

National Park Service

- **1838 or 1840:** Crazy Horse is born around this time. The exact date is disputed.
- **1854:** Crazy Horse sees Lieutenant John Grattan attack a Lakota Sioux village.
- **1865:** Crazy Horse leads the Lakota against the US Army during the Army's Powder River Campaign.
- **1866:** Crazy Horse defeats the US army in the Fetterman Fight on December 21.
- **1866–1867:** Crazy Horse leads the Lakota against the US Army during the Red Cloud War.
- **1875:** The US Commissioner of Indian Affairs tells all Lakota Sioux to move to the reservation by January 31, 1876, but Crazy Horse resists.
- **1876–1877:** Crazy Horse leads the Lakota against the US Army in the Sioux War.
- **1876:** Crazy Horse is a leader during the Battle of the Rosebud on June 17 and the Battle of Little Bighorn on June 25 (eight days later).
- **1877:** Crazy Horse attacks US troops led by Colonel Nelson Miles on January 8, but can't defeat them. He and his 1,100 followers surrender to the US military on May 7. He is arrested later that year and dies from a stab wound on September 5.

National Plains Reservation Aid

- **1842:** Crazy Horse is born near what is currently Rapid City, South Dakota.
- **1866–1868:** Crazy Horse raids white settlements and forts during Red Cloud's War.
- **1868:** Crazy Horse becomes the Oglalas' chief. The Treaty of Fort Laramie is signed this year, too, and the US army agrees to leave its posts on Lakota land along the Bozeman Trail.
- **1874:** Crazy Horse learns that General Custer led an expedition to the Black Hills and discovered gold. Settlers break the treaty and pour onto Lakota land, so Crazy Horse leads a campaign against them.
- **1876:** Crazy Horse leads an attack on General Custer's men on June 25 and defeats them soundly.
- **1877:** Crazy Horse and his followers surrender on May 6, 1877 at Fort Robinson in northwest Nebraska. Crazy Horse is promised a reservation, but he does not get one. A few months later, he is arrested and killed by a stab wound through the abdomen.