



Collaborative timemaps with **TimeMapper**

for students

TimeMapper is a web-based tool for building interactive timemaps (timelines whose data points connect to a geographic map) from data entered in a Google spreadsheet. The timemaps can be accessed online or embedded in your own website.

In today's class, you'll work collaboratively to build a timemap documenting a series of events related to the theme of your course. You'll enter information into a shared spreadsheet, which will in turn populate an interactive online timeline and map.

If you want to build your own TimeMap from scratch, ask your instructor for a copy of our Getting Started with TimeMapper handout for full instructions!

Getting started

Open a web browser (we recommend Chrome or Firefox). Your instructor will provide you with two links or URLs for this exercise -- one will be a shared Google spreadsheet, which you'll edit over the course of the lesson, and one will be the Time-Map being built by your group. **Open both of these pages** in separate tabs.

Adding media

TimeMapper supports a variety of media formats, including:

- Photos Direct URL, Flickr
- Video Direct URL, YouTube, Vimeo
- Audio Direct URL, Soundcloud

Entering your data

Begin by **looking over the Google spreadsheet**. It contains a number of columns, each of which corresponds to some part of the timemap; you can see the connections between the columns and the timemap in our companion handout, *Understanding your TimeMap*. You will need to enter the information for your assigned event/s into the spreadsheet. As you and your classmates are all working in the same spreadsheet, it'll be helpful to 'stake your claim' on the rows you are editing by coloring them in using the formatting bar at the top of the spreadsheet. It doesn't matter what order data is entered in, so just pick some rows.

You can provide a direct link to the media (to get this for an image, right-click on an online image and select 'Copy image location') or, for Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo and Soundcloud, just link to the page the media is on. Paste the link into the 'Media' column. Make sure you credit the artist and provide a clear description of the media in the 'Media caption' column. This shows that you understand the relevance of the media, and makes it more accessible for your audience.

Start entering the data for your first event. Most of the categories are pretty self-explanatory. You'll need to **provide a title, date and location** for TimeMapper to locate your event. As you update the spreadsheet, the timemap will update automatically, so you can monitor your progress and check the effect of your changes in the timemap tab in real time.

Writing a good description

The 'description' column contains the primary text for your event. Here, you'll want to provide an outline of the event or summary of the source you've used to understand it. A good description is clear and concise, and composed in your own words. As with the media, make sure you credit any sources you've used as you composed your description.

Adding detail

Each timemap entry has two main components, the **description** (in the middle) which explains what happened during the event, and the **media** (on the left). (The map, on the right, is populated automatically from the 'Location' column of the spreadsheet.)

Place and location

You'll enter a place name or address in the 'Place' column and TimeMapper will automatically look up the latitude and longitude in the 'Location column'. You may want to check this against an online map, as it is not always accurate.

TimeMapper does not recognise Google's formatting, but you can include html in the **description** and **media caption** columns. You're most likely to use these four tags:

- `bold` → **bold**
- `<i>italics</i>` → *italics*
- `link text` → a hyperlink
- `new
paragraph` → new paragraph

If you want to learn more html, check out tutorials on Codecademy or W3Schools (free online) or Lynda (UT site license; use 'Organisational Login', then your EID).

