

PHYSTORY:

The history of physics timeline game!

Ages: 10+ Players: 2+

Object:

Collect a total of ten event cards by determining where each card is placed in chronological order to create a timeline.

Gameplay:

Shuffle the cards and place them in a pile with the year side down. Each player draws a card, reads it out loud, and places it on the table in front of them. This card is the first in each player's timeline.

One player begins the game by drawing a card from the pile and reading the event description out loud to all players but does not reveal the date. The player to the left of the reader must decide whether the event occurred before or after the card in front of them. If the player guesses correctly, they win that card and place it next to their first card in proper timeline order. Once a player guesses correctly, the person to the left of the reader draws a new card and becomes the new reader.

Each card now breaks the timeline into segments. On their next turn, the player must determine whether a card should be placed before, after, or in between two of the cards in their timeline. Each player only works with their own timeline but is allowed to look at the timelines of other players to learn from the information on their cards. In the case that a player has a card in their timeline that matches the date of the card in play, the card in play may be correctly placed before or after the duplicate year card.

If the player guesses incorrectly, the next player to the left may use the mistake to determine where the card is placed on their timeline. If that player misses, play continues to the left, allowing the next player to make a guess. If no one guesses correctly, the player reading the card announces the date and places the card in a discard pile. The next player to the left now becomes the new reader. They pick up a card from the draw pile and read it to the player to their left, and gameplay continues until a player creates a timeline of ten cards.

Note:

All dates are C.E. – Common Era – unless otherwise noted. The “~” symbol is used to mark some dates as approximate.

Possible modifications:

- Choose to play with all time periods or just one only.
- Play using the cards across all timelines which highlight the history of women or of a minoritized group.
- Change the number of cards necessary to win. For shorter games, set collection goal to five cards.
- Create new categories or add your own cards to existing categories. Blank cards are available with this game. In addition, the cards from Heads Up can supplement timelines by using the birth year of the person pictured.

Notes:

This game uses the notation B.C.E. (Before Common Era) and C.E. (Common Era), rather than B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini). All years given on the cards are assumed to be CE unless otherwise stated. If players have trouble sorting cards with BCE and CE dates, consider BCE dates as though they are negative numbers on a timeline and CE dates are the positive numbers.

Many of the oldest dates are approximate and indicated as such by a ~ symbol.

This game was adapted by the American Institute of Physics' Center for History of Physics from the card game Chronology. The entire set of game cards is available for free download in PDF form on the AIP History Programs website. The cards will print out front and back. The cards were designed using a template on the online Avery Design and Print software for Avery index card style 5388. The cards are available on the History website in this template for easy editing and printing.

Many of the history of science events included in this game are connected to other resources published by AIP History, including oral histories, web exhibits, or the Teaching Guides on History of the Physical Sciences. Please visit <https://www.aip.org/history-programs> to access these resources.