

Creating a Chronology Amelia Earhart

Pair this issue's American history play (pp. 10-13) with the lesson plan below to take off on an exciting journey into the life and times of Amelia Earhart. This lesson was written for *JS* by Karen Kellaheer, a substitute teacher in Warren County, New Jersey, and a former Scholastic editor.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- research and identify key events in the life of Amelia Earhart.
- understand the importance of historical context.
- sequence events in a chronology.

PREPARE

Gather sources on Earhart and, if necessary, reserve computer time. Preview the options below and decide which type of chronology to have students create. For the traditional kind, have poster board, rulers, and markers on hand.

ENGAGE

After reading the play, discuss how historical context helps us understand Earhart's contributions. The play says, "As the Great Depression deepens, America becomes fascinated with Earhart." Ask: Do you think there was a connection between the dismal conditions brought about by the Depression and the country's attitude toward Earhart? (*Possible response: Americans were depressed; Earhart's flights gave them something to feel good about.*) Tell students that they will create chronologies to identify key events in Earhart's life and place them in historical context.

TEACH

1. Divide students into pairs. Have them revisit the play and highlight important dated events from Earhart's life (the play mentions at least nine).
2. Have them research two or three other important life events (birth, schooling, etc.) using library biographies, Web sites, or other sources. One thorough site is **ameliaearhartmuseum.org**.
3. Challenge them to find and list three to five historical events that took place during Earhart's lifetime, including the Great Depression. They should note the event, its year(s), and a brief description. For this purpose, have students use textbooks or visit the Library of Congress at **americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/earhart** and click on "Jump Back in Time."
4. Have each pair create its own chronology, using one of the following options. When students have finished, have them present their chronologies to the class.

• Option A: Traditional Chronology

Provide each pair with poster board. Have pairs begin by drawing a line across the page and dating the line from 1897



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(Earhart's birth year) to 1937 (the year she disappeared). On one side of the line, students should log events from Amelia Earhart's life. On the other side, they should enter events they identified in step 3. Encourage students to add illustrations or photos printed from the Internet, and to include a title for their chronology.

• Option B: PowerPoint Chronology

Have pairs begin by creating a title slide for their chronology. They should then insert a new slide for each entry (in most cases, the first entry will be 1897, the year of Earhart's birth). For each slide, students should include the year and a brief statement about the event. Instruct pairs to include both biographical events and events that provide historical context. Encourage them to use different background colors for each type of slide (for instance, green for Earhart's life, purple for other historical events).