

# Timeline-Making Guide



a program of the Jane Goodall Institute

It is important when choosing a project to make sure you allocate enough time to complete the project.

For example, if you are planning an Earth Day event, you'll want to make sure all of the tasks that need to be completed are done in time for the event. If you are a school group, you'll want to make sure that your project is completed before the end of the school year.

An effective way to accomplish this is to make a timeline by **working backward** from the event or project date.

Follow these simple guidelines to help you and your group members use time effectively.

- List the tasks that will need to be completed.
- Determine how long each task will take. Be generous when determining these times; it is better to overestimate than underestimate how long a task will take. Try to think of potential complications that might make a task take longer than expected. Consider having a Plan B.
- Create a Project Timeline (see example on next page)
- Assign each task to a group member or committee. Think about which tasks can occur simultaneously and make sure that those tasks are assigned to different people. If one task depends on another being completed first, make sure the person assigned that task knows that someone else is depending on her/him to complete the task before another task can begin.
- Talk about which tasks must be completed on time and which ones have more flexibility. If someone is running late completing a critical task, other group members will need to help that person so that the project will be able to continue on schedule.

## Example

**Project:** Plant Five Trees on Arbor Day

**Project Start Date:** January 1

**Project Completion Date:** April 25

### List of Tasks:

- Research trees that are native to the community
- Get five native trees donated for group planting  
*Potential set-back: Difficulty finding someone to provide the trees for free*
- Locate a place to plant the trees  
*Potential set-back: Difficulty finding a place to plant the trees*
- Send letters to local businesses asking them to donate or lend tools and supplies (e.g. mulch, stakes, shovels, etc.)  
*Potential set-back: Difficulty finding someone to donate/lend supplies*
- Contact local media to tell them about tree-planting event (initial press release, reminder call and after-event press release)
- Prepare tree-planting site
- Determine a schedule for “tree-care duty” to ensure the trees will be watered after they are planted

### Timeline Example

	<u>January</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>
Research native trees	1/1-20			
Get five trees donated	1/15 – 2/15			
Locate a place to plant trees		2/1-2/28		
Send letters to local businesses		2/5-3/10		
Contact local media			3/05-20	4/5-10    4/26
Prepare tree-planting site				3/25-4/24
Plant trees!				4/25
Determine schedule for “tree-care duty”				4/10-30

## Now it's Your Turn!

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### List of Tasks:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Task (in chronological order)	Potential set-back	Member assigned to task	Necessary completion date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			

Timeline Table

<u>Task</u>	<u>Jan.</u>	<u>Feb.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Apr.</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug.</u>	<u>Sept.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Dec.</u>