HOMEWORK ACTIVITY

PROJECT: COOL – Digital Media Literacy for Cultural Narratives

I. INTRODUCTION

As part of our Erasmus+ project "**COOL – Digital Media Literacy for Cultural Narratives"**, this activity will teach you—step by step—how to plan, build, and publish an interactive timeline with TimelineJS, turning a simple Google Sheet into a compelling story you can share and embed.

1.1. What is TimelineJS?

TimelineJS is a free, open-source tool from Northwestern University's Knight Lab that turns a simple **Google Sheet** into a beautiful, interactive timeline—no coding required. You write your story moments as rows in a spreadsheet (date, headline, short text, and an optional media link); then you "publish" the sheet and TimelineJS instantly renders it as a scrollable/tappable timeline you can share or embed on a website. [Timeline JS+2Timeline JS+2](#)

It shines because it **pulls media directly from the web**. With just a URL, you can enrich each slide with photos, videos, audio, maps, Wikipedia pages, social posts, PDFs, and more (e.g., YouTube/Vimeo, Google Maps—including places, directions, and Street View—Flickr, Instagram, SoundCloud, Wikipedia). This makes your story feel alive without heavy file uploads—just make sure links are public. [Timeline JS](#)

Under the hood, TimelineJS offers two authoring paths:

- **Google Sheets (recommended for beginners):** fastest way to publish; you'll copy the official template and fill it in. [Timeline JS](#)
- **JSON (advanced option):** for custom integrations, developers can feed a JSON data file and tweak presentation options in JavaScript (e.g., language, initial zoom, which slide to start on). [Timeline JS+2Timeline JS+2](#)

At a glance: Google Sheet → *File → Publish to the web* → paste the published link into the TimelineJS generator → get a shareable link or embed code. [Timeline JS](#)

1.2. What you'll be able to do after learning TimelineJS

By the end of this short learning by doing activity, you'll be able to:

1) Plan a concise, audience-focused story: Define the *purpose* (why this matters), the *audience* (who should care), and a *scope* that fits in 10–20 slides so people actually finish your timeline.

2) Turn a Google Sheet into an interactive publication: Copy the Knight Lab template, fill standard columns (date, headline, text, media URL, caption, credit), and **publish** the sheet so TimelineJS can read it. You'll produce a working timeline link in minutes. [Timeline JS](#)

3) Enrich each moment with web media—by pasting URLs: Illustrate events with YouTube/Vimeo clips, Google Maps (places, routes, Street View), Flickr/Instagram images, SoundCloud audio, Wikipedia articles, and more—no uploads to TimelineJS itself. You'll also learn to make Google Drive assets public when needed. [Timeline JS](#)

4) Share or embed the final timeline anywhere: You'll get a **public link** for easy sharing and an **embed code** for websites; there's also plugin guidance for self-hosted WordPress. [Timeline JS](#)

5) Customize key viewing options (when useful): Adjust language, opening slide, time-axis zoom, and navigation placement via generator settings or JS options—keeping the experience aligned with your audience. [Timeline JS](#)

6) Keep it updated with zero re-publishing overhead: Because the data lives in a Google Sheet, editing text or swapping media is as easy as updating a row; viewers see the changes once the sheet is (re)published. [Timeline JS](#)

7) Work within real-world constraints (copyright, privacy, accessibility): You'll learn to credit sources properly, prefer licensed/owned media, and use concise, descriptive captions. TimelineJS supports alt/title fields in JSON and respects your caption/credit text, which we'll leverage for clearer, more accessible stories. [Timeline JS](#)

1.3. What kinds of stories fit best

- **Organization history:** Milestones from founding to today (years/months).
- **Event diary:** Day-by-day (or hour-by-hour) highlights of a festival, training, or campaign.
- **Project lifecycle:** From needs → funding → pilots → impact, for replication by others.
- **Campaign timeline:** Problem, actions, media coverage, policy changes, community outcomes.
- **People timeline:** A founder/artist/beneficiary's journey linked to your mission.
- **Place timeline:** How a venue or neighborhood changed over time (before/after, maps).

> Each slide is a *dated moment* with a short headline, two-to-three sentences, and optional media. You'll choose a **scope** (e.g., 2015–2025; "Festival Week 2024"; "Training Day 6 Sept 2025") and a **granularity** (years / months / days / hours) that match your audience's attention.

II. HOMEWORK WEEK 1

2.1. Why Week 1 matters (motivation)

Week 1 is dedicated to laying the foundations of your interactive timeline. Unlike a simple list of dates, a timeline built with TimelineJS is a **narrative with a purpose**. This stage is crucial because it ensures your project remains focused and realistic (10–20 slides, 1–2 hours of work per week), guides you in selecting the right media for the following steps, and ultimately makes your final timeline meaningful and engaging for real audiences such as donors, participants, clients, or citizens.

By the end of Week 1, you will:

- **Define a clear story goal**, identifying what you want your audience to think, feel, or do.

- **Identify your target audience** and the key takeaway you want them to gain.
- **Choose the scope and granularity** of your story (whether to use years, months, days, or hours).
- **Draft 8–15 time-stamped moments ("slides")** that will form the backbone of your interactive narrative.

This preparatory work ensures that your timeline will be structured, purposeful, and ready to be enriched with media assets in the next phase.

2.2. What you'll deliver (this week)

A **1–2 page Word document** called *"W1_Story_Outline_[YourOrganisation or Name].docx"* containing:

1. Working title
2. Logline (1-sentence purpose)
3. Audience + desired outcome (call-to-action)
4. Story type & scope (with time granularity)
5. List of 8–15 candidate moments (dated)
6. Title-slide idea (image + 2–3 line intro)
7. Risks/gaps (what might be hard to find)
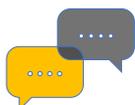
See ANNEX I

2.3. Step-by-step instructions (follow in order)

Step 1 — Pick your audience and outcome

- **Audience**: Who should care? (donors, partners, press, city residents, parents, students, festival goers)
- **Outcome**: What should they do after watching? (donate, join, attend, trust, adopt a practice)

So-what test: If your timeline worked perfectly, **what changes** for that audience?

### Step 2 — Choose your story type (one primary)

Pick the shape that best fits your reality:

1. **Organization History** — milestones from founding to today
2. **Event Diary** — day-by-day (or hour-by-hour) of a festival, training, or campaign
3. **Project Lifecycle** — from needs assessment → funding → pilots → results
4. **Campaign Timeline** — problem → awareness actions → media coverage → impact

5. **People Timeline** — founder/artist/expert journey tied to your mission
6. **Place Timeline** — how a site or community changed over time (before/after)
7. **Case Timeline** — one issue, steps taken, turning points, outcomes

Tip: If you can't imagine **10 dated moments**, your scope is too narrow; if you have **30+**, narrow it.
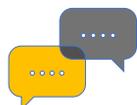
Step 3 — Decide scope & granularity

- **Scope**: total period (e.g., 2015–2025; "Festival Week 2024"; "Training Day, 6 Sept 2025")
- **Granularity**:
  - *Years* (long histories)
  - *Months/Weeks* (medium projects)
  - *Days/Hours* (events/live coverage)

Rule of thumb: match granularity to your audience's attention. Busy stakeholders prefer **fewer, clearer** moments.
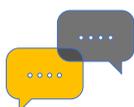
Step 4 — Write a working title and logline

- **Title**: clear, literal beats clever.
- **Logline (1 sentence)**: *For [audience], this timeline shows [what] so they can [benefit/action].*

Examples (loglines):

- "For journalists and partners, this timeline shows how our 'New Horizons' training evolved from idea to pilot to results, so they can reuse our model."
- "For local families, this event diary shows how our 'KultInclusion' day unfolded, so they know what to expect next year."
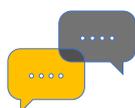
Step 5 — Draft 8–15 candidate moments

Each moment must be:

- **Dateable** (YYYY or YYYY-MM-DD or HH:MM if needed),
- **Visualizable** (you can imagine a photo/video/map),
- **Narrative** (advances the story, not just "we existed").

Use bullets. Don't worry about perfect wording yet.

Step 6 — Add a title slide idea

A title slide has **no date**; it opens the timeline with:

- a strong image (or simple background),
- 2–3 lines that set expectations (who/what/why).

Step 7 — Reality check & trimming

- Remove duplicates or "nice but not necessary" items.
- Keep **10–20** moments. Mark 2–3 as **must-have**.

Step 8 — List risks/gaps (so Week 2 runs smoothly)

- "2012 photo likely missing—may need press archive."
- "Map for venue access—need to create a shareable link."
- "Consent for minors' photos—use crowd shots or alternatives."

2.4. Concrete Examples

When drafting your **candidate moments** (slides), remember that each one should not only have a **date, headline, and short description**, but also be linked to a **media element** that brings it alive (media elemnts will be collected in the following weeks). TimelineJS becomes engaging when you combine text with visuals, videos, maps, or other supported content.

Supported media for TimelineJS include:

- **Images**: JPG, PNG, GIF (must be hosted online with a public URL; e.g., Wikimedia Commons, Flickr, Google Drive with public link).
- **Video**: YouTube, Vimeo, DailyMotion, TED, Kickstarter.
- **Audio**: SoundCloud, Spotify.
- **Maps**: Google Maps (locations, directions, Street View), Google Earth (KML files).
- **Social media**: Twitter/X, Instagram (public posts), Wikipedia articles.
- **Documents**: Google Docs, PDFs (with public link), DocumentCloud.
- **Other embeds**: via an <iframe> if the source allows embedding.

> **Key reminder:** For each slide, think not just about the story text but also **what kind of media could illustrate it**. A single image or video often says more than a paragraph of text. Even if you don't yet have the file, note the type of media you *plan* to use (e.g., "photo from archive," "YouTube clip," "Google Map link").

A) Example 1: Telling the History of your organization

- **Audience:** donors & new volunteers

- **Outcome:** trust us → donate/join
- **Scope/Granularity:** 2010–2025, **years**
- **Title:** "15 Years of my organization"
- **Logline:** "For supporters, this timeline shows how we grew from a small cultural lab to a cross-border project hub, so you can see why your support matters."

Candidate moments (sample 12):

1. **2010-06-01** – Founding meeting; 3 co-founders sign the statute
2. **2012-09-15** – First regional workshop reaches 120 participants
3. **2014-03-22** – First international partner agreement
4. **2016-11-05** – Launch of media lab (podcasts & video)
5. **2017-05-10** – Award for local cultural innovation
6. **2019-09-30** – First Erasmus+ collaboration signed
7. **2020-06-18** – Pandemic pivot: online training suite
8. **2022-03-08** – Inclusion toolkit downloaded 5,000+ times
9. **2023-10-12** – "RiverSo" outdoor learning space opens
10. **2024-05-29** – 5-day Digital Media Literacy training in Perugia
11. **2024-12-01** – 10th cross-border project launched
12. **2025-06-06** – Visitor #10,000 at our events

Title slide idea: Group photo outside the lab; 2–3 lines on mission & impact.

B) Example 2: Telling the Diary of an Event (Festival or Training Week)

- **Audience:** future attendees & partners
- **Outcome:** understand value → attend/support next edition
- **Scope/Granularity: one week**, **days**
- **Title:** "Inside the 2025 Street Art Week"
- **Logline:** "For artists and families, this diary shows day-by-day highlights of the festival so you can plan your visit and see what we offer."

Candidate moments (sample 9):

- **Title slide** – What the festival is, who it's for

1. **2025-06-01** – Day 1: Opening mural prep & safety briefing
2. **2025-06-02** – Day 2: Artists arrive; welcome jam
3. **2025-06-03** – Day 3: Kids' workshop (90 kids, 8 mentors)
4. **2025-06-04** – Day 4: Community wall unveiling
5. **2025-06-05** – Day 5: Media day & local TV interview
6. **2025-06-06** – Day 6: Inclusive design walk (wheelchair routes)
7. **2025-06-07** – Day 7: Final concert & thank-you wall
8. **2025-06-08** – Bonus: Afterparty cleanup & recycling stats

C) Example 3: Project Lifecycle (Erasmus+)

- **Audience:** educators, municipalities, evaluators
- **Outcome: reuse our model** (scale/replication)
- **Scope/Granularity: 3 years**, **quarters/months**
- **Title:** "New Horizons in Journalism: From Idea to Impact"
- **Logline:** "For VET schools and journalists, this shows how we designed, piloted, and validated a new-media toolkit they can adopt."

Candidate moments (sample 10):

1. **2023-02** – Needs assessment: 87 survey responses
2. **2023-06** – Partnership formed
3. **2023-11** – Guide outline validated (6 chapters)
4. **2024-02** – Video tutorials produced (4 modules)
5. **2024-05** – 3-day pilot training
6. **2024-06** – Pre/post skill gains (+28% avg)
7. **2024-09** – Toolkit v1 published (open license)
8. **2024-10** – Press coverage & conference talk
9. **2025-01** – Schools adopt our training modules
10. **2025-04** – community forum

D) Example 4: Place Timeline (community site or venue)

- **Audience:** local community & funders
- **Outcome:** support maintenance, join activities
- **Scope/Granularity: 2018–2025**, **years (with a few months)**
- **Title:** "A Riverside Learning Space: Before & After"
- **Logline:** "For families and supporters, this shows how we turned a riverside plot into an inclusive outdoor classroom."

Candidate moments (sample 10):

1. **2018-04** – First site visit; vision drafted
2. **2019-07** – Cleanup & replanting
3. **2020-05** – Wooden benches built by volunteers
4. **2021-09** – Solar lights installed
5. **2022-06** – First outdoor cinema night
6. **2023-03** – Safe play area & eco-games
7. **2023-09** – Flood-proofing improvements
8. **2024-05** – Inclusive event pilot (ramps, signage)
9. **2024-09** – Accessibility audit fixes
10. **2025-06** – Annual family day reaches 500 visitors

2.5. Decision aids (to choose & refine your story)!

Quick chooser

- Have a long archive? → **Organization History**
- Launching/recapping an event? → **Event Diary**
- Want to show a method others can reuse? → **Project Lifecycle**
- Want to persuade locals/press? → **Campaign** or **Place** timeline

Moment quality checklist (use for each slide)

- Can I **assign a date**?
- Can I **show it** (photo/video/map/press clipping)?
- Does it **move the story forward** (not just "nice trivia")?
- Is it **understandable to a newcomer** in 15 seconds?

Scope sanity check

- <8 solid moments → **broaden** the scope or switch type
- 20 moments → **merge** or **split** into phases (an "era") and keep the best 12–18

2.6. Common pitfalls (and how to avoid them)

- **Too broad** ("Our entire history since 1950") → pick a **decade** or a **theme**.
- **Undated moments** → rephrase or drop. If it can't be dated, it rarely fits.
- **Audience mismatch** → if donors are the audience, keep outcomes, impact, and credibility front-and-center.
- **No "why"** → add the logline; add a call-to-action the timeline supports.

2.7. Optional enrichments (only if you have time)

- Add **eras** (e.g., "Founding 2010–2014", "Scaling 2015–2019") to structure long histories.
- Think about **Groups** (e.g., "Milestones", "Media Coverage") if you expect parallel strands later.
- Jot a list of **likely media** next to each moment (photo, video, map, article)—this saves time in Week 2.

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WEEK 2

III. HOMEWORK WEEK 2

3.1. Why Week 2 matters (motivation)

In Week 1, you defined your story's foundation — title, audience, goal, and candidate moments. Now it's time to **collect the materials that will make your timeline visually rich and engaging**.

This week you will learn how to **find, evaluate, and organize media** that match each of your story moments. By the end of this activity, you will have a complete set of photos, videos, maps, and other online resources ready to be inserted into your TimelineJS spreadsheet next week.

Why this step is essential:

- Media transforms your text into an interactive story that captures attention.
- Well-chosen visuals and sound help the audience *feel* the narrative, not just read it.
- Preparing media now saves hours later when you build your Google Sheet.
- This phase teaches you to handle online content ethically — respecting copyright, licenses, and accessibility.

3.2. Learning outcomes (Week 2)

By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- Identify and select **appropriate media** for each timeline slide.
- Distinguish between **supported media types** and know where to find them.
- Evaluate the **credibility and licensing** of online resources.
- Record all sources clearly in a **Media Log (Asset Log)** with URLs, captions, and credits.
- Understand the importance of consistent file hosting and public access links.

3.3. What you'll deliver this week

Prepare a document or spreadsheet called
"W2_Asset_Log_[YourOrganisation or Name].xlsx" (or .docx if preferred) containing at least one media item per timeline slide.

Your table should have **six columns:**

| Slide # | Provisional Headline | Media Type | Media URL (public) | Caption (≤25 words) | Credit/Author + License |

Deliverable format:

! Minimum 8 rows (one per timeline moment).

! Each media item must be a *real link* or a note indicating what you will use (e.g., "photo from archive," "YouTube link pending").

! If using your own media, indicate "own photo" or "self-produced video."

You can choose between **three formats** to complete your Asset Log:

1. **Word document (.docx)** – if you prefer to work with text only.

   - You can create a simple table in Word
   - This option is good if you are less confident with Excel or online tools, but it requires you to manually check and copy links later.

2. **Excel file (.xlsx)** – a file created in Microsoft Excel or LibreOffice Calc.

   - Excel tables are practical for organizing larger amounts of information because you can easily adjust column sizes and copy/paste URLs.
   - However, Excel files are stored on your computer, and TimelineJS cannot read them directly. You will later need to copy the content into Google Sheets.

3. **Spreadsheet (Google Sheets)** – this is the **recommended format**.

   - A spreadsheet is an *online table* similar to Excel, but it is stored and edited directly in your **Google Drive** account.
   - Each cell in the spreadsheet can contain text, links, captions, or credits—exactly like in Excel—but it has one major advantage: it is **already online and shareable**, so TimelineJS can read from it directly once it is published.
   - Google Sheets is free and works from any browser without needing software installation.

> **In short:** Word is simple but static; Excel is flexible but local; **Google Sheets is dynamic and directly compatible** with TimelineJS.
> For this reason, we strongly recommend using **Google Sheets on Google Drive**.

Why using Google Drive is essential

Google Drive is a **cloud storage platform** that allows you to:

- **Access your files anywhere**, on any device, without transferring them by email.

- **Share** your documents (Drive files, images, PDFs, videos) through **public links** that TimelineJS can use.
- **Collaborate** with your project partners in real time — everyone can comment, edit, and view the same document.
- **Host all your media materials** in one place, ensuring they remain visible to the public (if shared correctly).

Because TimelineJS loads images, videos, and documents from online URLs, **media stored only on your local computer will not work**.
When you upload your materials to Drive, make sure to:

1. Right-click on each file → **Share** → Select **"Anyone with the link" → Viewer.**
2. Copy the sharing link and paste it into your Asset Log.

3.4. Step-by-step instructions

Step 1 – Review your Week 1 candidate moments
Re-read the list of events you drafted. Next to each, note what kind of media could illustrate it.

Example:

"2019 – First Erasmus+ collaboration signed → photo of signing ceremony (own photo)."

Step 2 – Check what kinds of media TimelineJS supports
You can use any of the following:

Media type	Examples of sources
Images	JPG, PNG, GIF – hosted publicly (Wikimedia Commons, Flickr CC, Google Drive public link)
Videos	YouTube, Vimeo, DailyMotion, TED, Kickstarter
Audio	SoundCloud, Spotify
Maps	Google Maps (locations, routes, Street View), Google Earth (KML)
Social posts	Twitter (X), Instagram (public), Wikipedia articles
Documents	Google Docs, PDF (public link), DocumentCloud
Other embeds	Any source providing a valid <iframe> (e.g., Padlet, Canva presentation)

Remember:

- Files must be **publicly accessible** (test in incognito mode).
- Avoid local files (like "C:\Desktop\photo.jpg").
- Always keep the original file or backup copy on your computer or Drive.

Step 3 – Search for suitable materials

For each slide, find at least one asset that:

- Represents the event accurately.
- Adds emotion or clarity (e.g., faces, locations, objects, quotes).
- Is free to use (check license or use your own media).

Useful free sources:

- [Wikimedia Commons](#)
- [Unsplash](#) (royalty-free photos)
- [Pexels](#) (photos + videos)
- [Flickr Creative Commons](#)
- [Europeana](#) for cultural heritage media
- [YouTube Creative Commons filter]
- [Google Maps → Share → Copy link]

Step 4 – Create your Asset Log

Open Excel or Google Sheets and create columns as shown above.
For each slide:

1. Copy/paste the **media URL**.
2. Write a **short caption** (max 25 words). A **brief description (usually one sentence or up to 25 words)** that explains what the viewer is seeing in a photo, video, map, or document. It helps the audience quickly understand the context of the media without reading long text. Think of it as a **"subtitle"** or **"mini explanation"** that appears below the image or video in your timeline.
3. Add the **credit/author** and **license type** (e.g., *Photo by Jane Rossi – CC BY-NC 4.0*).
4. If you use your own photo or video, mark "Author: [Your Name] – Own Material.
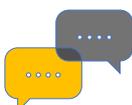
Step 5 – Test accessibility

- Click every URL in your log — it should open instantly without a login.
- For Google Drive links: *Right-click → Share → Anyone with the link (Viewer).*

- For YouTube/Vimeo: use the full page URL (not the "short" youtu.be if it's private).

Step 6 – Add alternative ideas (optional)

If you are unsure which media to use, note *two* options: one preferred, one backup.
This flexibility will help when building the timeline next week.

3.5. Example of a completed Asset Log (excerpt)

Slide #	Headline	Media Type	Media URL	Caption	Credit/License
1	2010 – Founding meeting	Image	https://commons.wikimedia.org/...	"Founders signing the statute."	POT Archive – Own photo
2	2016 – Media Lab Launch	Video	https://youtu.be/abc123	"Opening day of the new media lab."	POT Video Team – CC BY-SA
3	2020 – Online training pivot	Screenshot (Image)	https://drive.google.com/...	"Online learning platform interface."	Screenshot – Own
4	2022 – Inclusion toolkit	PDF Document	https://docs.google.com/...	"Toolkit cover page."	POT Project – CC BY-NC

3.6. Common pitfalls and how to avoid them

Mistake	How to fix it
Using media stored only on your computer	Upload to Google Drive or another public host and share the public link.
Copying images from Google Images without checking license	Use verified CC sources (Wikimedia, Pexels, Unsplash).
Forgetting captions/credits	Add them immediately to your Asset Log.
Broken/private links	Test every link in an incognito window.
Oversized media (slow loading)	Choose lighter images (< 2 MB) or lower-res versions.

3.7. Optional enrichment (for motivated participants)

- Add a second media asset per slide (e.g., both photo + map).
- Explore alternative formats (e.g., embed a tweet, a short audio comment).
- Note ideas for the **title slide background** (photo or video loop).

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WEEK 3

IV. HOMEWORK WEEK 3

4.1. Why Week 3 matters (motivation)

After two weeks of preparation—defining your story (Week 1) and collecting your media (Week 2)—you are now ready to **build your first interactive timeline** using **TimelineJS**.

This is the most exciting phase of the process: the moment where your planning and creative work take shape as a real, shareable digital product.
You will now take the **8 slides** you already designed—with their **short descriptions** and selected media—and transfer them into the official **TimelineJS Google Sheets template**.

By doing so, you will:

- Learn how to use the **TimelineJS spreadsheet template** correctly.
- Combine your story and visuals into an interactive, scrollable narrative.
- Produce your **first working version** of a timeline that you can view and test online.

By the end of Week 3, you will have a **fully functioning prototype** of your interactive timeline, ready for refinement and sharing in Week 4.

4.2. Learning outcomes (Week 3)

By completing this week's activity, you will learn how to:

- Copy and use the official **TimelineJS Google Sheets template**.
- Correctly fill each column (dates, headlines, texts, media URLs, captions, and credits).
- Publish your spreadsheet online so that TimelineJS can access it.
- Generate a **preview link** to view your interactive timeline.
- Identify and solve the most common formatting and technical issues.

4.3. What you'll deliver this week

By the end of this week, you should have:

1. **A published Google Sheet** containing your 8 slides, with text and media inserted.
2. **A working TimelineJS preview link**, showing your interactive story online.
3. *(Optional)* A short paragraph with "Notes & Issues" describing any corrections or improvements you plan for Week 4.

Deliverables to submit:

- Link to your *published Google Sheet*
- Link to your *TimelineJS preview*

- Optional: short text with comments or questions

4.4. Step-by-step instructions

Step 1 – Get the official TimelineJS template

1. Visit https://timeline.knightlab.com/.
2. Scroll down to **"Make a Timeline."**
3. Click **"Get the Google Sheets template."**
4. When the template opens, click **File → Make a copy** to save your editable version in your Google Drive.

Step 2 – Understand the spreadsheet structure

The spreadsheet is where you will now enter your 8 slides.
Each **row** represents one **slide (event)**, and the **first row** contains the column headers.
**Do not delete or rename** the headers — TimelineJS needs them to function correctly.

Here are the key columns you will use:

Column	Description	Example
start_date	The date of your event. You can use a full date (YYYY-MM-DD) or **only the year (YYYY)** if you don't know the exact month/day.	2021 or 2021-05-12
end_date	Optional – if your event lasted more than one day.	2022
headline	The title of your slide.	"Launch of Media Lab"
text	The short description you wrote in Week 1 (2–4 sentences).	"Our media lab opened to promote creativity among young professionals."
media	Paste the **public URL** of your photo, video, map, or document from Week 2.	(e.g., YouTube, Flickr, Google Drive, or Google Maps link)
media_credit	Author or organization responsible for the media.	"POT Project Team"
media_caption	A short caption (≤ 25 words) describing the image or video.	"Opening ceremony of the new media lab."
group	*(Optional)* Label slides by type (e.g., "Workshops", "Events").	"Workshops"

Column	Description	Example
background	*(Optional)* Choose a color (#E3F2FD) or image URL for background.	"#CCE5FF"

💡 **Tip:** Using only the year is perfectly fine if your timeline covers a long period or if you don't have precise dates. TimelineJS will still position your events chronologically.
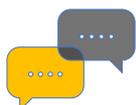
Step 3 – Transfer your data

Use the materials you already created in **Weeks 1 and 2**:

- Copy the **dates, titles, and short texts** from your Week 1 Story Outline.
- Copy the **media URLs, captions, and credits** from your Week 2 Asset Log.
- Paste everything into your Google Sheet, one slide per row.
- Make sure not to leave any blank rows in between slides.

Keep your timeline concise and clear: **8 slides** are perfect for this first interactive version.

Step 4 – Publish your spreadsheet

1. In Google Sheets, click **File → Share → Publish to the web**.
2. Select *"Entire document"* and confirm.
3. Copy the generated link — it will begin with https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/.../pubhtml.
4. This is your **public link**, which TimelineJS will use to build your timeline.

⚠️ Remember: "Publishing" is different from "Sharing." Only *publishing* the sheet makes it readable by TimelineJS.
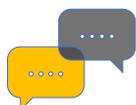
Step 5 – Generate your TimelineJS preview

1. Go back to https://timeline.knightlab.com/.
2. Scroll down to **"Build your Timeline."**
3. Paste your published Google Sheet link into the "Google Spreadsheet URL" box.
4. Check the settings:
    - Language: EN (English)
    - Start slide: 1
    - Initial zoom level: 2
    - Navigation position: bottom (default)
5. Click **Preview** to see your first timeline!

You will get a **preview link** that you can open, test, and share.
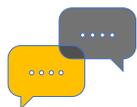
Step 6 – Review and test your timeline

Before you submit:

- Check that **all 8 slides appear** and are in the correct order.
- Make sure **media links work** and display properly.
- Verify that **captions and credits** are visible and accurate.
- Test your timeline both on **computer** and **mobile**.
- Write down any issues you'd like to fix in Week 4.

4.5. Example (description of a real case)

Element	Description
Timeline title: "15 Years of POT Project"	Includes 8 slides covering 2010–2025, combining text, photos, videos, and one map.
Public Sheet: Stored on Google Drive, published to the web and readable by TimelineJS.	
Preview link: Generated directly through the official TimelineJS generator.	

4.6. Common pitfalls and how to fix them

Problem	Solution
Blank rows between slides	Delete empty rows – each row must contain an event.
Wrong date format	Use either YYYY-MM-DD or simply YYYY.
Private media links	Set Google Drive or YouTube sharing to "Anyone with the link → Viewer."
Oversized images	Use compressed images (< 2 MB).
Header names changed	Restore the original header titles from the template.
Timeline not loading	Check that you have published (not only shared) the sheet.

4.7. Optional enrichment (for motivated participants)

- Add a **title slide** (type = title) introducing your story.
- Add **eras** (type = era) to mark different phases (e.g., "Founding 2010–2014").
- Experiment with **groups** (e.g., "Events," "Projects," "Achievements").
- Customize background colors or images for visual appeal.
- Use simple HTML formatting (`<b>`, `<i>`, `<a href="URL">`) for clarity.

HOMEWORK ACTIVITY

PROJECT: COOL – Digital Media Literacy for Cultural Narratives

WEEK 4

V. HOMEWORK WEEK 4

5.1. Why Week 4 matters (motivation)

Congratulations!
Over the past three weeks, you have successfully defined your story, collected your media, and built your first interactive timeline using **TimelineJS**.

Week 4 is about **refinement and presentation**.
Now that your prototype is ready, you will learn how to evaluate it critically, improve the structure and clarity of your story, ensure that all media and credits are correct, and finalize your work for public sharing.

By completing this final phase, you will:

- Develop the ability to **edit and refine a digital publication**.
- Learn to apply basic principles of **accessibility and visual balance**.
- Prepare a professional, ready-to-share interactive product.
- Reflect on your creative and learning process through a short **Curator's Note**.

5.2. Learning outcomes (Week 4)

By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- Revise and finalize your **interactive timeline** to ensure clarity, accuracy, and accessibility.
- Apply small but important improvements (text, design, credits).
- Prepare your **final public version** and a short written reflection.
- Share your work confidently with peers, partners, and audiences.

5.3. What you'll deliver this week

You will deliver **two final components**:

1. **Final published version of your TimelineJS timeline**

   - Corrected and refined based on your Week 3 preview.
   - All links, captions, and credits verified.
   - Visually balanced and accessible.

2. **Curator's Note (150–200 words)**

   - A short written reflection describing:

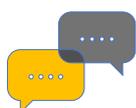   - What story your timeline tells.

- What you learned while creating it.
- What challenges you faced and how you solved them.
- How you or your organization might use TimelineJS in future projects.

Deliverables to submit:

- Link to your *final published TimelineJS*
- File or text of your *Curator's Note*

5.4. Step-by-step instructions

Step 1 – Review your timeline content

Open your **Week 3 timeline** and carefully check:

- Text clarity: are the headlines and descriptions concise and easy to read?
- Spelling and grammar: fix typos or inconsistent formatting.
- Media quality: are images, videos, or maps properly visible?
- Credits: does every media element have an author or source listed?

Step 2 – Check structure and flow

- Is your timeline logical and easy to follow from beginning to end?
- Does it have a clear opening, development, and conclusion?
- Are dates consistent (e.g., all using either YYYY or YYYY-MM-DD)?
- Does the timeline feel balanced—neither overcrowded nor empty in the middle?

Step 3 – Verify technical settings

In the **TimelineJS generator page**:

1. Reopen your project by pasting your published Google Sheet link.
2. Check or adjust the following:

   - **Language:** EN (or your project's target language).
   - **Start slide:** choose your opening slide.
   - **Initial zoom level:** adjust to show all events clearly (recommended: 2).
   - **Navigation position:** bottom (default) or top if preferred.

3. Click **Preview** again to confirm the final layout.

Step 4 – Accessibility and visual balance

A professional timeline is not just accurate—it's **readable and inclusive**.
Apply these small but essential adjustments:

- Use **short paragraphs** (max 3–4 sentences per slide).
- Avoid long text or cluttered slides.
- Check **contrast** between text and background.
- Make sure **captions** describe what's shown (useful for all users).
- Test the timeline on **mobile** to ensure readability.

Step 5 – Publish your final version

Once satisfied with your edits:

1. Go to your Google Sheet → **File → Share → Publish to the web** (if needed, republish).
2. Copy the public link again.
3. Paste it into the **TimelineJS generator**.
4. Click **Preview → Get link or Embed code.**

You can now share this final link with your partners or embed it on a website.
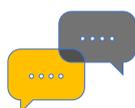
Step 6 – Write your Curator's Note

Your **Curator's Note** is a short reflection (about half a page) that gives meaning to your work.
Use these guiding questions to structure it:

1. **What story does your timeline tell?**
   – Example: "Our timeline tells the story of how our organization has promoted digital media education since 2010."
2. **What did you learn while creating it?**
   – Example: "I learned how to organize a story visually and how small details like captions and colors change its impact."
3. **What challenges did you face?**
   – Example: "The most difficult part was finding copyright-free media and checking that all links were public."
4. **How will you use TimelineJS in the future?**
   – Example: "We plan to use timelines for project reporting and to tell stories from our events and partnerships."

5.5. Common pitfalls and how to fix them

Problem	Solution
Overly long text in slides	Reduce text to 3–4 sentences max; move details to captions.
Missing media credits	Always include author/source; if unknown, remove the image.
Private media files	Set Google Drive/YouTube links to "Anyone with the link → Viewer."
Inconsistent date formats	Use either years only (YYYY) or full dates (YYYY-MM-DD) consistently.
Low contrast backgrounds	Use light backgrounds and dark text for better readability.
Forgotten to republish	After edits, click "Publish to the web" again before generating final link.

5.6. Optional enrichment (for motivated participants)

If you want to make your final timeline stand out:

- Add a **title slide** with an engaging cover image and subtitle.
- Add **eras** to highlight different project phases.
- Add **groups** to separate themes or types of activities.
- Customize colors to match your organization's visual identity.
- Translate the timeline into another language version (if relevant).

5.7. What happens after Week 4

With this final step, you have completed your **Learning by Doing course on TimelineJS** as part of the COOL project.
You now have all the skills to:

- Design an interactive narrative from scratch.
- Curate and credit media ethically.
- Build digital storytelling tools for cultural and educational use.

Your finished timeline can now be:

- Presented at project dissemination events.
- Shared on your organization's website or social media.
- Used as a model for future digital media literacy activities.