

**BEETHOVEN: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC – Concert Program Timeline**  
**Teacher Lesson Sequence**

**Objective:**

Students will complete a timeline that pairs events in North American history with the composition years of the musical selections they will hear at **Beethoven: The Man and His Music**.

**Materials:**

- Pencils
- Beethoven Timeline Worksheet and Reading Guide
- Resource for online research (optional)
- Concert playlist (optional)

**Lesson Sequence:**

1. Distribute Timeline Worksheets. Discuss how the timeline shows when each piece of music was first performed, from earliest (top of the page) to latest (bottom of the page). Musical selections are listed in the boxes on the LEFT side of each year.
2. Explain that the boxes on the RIGHT side are empty – each one of these years corresponds to one of the events listed at the top of the page, but they are out of order.
3. **Basic Version:** Allow students to read the information in the Reading Guide, then complete the Timeline.  
**Medium Version:** Allow students to use an online or print resource to research the years of the events.  
**Advanced Version:** Have students try to fill in the correct events *without reading anything first*, based on prior knowledge.
4. In all versions, go through the Reading Guide as a class after students complete the Timeline and discuss the events. Do you think the events on the right side of the timeline had any effect on the music composed at the same time?

**Extensions:**

- You may wish to play recordings of the concert selections to demonstrate their compositional timeline, from earliest to latest.
- Use the additional online resources in the Reading Guide for individual or small group research projects.

## BEETHOVEN: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC – Concert Program Timeline

Can you match these events in North American History with the piece of music first performed in the same year?

- Lewis and Clark cross the American west to the Pacific Ocean, guided by Sacagawea
- Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone
- Ohio becomes a state
- Slave trade between U.S. and Africa abolished
- George Washington re-elected for second term as U.S. President
- Mexico becomes a republic
- End of War of 1812 – Francis Scott Key writes the Star-Spangled Banner

<b>Haydn: “Surprise” Symphony</b> (also Beethoven’s first music lesson with Haydn!)	<b>1792</b>	
<b>Beethoven: Symphony No. 2</b>	<b>1803</b>	
<b>Beethoven: Fidelio</b> (opera that inspired Leonore no. 3 overture)	<b>1805</b>	
<b>Beethoven: Symphony No. 5</b>	<b>1808</b>	
<b>Beethoven: Symphony No. 8</b>	<b>1814</b>	
<b>Beethoven: Symphony No. 9</b>	<b>1824</b>	
<b>Brahms: Symphony No. 1</b> (inspired by Beethoven)	<b>1876</b>	

## BEETHOVEN: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC – Timeline Reading Guide

**1792:** Haydn's Symphony no. 94 in G major, the "Surprise," premiered in London. The famous startlingly loud chord that gives the piece its nickname is NOT written into the original score, but spontaneously cued to the orchestra by Haydn – supposedly to awaken a snoring audience member. In the same year, George Washington was unanimously voted into a second term as President of the United States.

*Read more here:* <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/presidential-election-of-1792/>

**1803:** Beethoven conducted the premiere of his Symphony no. 2 in Vienna. The music is cheerful and humorous, despite his depression over losing his hearing. Ohio officially became the 17<sup>th</sup> state in the union on March 1, 1803, endorsed to the U.S. Congress by President Thomas Jefferson.

*Read more here:* [http://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Ohio\\_Statehood](http://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Ohio_Statehood)

**1805:** The first performance of Beethoven's only opera, Fidelio, took place at the Vienna theater. The performance was a disaster and received bad reviews, prompting Beethoven to revise the music (including its overture) many times. Meanwhile in the United States, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark reached the Pacific ocean after a year-long expedition to discover the American west. The team of explorers was guided by a Shoshane woman, Sacagawea.

*Read more here:* <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/history/lewis-and-clark/>

**1808:** Beethoven's iconic Fifth Symphony premiered in Vienna in a marathon concert of his music, conducted by Beethoven himself. The year 1808 also marked the end of international slave trade – the U.S. and European nations were no longer allowed to bring slaves from Africa. This historic legislation is often overlooked because slavery was not abolished within the United States until 1865.

*Read more here:* <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/118969>

**1814:** Beethoven premiered his Eighth Symphony in Vienna, a piece that paid homage to the classical style of Haydn. Despite its name, the most historic events of the War of 1812 took place in the year 1814 when the war came to an end. It was in this year that Francis Scott Key, upon seeing the American flag still flying after the British siege on Baltimore, wrote the poem that would become our national anthem.

*Read more here:* <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/your-guide-three-weeks-1814-we-today-call-war-1812-180952425/>

**1824:** Beethoven was completely deaf by the time he conducted the premiere of his Ninth and final symphony. Audience members claimed he had to be turned around at the end to see them applauding because he could not hear. Also in 1824, three years after gaining independence from Spain, Mexico became a republic and adopted a constitution similar to that of the United States.

*Read more here:* <https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/today-in-latino-history-mexico-becomes-a-republic/>

**1876:** Johannes Brahms chose to premiere his Symphony No. 1 in Karlsruhe, Germany, avoiding Beethoven's home town of Vienna. He had long been intimidated by the legacy of Beethoven, but the symphony was a success. Another man who worked hard to succeed with new ideas was Alexander Graham Bell: he invented and patented the telephone in 1876.

*Read more here:* <https://www.nationalitpa.com/history-of-telephone>