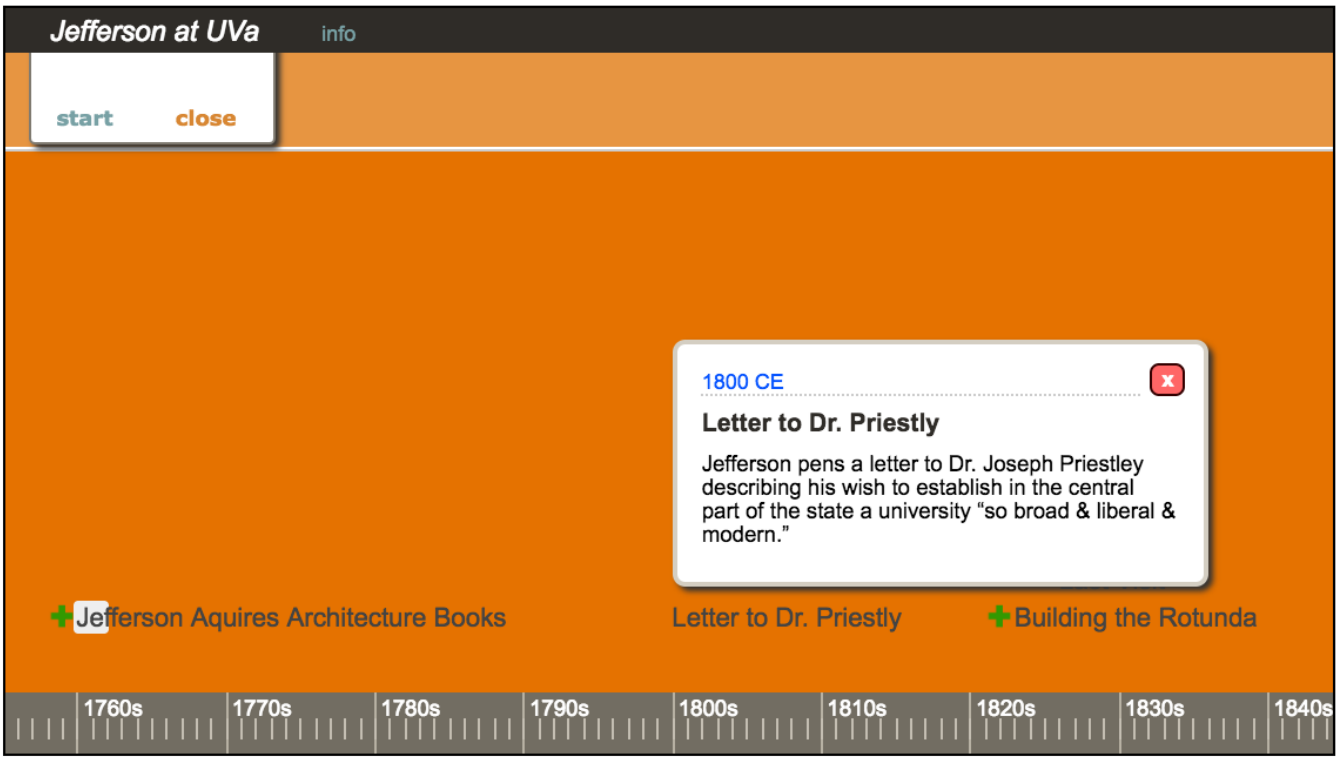
Timeline Walkthrough

This guide walks you through making a dynamic timeline in Mandala Visuals. We'll show you how to set up your spreadsheet, then use that data in Visuals. Then, you'll use customization settings to make your timeline look the way you want. The final timeline will look something like this:



To create a timeline:

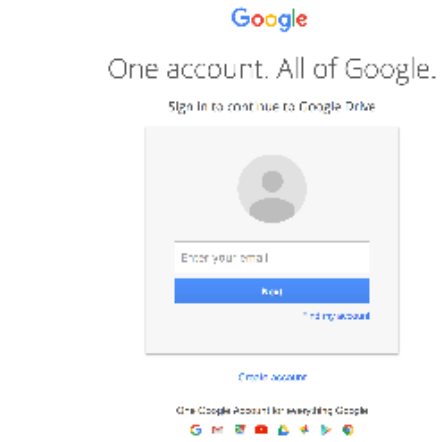
1. Create a Google Spreadsheet
2. Enter your data
3. Format your spreadsheet
4. Log in to Visuals
5. Connect your Google Drive to Visuals
6. Create a new visualization

1. Create a Google Spreadsheet

Visuals pulls data from your Google account to make visualizations. To start making a timeline, put your data into Google Sheets.

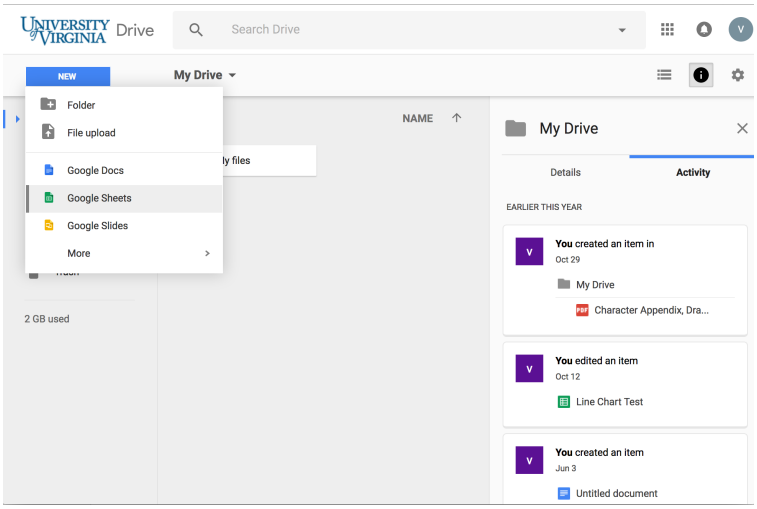
First, go to docs.google.com. You'll see the Google log in page.

You can use any Google address as the account. Remember, UVA students have "@virginia.edu" addresses that work with Google Drive.

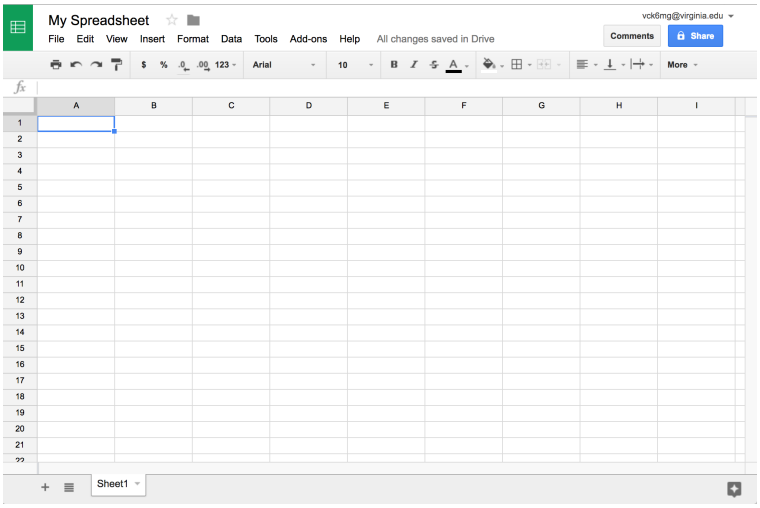


Enter your email, then click **Next**.

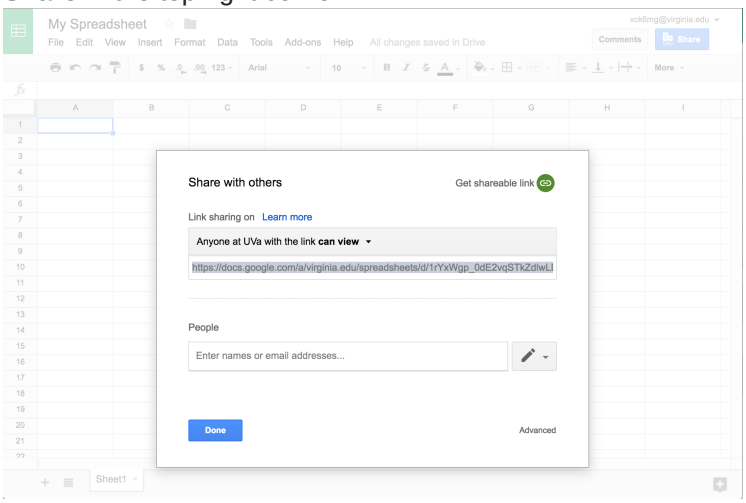
Log in with your Netbadge credentials. You'll see the University of Virginia Google Drive page (or the standard Google Drive page if you entered a non-UVa address).



Click **New**, then **Google Sheets** to make your new spreadsheet.

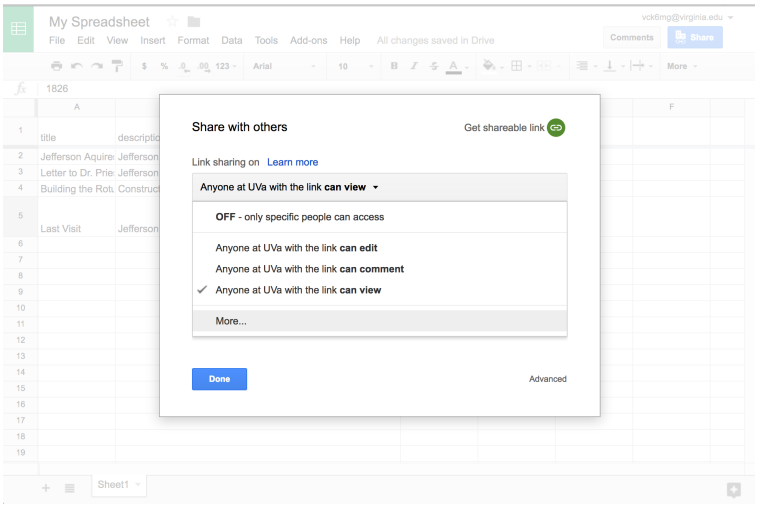


This is where you will enter your data. Before you start that process, however, you should make your spreadsheet accessible to Audio-Video. To do this, click **Share** in the top right corner.

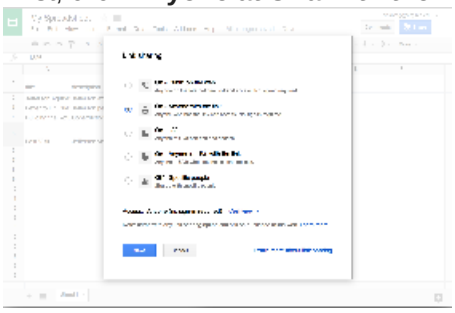


Then, **Get shareable link**. This automatically turns on link sharing.

The default setting restricts sharing to UVA viewers. We need to make a few more changes so anyone with a link can access your data. If you're not using a UVA Google Drive Account, you can skip ahead to the next section.



First, click **Anyone at UVa with the link can view**. You'll see extra options. Click **More** to see all privacy options.



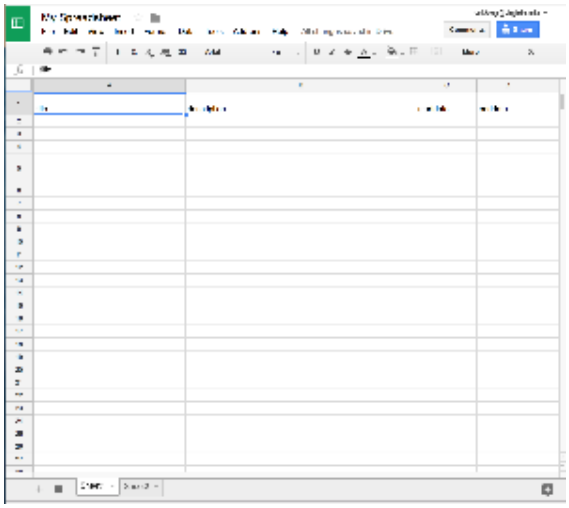
Choose **On - Anyone with the link**, then **Save**. Click **Done** to finish adjusting privacy settings.

Now you're ready to enter your data.

2. Enter your data

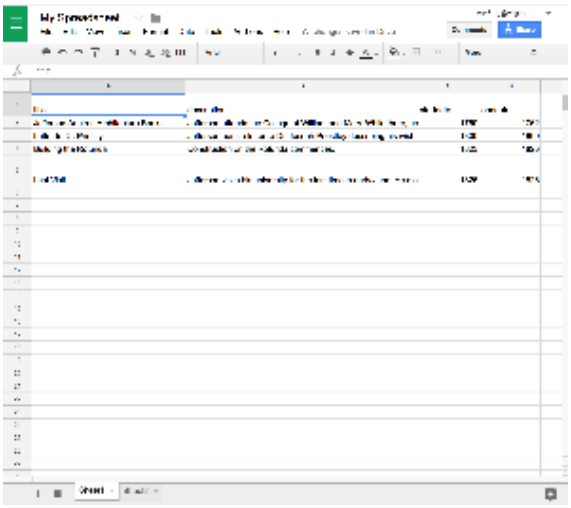
At this point, you should pull up our Timeline guide for quick reference. This tells you how to format your data so Visuals can read it. In general, you'll use individual chart guides in our Visualization Index to find out about formatting.

Here, we're making a simple spreadsheet.



Enter all required labels at on the top row of the spreadsheet. These are:

- title
- description
- startdate
- enddate



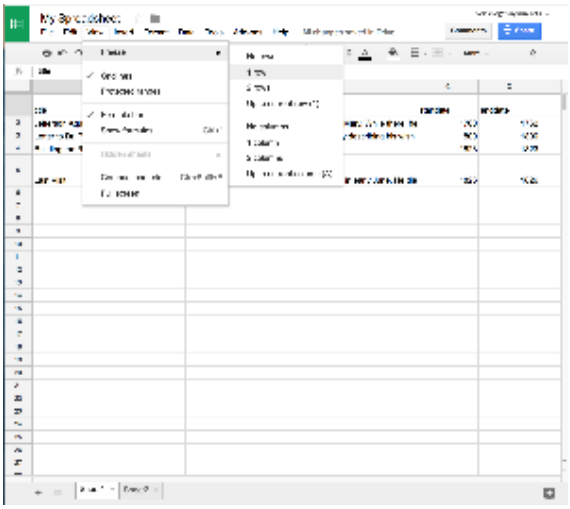
Now, fill in your data for each cell. You'll see from the Tim eline guide that each row represents an event on the timeline.

We've entered four events in the example to the left. This data was taken from the Thomas Jefferson Foundation's website.

Now that you've entered your data, it's time to format it.

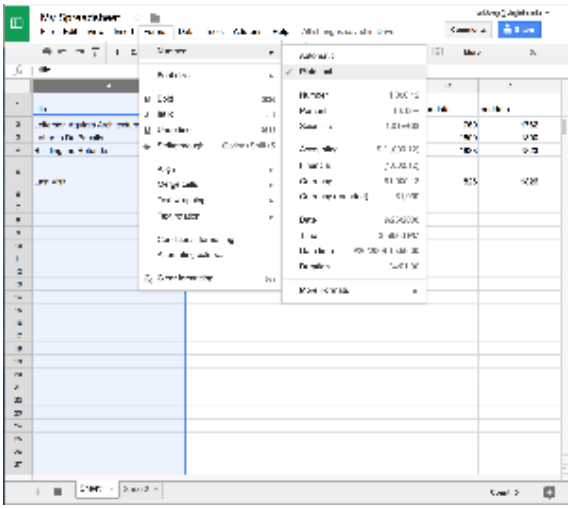
3. Format your spreadsheet

If you pull up our Timeline reference guide, you'll see that the first row you filled out contains *data labels*. We need to “freeze” this row. "Freezing" helps Audio-Video read the data you entered.



To freeze the first row, click **View** in the top menu, then **Freeze**. Choose **1 row**. A gray line will appear under this row.

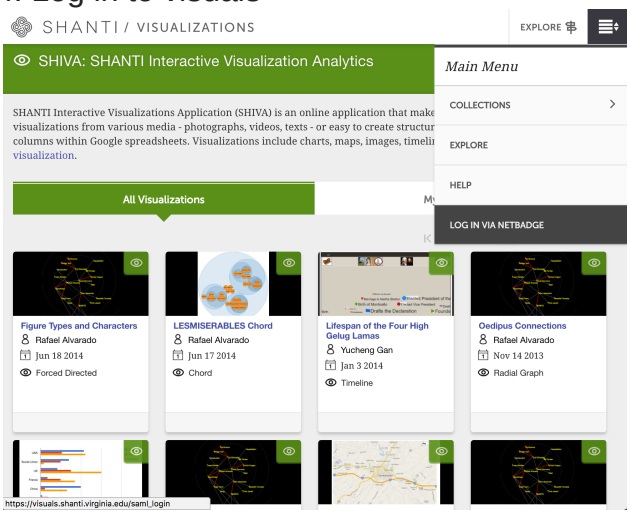
The Timeline reference guide also has specific *data types* for each column. Luckily, our example is easy: every column should be in the "plain text" data type.



To set the data type, select your column. Click **Format** fr
om the menu, then **Number**. Choose **Plain Text**. Do this
for each column.

Now your data is ready to go, and you can move to Mandala Audio-Video.

4. Log in to visuals

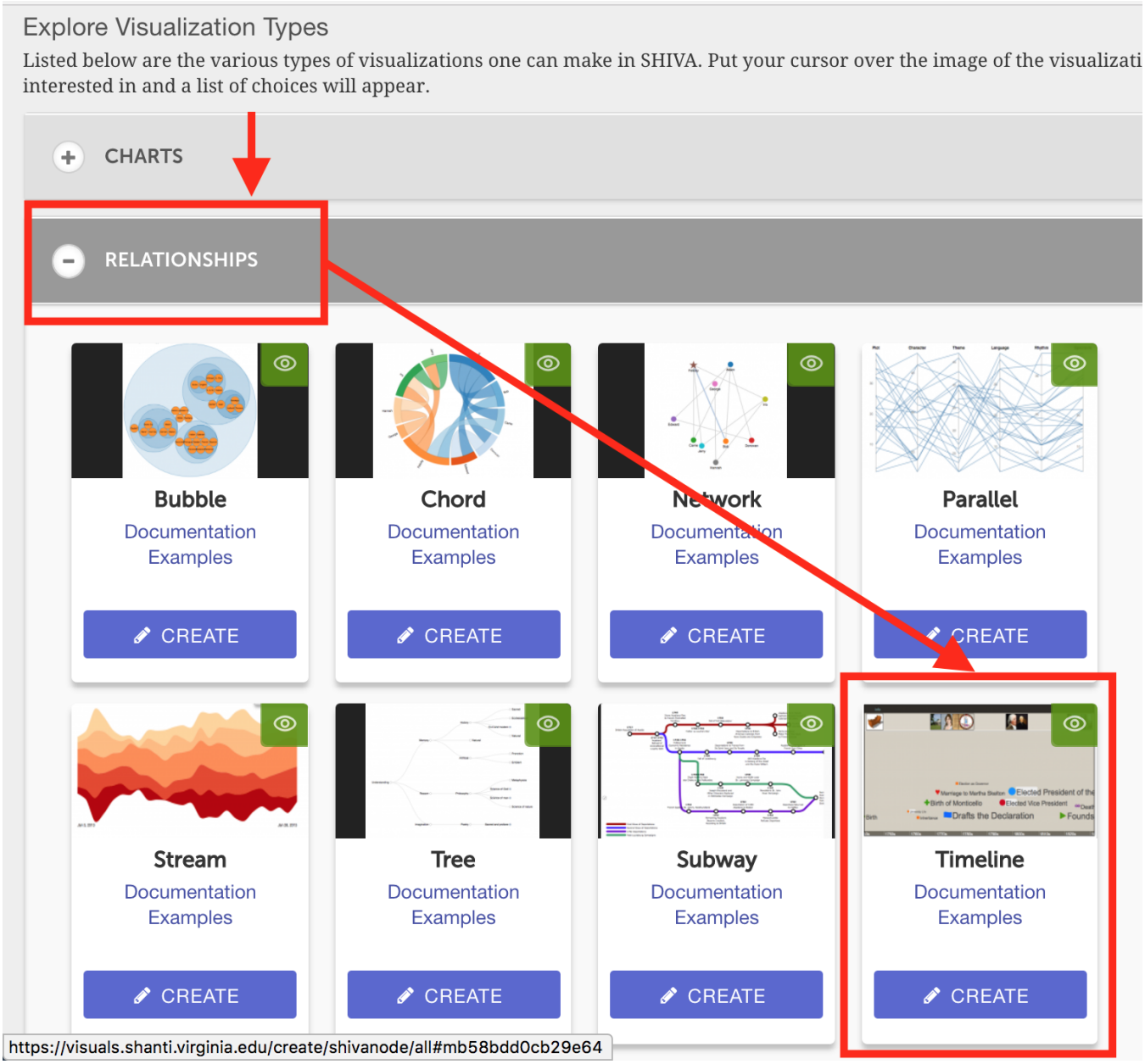


Click on the Main Menu icon () in the top right
corner. Then, **Log in via Netbadge**.

Enter your Netbadge credentials to finish logging in. Now we'll make your visualization.

6. Create your timeline

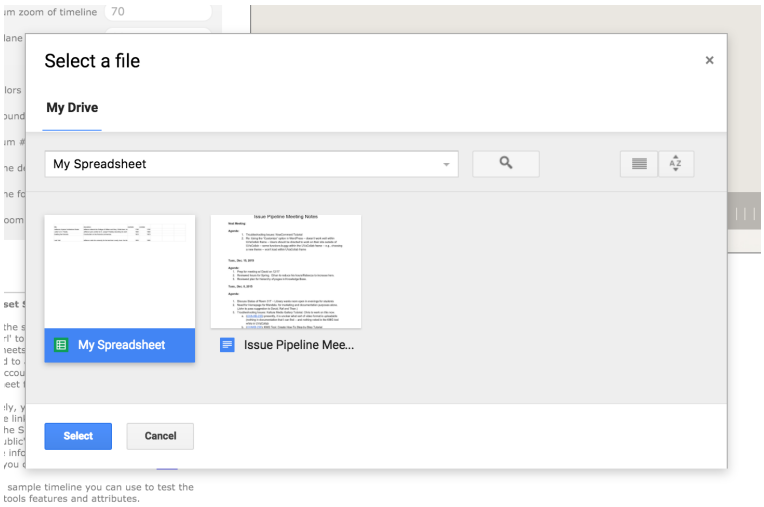
From the Visuals homepage, **Create a visualization.**



Choose **Relationships**, then **Timeline**.

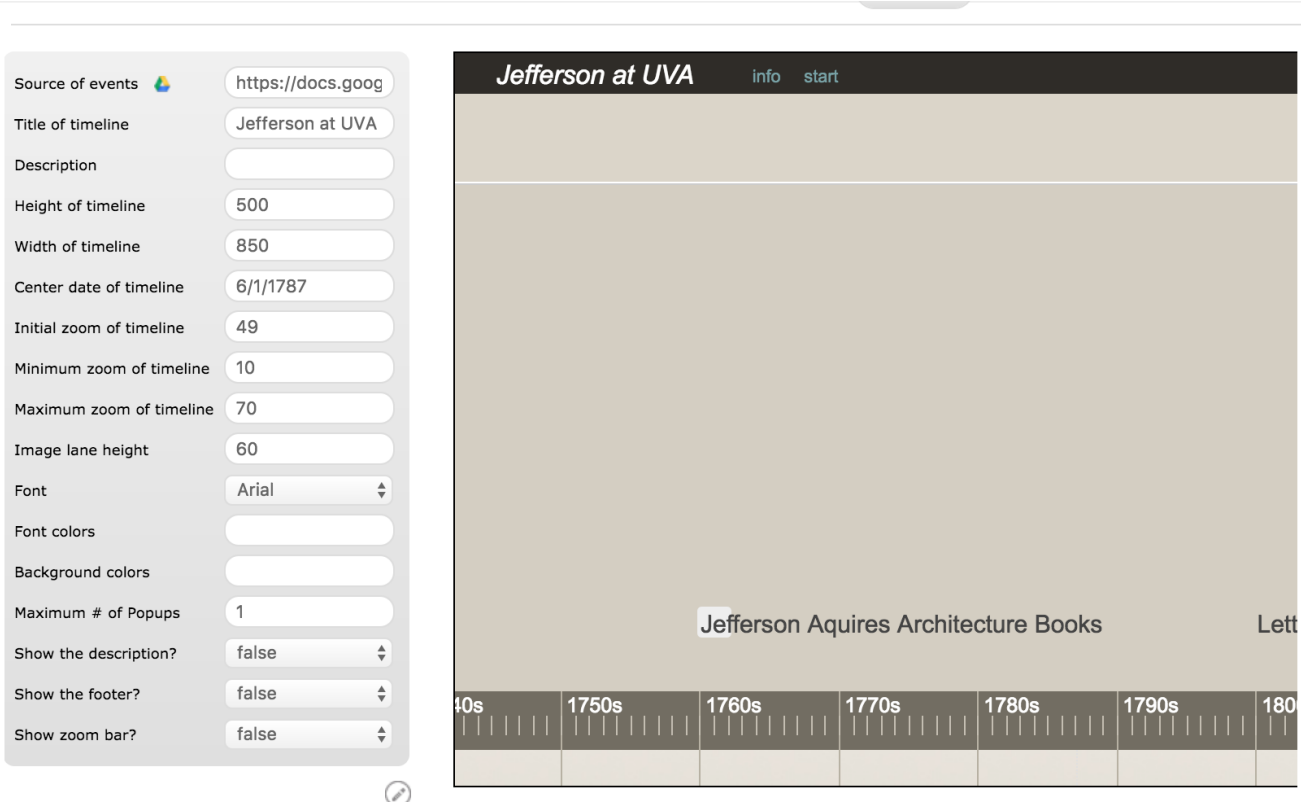
You'll see the visualization editor and a preview of your timeline. Now we need to add your spreadsheet to the editor. Find the "Source of events" field and click on the triangle **Google Drive icon** next to it. You'll see a list of your Google Drive accounts. Log in to the account that holds your data spreadsheet.

Google will ask if you give Shanti permission to see your files: click **Allow**. You'll see a Google Drive window in Visuals with a list of your files.



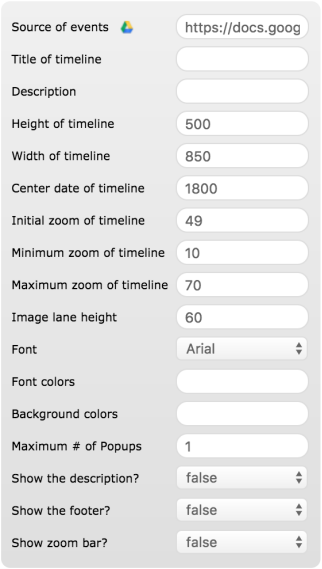
Select the spreadsheet you made in step 1.

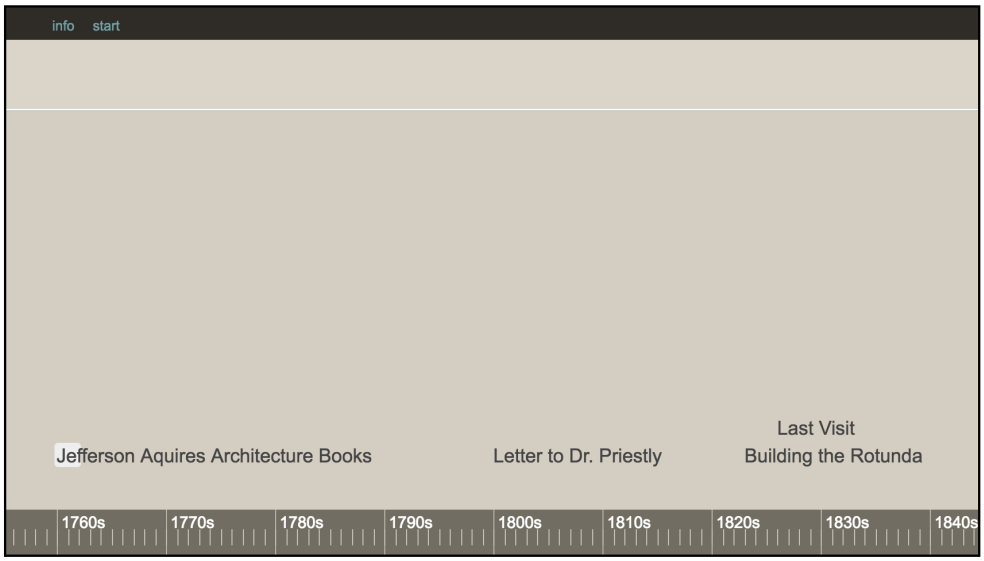
You'll see a preview of your timeline in the editor. Now we'll use the options in the sidebar to customize your timeline.



First, we'll add a title in the "Title of timeline" field. Here, we've entered "Jefferson at UVA"

The default timeline view doesn't show all the events. You can see that the events "Last Visit" and "Building the Rotunda" are cut off on the left, while there is plenty of empty space on the right. Let's fix that.





First, set "Center date of timeline." 1800 seems like a good place to center the timeline. According to the Visualization Index, however, this field should be in the DD/MM/YYYY format. We'll pick an arbitrary date and enter "01/01/1800" in the field.

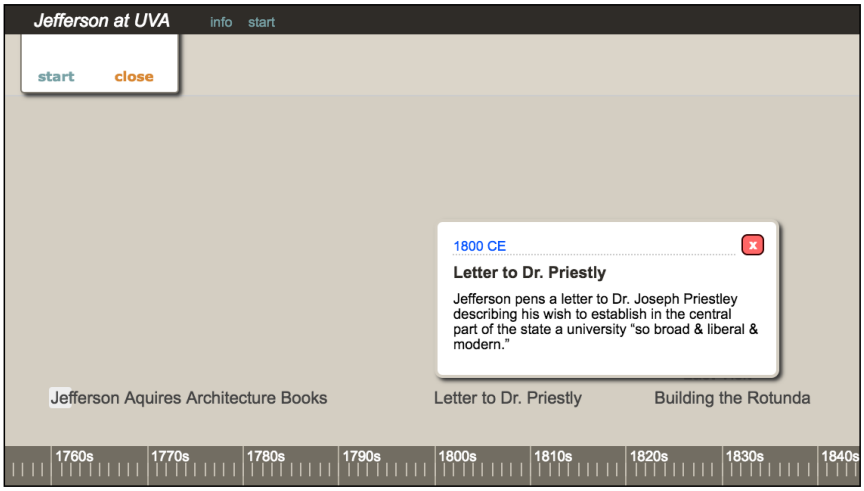
If you want to set a specific day, you would use the month/day/year format ("01/25/1800").

That looks a lot better. Now we can see all the events in the default view.



Let's add a title in the "Title of timeline" field.

The timeline still isn't very informative, however – how will viewers understand the significance of the letter to Dr. Priestly, for example? Let's make the visualization show a description of the event, which we entered in column B of our spreadsheet.



To do this, change **Show the description** from **false** to **t rue**. Now when a viewer clicks on an event, a description will pop up.

The timeline still looks slightly plain. Let's mark each event about architecture. You can see that the index guide for the Timeline has an "icon" column on the data sheet. This means you can add icons to events by making a new "icon" column.

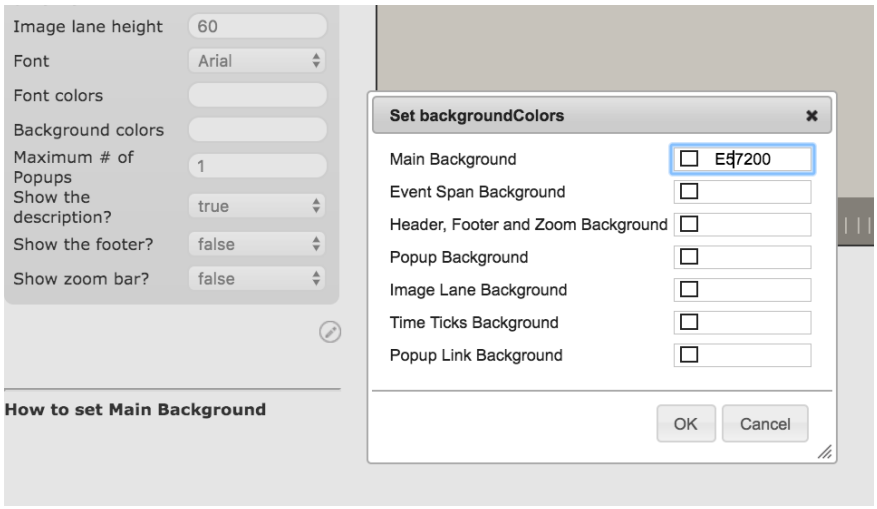
Go back to the spreadsheet and add *icon* in a new column on the header. Remember to enter the label exactly.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	title	description	startdate	enddate	icon
2	Jefferson Aquires Architecture Books	Jefferson attends the College of William and Mary. While there, he	1760	1762	
3	Letter to Dr. Priestly	Jefferson pens a letter to Dr. Joseph Priestley describing his wish t	1800	1800	
4	Building the Rotunda	Construction on the Rotunda commences.	1823	1823	
5	Last Visit	Jefferson visits his university for the last time in early June. He die	1826	1826	
6					

You can then enter the name of the icon you want to add: here we're using "plus_green.png." Check the Visualizati on Index to see all your icon options.

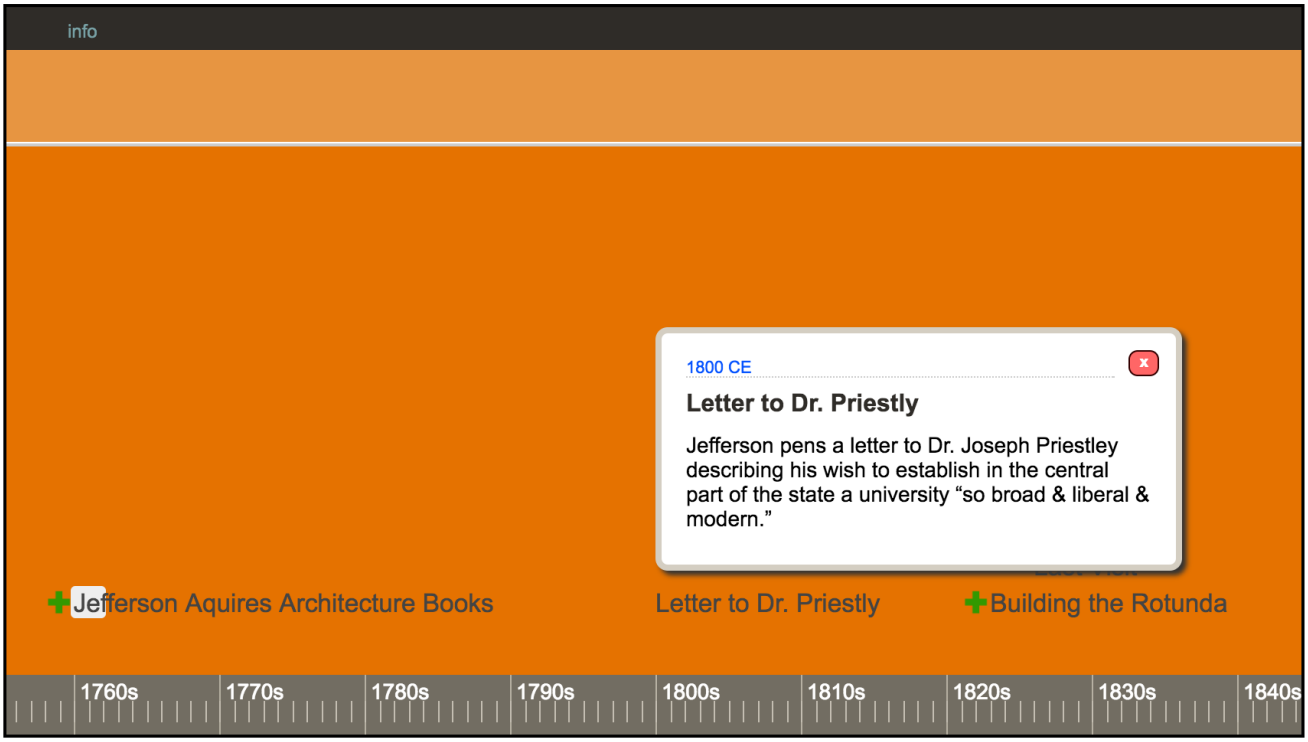
	A	B	C	D	E
1	title	description	startdate	enddate	icon
2	Jefferson Aquires Architecture Books	Jefferson attends the College of William and Mary. While there, he	1760	1762	plus_green.png
3	Letter to Dr. Priestly	Jefferson pens a letter to Dr. Joseph Priestley describing his wish	1800	1800	
4	Building the Rotunda	Construction on the Rotunda commences.	1823	1823	plus_green.png
5	Last Visit	Jefferson visits his university for the last time in early June. He die	1826	1826	

Now let's change the color of the background to something more UVA-appropriate.



Click **Background colors**, then enter the hexadecimal code for UVA orange (E57200) in the "main background" field. Click **OK** to apply the color.

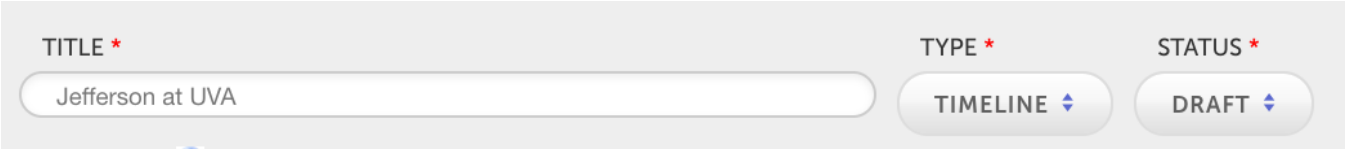
Now we're done.

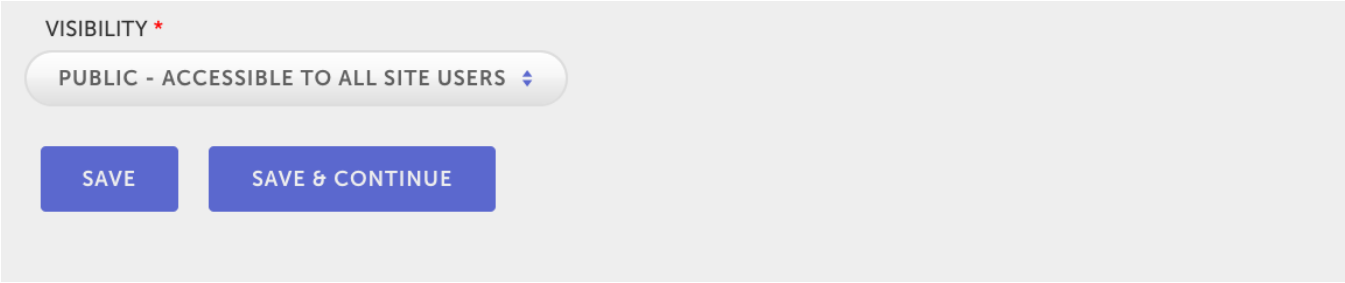


This is what your timeline should look like.

Remember, you can find out more about the different options for your timeline with the Visualization Index.

To finish making your timeline, give the visualization a title in the "Title" field at the top of the page, then choose Public under the "Visibility" options at the bottom of the page.





Save your visualization.

Now you're finished with your project. To learn more about making visualizations, you can use this Visuals in Mandala guide.