**Social Studies: Week 5 Historical Eras**

Historians, those who study and write about the past, use a system for numbering years. They divide time into the Common Era (CE) and Before Common Era (BCE). Any dates before the year 0 are indicated to be BCE.

**Historians divide** **the past into four major eras (periods of years):**

**Pre-History, Ancient, Middle Ages and Modern**

**Pre-History:** This era is the longest period of time. It begins with the start of human existence and continues to about 3000 BCE. Written records do not exist for this period because writing had not yet been invented so archaeologists use artefacts to study this time period.

**Ancient:** This era begins around 3000 BCE and lasts until 500 CE. This era sees the first written records of human history.

**Middle Ages:** This era begins around 500 CE and lasts until 1500 CE. In this period, societies changed a lot compared to how people lived during the Ancient era.

**Modern:** This era spans from 1500 CE to present day. This time period saw rapid development of technology which changed people’s lives dramatically.

**Activity 1:** Think of these four eras as along a number line with arrows at each end pointing left and right to indicate that time continues as we look backward towards the past and forward to the future.

1. Draw a line and divide it into the four groups with the longest period starting at the left of your timeline and taking up half of the number line. Colour this section Pre-History, in blue.
2. Moving left to right, next label Ancient History a section half as long as the first and colour it in green.
3. The next period is the Middle Ages and is about a quarter of the length of the one before it and may be coloured in yellow.
4. The last period is the shortest on your number line and is what we call the Modern era and can be coloured in orange or red.
5. Draw a line near (but not at) the end of the Ancient Era and label it year 0.
6. Then draw a line where Pre-History (blue) ends and Ancient History(green) begins and label it 3000 BCE.
7. Draw another line where Ancient History ends and Middle Ages begin and label it year 500 CE.
8. Then, label where Middle Ages end and Modern begins year 1500.
9. The end of your number line can be labeled the year 2000 with an arrow pointing to the right to show that time continues on.

 **Notice that your timeline counts backwards and forwards from year 0. The Ancient Nubians lived between c. 250 BCE -350 CE (Label about where the year 350 CE would be counting back from year 0 on your timeline.) This indicates that they lived during the Ancient period and also dating back to Pre-History.**

**Activity 2: Using your timeline, label about where the following dates would appear (you do not have to be exact but must place the date in one of the four major eras or time period)**

1. 8000 BCE (Pre-History)
2. 1000 BCE (Ancient)
3. 700 CE (Middle Ages)
4. 1900 CE (Modern)

