Sequencing

When you read history, you need to understand the sequence, or order, of the events about which you are reading. Knowing what happened first or what caused something else to happen will keep you focused and lead you to a better understanding of what you are reading.

TIPS FOR SEQUENCING

Here are some ways you can figure out the sequence of events in a history text:

- **Look for dates.** Put the dates in order as you read. They will not always be presented in order in the text. Write down the event that took place next to the date.

- **Look for numbers or phrases indicating how long a period of time lasted.** Sometimes you will see a date and then a reference to a period of time, such as *for the following 300 years*, or *for the next decade*. Use these references to fill in the sequence of events you are recording.

- **Look for words linking events by time order.** These are words such as *first*, *next*, and *last*.

- **Look for words or phrases linking events by cause.** Sometimes you will see words or phrases such as *caused*, *led to*, *because of*, *as a result of*, *consequently*, and so on. These words tell you that events are linked by cause—one event happened because another event led to it.

Sometimes, even with all these tips, it can still be difficult to figure out the sequence of events. When this happens, pick out one event and read about what happened immediately before or after it. Do whatever you need to do to pick out the thread of the sequence—you can even start with an event that you know happened last, and work backwards.
PRACTICING SEQUENCING

Read the following excerpt from your chapter. Then use what you learned about sequencing to answer the questions.

In 711 a combined Arab and Berber army invaded Spain and quickly conquered it. Next, the army moved into what is now France, but it was stopped by a Christian army near the city of Tours. Despite this defeat, Muslims called Moors ruled parts of Spain for the next 700 years.

A new Islamic dynasty, the Abbasids, came to power in 749. They reorganized the government to make it easier to rule such a large region.

1. What are the dates, words, and numbers or phrases in this excerpt that would help you build a sequence of events?

2. The Battle of Tours, in which a Christian army kept the Moors from conquering France, took place in 732. Is this before or after the Moors conquered Spain? What word in the excerpt tells you this?

3. If you were making a time line based on this excerpt, what event would you put last? How did you determine that this was the last event?

4. On a separate piece of paper, draw a time line of the events presented in this excerpt.

EVALUATING

Did the tips for sequencing help you answer the questions?

- Were you able to pick out dates, words, and phrases to help you understand the sequence of events?
- When you were given the date of the Battle of Tours, were you able to determine whether that event came before or after the Moorish conquest of Spain?
- How can sequencing help you in other subjects?