Purpose
Thresholds are a key part of the Big History story. They mark key moments where the Universe became irreversibly more complex. For each of these thresholds, there are a set of ingredients and a set of Goldilocks Conditions that result in new complexities. In this activity, you’ll explore the concept of thresholds in greater depth. First, you’ll look at the threshold card for Threshold 2. Using this as a model, you’ll create a threshold card of your own. Rather than highlighting a part of Big History, your threshold card will highlight a moment in your life where things become more complex. You may want to draw upon the timeline you created in the opening activity of Lesson 1.4, My Timeline.

Process
In groups, review the Threshold 2: Stars Light Up Card. As a class, you will review the card and define what each of the following mean:

- Ingredients
- Goldilocks Conditions
- New complexities

It’s important to understand the difference between each of these ideas. Goldilocks Conditions are not the same as the ingredients, though they might describe the ingredients.

Now, revisit the timeline of your life, created in Lesson 1.4. If you don’t have it, simply think about a few key “thresholds” in your own life. This might be something just about you, your family, or the community as a whole. Examples might include a move to a new city, the birth of a sibling, or a new school opening up nearby.

Working on your own, create a threshold card detailing this moment. List the ingredients, Goldilocks Conditions, and new complexities that emerged for this threshold. After a few minutes, work with a partner to review one another’s work. Ensure your partner has used the terms properly and highlight any questions that might have emerged from the discussion.

Finally, be prepared to share your work with the class.
THRESHOLD

INGREDIENTS + GOLDILOCKS CONDITIONS = NEW COMPLEXITY

THRESHOLD 1
THE BIG BANG

THRESHOLD 2
STARS LIGHT UP

THRESHOLD 3
NEW CHEMICAL ELEMENTS

THRESHOLD 4
EARTH & THE SOLAR SYSTEM

THRESHOLD 5
LIFE ON EARTH

THRESHOLD 6
COLLECTIVE LEARNING

THRESHOLD 7
AGRICULTURE

THRESHOLD 8
THE MODERN REVOLUTION

13.7 billion years ago | 5 billion years ago | 1 billion years ago | 1 million years ago | 5000 years ago | 1000 years ago | Today