

Important Historical Events in the Last 1,000 Years

1066—Norman Conquest of Britain	1520—Suleiman I “the Magnificent” presides over the Ottoman Empire's greatest period	1769—Watt patents first practical steam engine
1095—Pope Urban II calls for the Crusades	1522—Magellan's expedition circumnavigates the globe	1776—U.S. Declaration of Independence; Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations
1100s—Angkor Wat is built	1543—Copernicus postulates a heliocentric universe	1787—U.S. Constitution signed
1206—Genghis Khan begins creation of largest land empire in history	1582—Pope Gregory XIII reforms calendar	1789—French Revolution begins
1215—Magna Carta signed	1603—Shakespeare's Hamlet	1792—Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Woman
1260—Chartres Cathedral consecrated	1605—Cervantes's Don Quixote, first modern novel	1796—Jenner discovers smallpox vaccine
1271—Marco Polo begins travels to Asia	1609—Galileo makes first astronomical observations with a telescope	1808—Beethoven's Fifth Symphony
1273—Thomas Aquinas's Summa theologica	1637—Descartes publishes Discours de la méthode	1815—Battle of Waterloo crushes Napoleon
1300s—Renaissance begins in Italy	1643—Taj Mahal completed	1819—Bolívar defeats Spanish forces at Boyacá
1347—Bubonic plague (Black Death) spreads in Europe	1664—Newton's theory of universal gravitation	1826—Niepce takes first photograph
c.1387—Chaucer's Canterbury Tales	1667—Milton's Paradise Lost	1833—Slavery abolished in British Empire
1399—Tamerlane begins last great conquest	1684—Leibniz's calculus published	1842—Long uses first anesthetic (ether)
1438—Incan Empire formed in Peru	1690—Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding	1859—Darwin's On the Origin of Species; Lenoir builds first practical internal-combustion engine
1455—Gutenberg's movable-type printing press produces the Bible	1721—Bach completes the Brandenburg Concertos	1862—Pasteur's experiments lead to germ theory; Salon des Refusés introduces impressionism
1492—Columbus reaches the New World	1755—Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language	1867—Japan ends 675-year shogun rule
1509—Michelangelo begins painting Sistine Chapel	1760—Industrial Revolution begins in England	1876—Bell patents the telephone
1513—Machiavelli's The Prince	1762—Rousseau's The Social Contract	1879—Edison invents electric light
1517—Martin Luther initiates Reformation	1764—Mozart (aged eight) writes first symphony	
1519—Aztec Empire at height as Spanish arrive		

1880s—Europe colonizes African continent

1885—World's first skyscraper built in Chicago

1893—New Zealand becomes first country in the world to grant women the vote

1895—Lumière brothers introduce motion pictures; Marconi sends first radio signals

1897—Herzl launches Zionist movement

1900—Freud's Interpretation of Dreams

1903—Wright brothers fly first motorized airplane

1905—Einstein announces theory of relativity

1907—Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger introduces cubism

1911—Rutherford discovers structure of atom

1913—Ford develops first moving assembly line

1914—World War I begins

1916—Sanger founds international birth control movement

1917—Lenin leads the Bolshevik Revolution

1918—Global “Spanish flu” epidemic

1922—Joyce's Ulysses published

1927—Farnsworth demonstrates working model of a television; Lemaitre proposes big bang theory

1928—Fleming discovers penicillin

1929—Hubble proposes theory of expanding universe; U.S. stock market crash precipitates global depression

1936—Keynes's The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money

1939—Hitler invades Poland; World War II begins

1942—Nazi leaders at Wannsee Conference coordinate “final solution to the Jewish question”

1945—Atomic bombs are dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; first electronic computer, ENIAC, is built; Arab League launches modern pan-Arabism

1946—First meeting of U.N. General Assembly; Churchill's

“Iron Curtain” speech marks beginning of cold war

1947—Gandhi's civil disobedience movement leads to an independent India

1949—Communist victory in China under Mao Zedong

1950s—Abstract expressionism introduced

1953—Watson, Crick, and Franklin discover DNA's structure

1954—Brown v. Board of Education begins unraveling of U.S. racial segregation

1957—Russia launches first satellite, Sputnik I

1959—Mary and Louis Leakey uncover hominid fossils

1969—Armstrong and Aldrin walk on the Moon; Internet (ARPA) goes online

1980—Smallpox eradicated

1981—Scientists identify AIDS

1989—Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe

1991—Breakup of Soviet Union; apartheid ends in South Africa