

Important Historical Figures

Abraham Lincoln: 16th U.S. president, involved in the Civil War (1809 - 1865)

Adam Smith: Economist, wrote "The Wealth Of Nations" (1723 - 1790)

Adolf Hitler: Fuehrer of Nazi Germany, involved in World War II (1889 - 1945)

Albert Einstein: theoretical physicist, created the Theory of Relativity (1879 - 1955)

Alexander Hamilton: U.S. Founding Father, National Bank (1755 - 1804)

Alexander the Great: Greek king and conqueror of the known world (356 - 323 B.C.)

Ali: Early Caliph and a central figure of Sufism (598 - 661)

Andrew Jackson: 7th U.S. president, also known as "Old Hickory" (1767 - 1845)

Anne Frank (1929-1945) – Anne Frank’s diary is one of the most widely read books in the world. It reveals the thoughts of a young, yet surprisingly mature 13-year-old girl, confined to a secret hiding place. “Despite everything, I believe that people are really good at heart.”

Annie Besant (1847-1933) – A campaigner for social justice, an advocate of women’s rights and later member of the Theosophist society. She also actively campaigned for Indian independence.

Aristotle: Greek philosopher and polymath (384 - 322 B.C.)

Audrey Hepburn (1929 – 1993) – Influential female actor of the 1950s and 60s. Audrey Hepburn defined feminine glamour and dignity, and was later voted as most beautiful women of the twentieth century. After her acting career ended in the mid-1960s, she devoted the remaining period of her life to humanitarian work with UNICEF.
Augustine of Hippo: Early Christian theologian, wrote "The City of God" (354 - 430)

Augustus: First Emperor of Rome, Pax Romana (63 B.C. - A.D. 14)

Benazir Bhutto (1953 – 2007) The first female prime minister of a Muslim country. She helped to move Pakistan from a dictatorship to democracy becoming Prime Minister in 1988. She sought to implement social reforms, in

particular helping women and the poor. She was assassinated in 2007.

Benjamin Franklin: Founding father, scientist, captured lightning (1706 - 1790)

Betty Friedan (1921 – 2006) – Leading feminist figure of the 1960s, who wrote the best-selling book “The Feminine Mystique” Friedan campaigned for an extension of female rights and an end to sexual discrimination.

Betty Williams (1943 –) Together with Mairead Corrigan, Betty Williams campaigned to bring an end to the sectarian violence of Northern Ireland. They founded the Community for Peace and were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 (postdated for 1976)

Billie Holiday (1915-1959) – Given the title “First Lady of the Blues” Billie Holiday was widely considered to be the greatest and most expressive jazz singer of all time. Her voice was moving in its emotional intensity and poignancy. Despite dying at the age of only 44 Billie Holiday helped define the jazz era and her recordings are widely sold today.

Billie Jean King (1943 –) One of the greatest female athletes Billie Jean King was one of the greatest female tennis champions who also battled for equal pay for women. She won 67 professional titles including 20 titles at Wimbledon.

Boudicca (1st Century AD) Boudicca was an inspirational leader of the Britons. She led several tribes in revolt against the Roman occupation. Initially successful her army of 100,000 sacked Colchester and then London. Her army was later defeated.

Carl Linnaeus: Swedish biologist, father of Taxonomy (1707 - 1778)
Catherine de Medici (1519-1589) Born in Florence, Italy, Catherine was married to the King of France at the age of 14. She was involved in interminable political machinations seeking to increase the power of her favoured sons. This led to the disastrous St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre.

Catherine the Great (1729-1796) – One of the greatest political leaders of the Eighteenth Century. Catherine the great was said to have played an important role in improving the lot of the Russian serfs. She placed great emphasis on the arts and helped to cement Russia as one of the dominant countries in Europe.

Charlemagne: first Holy Roman Emperor, considered the "Father of Europe" (742 - 814)

Charles Darwin: scientist, created the Theory of Evolution (1809 - 1882)

Charles Dickens: English novelist, wrote "David Copperfield" (1812 – 1870)

Charles I: King of England, involved in the English Civil War (1600 - 1649)

Charles II: King of England, post-Cromwell (1630 - 1685)

Charles V: Holy Roman Emperor during the Counter-Reformation (1500 - 1558)

Christopher Columbus: explorer, discoverer of the New World (1451 - 1506)

Cicero: Roman statesman and orator, wrote "On the Republic" (106 - 43 B.C.)

Cleopatra (69 -30 BC) The last Ptolemaic ruler of Egypt. Cleopatra sought to defend Egypt from the expanding Roman Empire. In doing so she formed relationships with two of Rome’s most powerful leaders Marc Anthony and Julius Caesar.

Coco Chanel (1883-1971) – One of the most innovative fashion designers, Coco Chanel was instrumental in defining feminine style and dress during the 20th Century. Her ideas were revolutionary; in particular she often took traditionally male clothes and redesigned them for the benefit of women.

Constantine the Great: Emperor of Rome, first Christian emperor (272-337)

Dante Alighieri: Italian poet, wrote the "Divine Comedy" (1265 - 1321)

David: Biblical King of Israel, founded Jerusalem (1040 - 970 B.C.)

Diana, Princess of Wales (1961-1997) - British Royal princess who was noted for her humanitarian charity work. Despite troubled marriage to Prince Charles, her popularity remained undimmed as many were inspired by her natural sympathy with the poor and marginalised from society.

Dorothy Hodgkin (1910-1994) – Awarded the Nobel prize for chemistry Dorothy Hodgkin work on critical discoveries of the structure of both penicillin and later insulin. These discoveries led to significant

improvements in health care. An outstanding chemist Dorothy also devoted a large section of her life to the peace movement and promoting nuclear disarmament.

Edgar Allen Poe: American author, wrote "The Raven" (1809 - 1849)

Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204) The first Queen of France. Two of her sons Richard and John went on to become Kings of England. Educated, beautiful and highly articulate, Eleanor influenced the politics of western Europe through her alliances and influence over her sons.

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) – Wife and political aide of American president F.D.Roosevelt. In her own right Eleanor made a significant contribution to the field of human rights, a topic she campaigned upon throughout her life. As head of UN human rights commission she helped to draft the 1948 UN declaration of human rights.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) – A social activist and leading figure in the early women's rights movement. She was a key figure in helping create the early women's suffrage movements in the US. She was the principle author of 'Declaration of Sentiments' in 1848.

Elizabeth I (1533-1603) – Queen of England during a time of great economic and social change, she saw England cemented as a Protestant country. During her reign she witnessed the defeat of the Spanish Armada leaving Britain to later become one of the world's dominant superpowers.

Elvis Presley: The "king of rock and roll" (1935 - 1977)

Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886) – One of America's greatest poets Emily Dickinson lived most of her life in seclusion. Her poems were published posthumously and received widespread literary praise for their bold and unconventional style. Her poetic style left a significant legacy on 20th Century poetry.

Emily Murphy (1868-1933) – The first women magistrate in the British Empire. In 1927 she joined forces with four other Canadian women who sought to challenge an old Canadian law that said, "women should not be counted as persons"

Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) – A British suffragette, Emily Pankhurst dedicated her life to the promotion of women's rights. She explored all

avenues of protest including violence, public demonstrations and hunger strikes. She died in 1928, 3 weeks before a law giving all women over 21 the right to vote.

Eva Peron (1919-1952) – Eva Peron was widely loved by the ordinary people of Argentina. She campaigned tirelessly for both the poor and for the extension of women's rights. She died aged only 32 in 1952.

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) – By serving in the Crimean war, Florence Nightingale was instrumental in changing the role and perception of the nursing profession. Her dedicated service won widespread admiration and led to a significant improvement in the treatment of wounded soldiers.

Francis Bacon: English scientist, created the Scientific Method (1561 - 1626)

Franklin D. Roosevelt: 32nd U.S. President, responsible for the New Deal (1882 - 1945)

Friedrich Nietzsche: German philosopher, "God is dead" (1844 - 1900)

Galileo Galilei: Italian physicist and astronomer (1564 - 1642)

Genghis Khan: Founder of the Mongol Empire (1162 - 1227)

George III: King of England, involved in the American Revolution (1738 - 1820)

George Washington: 1st U.S. president, involved in the American Revolution (1732 - 1799)

Germaine Greer (1939 –) Leading feminist icon of the 1960s and 1970s Germaine Greer enjoys raising contentious issues. In particular her book "The Female Eunuch" was a defining manifesto for the feminist movement, which proved influential in the 1960s.

Guatama Buddha: central figure of Buddhism (563 - 483 B.C.)

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) – A lifelong anti-slavery campaigner. Her novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was a best seller and helped to popularise the anti-slavery campaign. Abraham Lincoln would later remark her books were a major factor behind the American civil war.

Harry S. Truman: 33rd U.S. president, involved in the Korean War (1884 - 1972)

Helen Keller (1880-1968) – At the age of 19 months Helen became deaf and blind. Overcoming the frustration of losing both sight and hearing she campaigned tirelessly on behalf of deaf and blind people.

Helena Rubinstein (1870-1965) – Formed one of the world's first cosmetic companies. Her business enterprise proved immensely successful and later in life she used her enormous wealth to support charitable enterprises in the field of education, art and health.

Henry VIII: King of England, had six wives (1491 - 1547)

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) Mystic, author and composer. Hildegard of Bingen lived a withdrawn life, spending most of her time behind convent walls. However her writings, poetry and music were revelatory for the time period. She was consulted by Popes, Kings and influential people of the time. Her writings and music have influenced people to this day.

Immanuel Kant: German philosopher, wrote "Critique Of Pure Reason" (1724 - 1804)

Indira Gandhi (1917-1984) – First female prime minister of India. She was in power from between 1966-77 and 1980-84. Accused of authoritarian tendencies she only narrowly avoided a military coup by agreeing to hold an election at the end of the "emergency period" of 1977. She was assassinated in 1984 by her Sikh bodyguards, in response to her storming of the Golden Temple.

Isaac Newton: scientist, created the Theory of Gravity (1643 - 1727)

J.K.Rowling (1965 –) British author of the phenomenal best-selling Harry Potter series. The volume of sales was so high, it has been credited with leading a revival of reading by children. She wrote the first book as a single mother, struggling to make ends meet, but is now one of most successful self-made woman.

James Cook: Explorer and discoverer of Hawaii and Australia (1728 - 1779)
James I: King of England, responsible for the King James Bible (1566 - 1625)

James Madison: 4th U.S. president, involved in the War of 1812 (1751 - 1836)

Jane Austen (1775-1817) – One of the most popular female authors Jane Austen

wrote several novels, which remain highly popular today. These include "Pride and Prejudice" "Emma" and "Northanger Abbey". Jane Austen wrote at a time when female writers were not so high profile, helping pave the way for future writers.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: philosopher, wrote "On the Social Contract" (1712 - 1778)

Jesus: central figure of Christianity (7 B.C. - A.D. 30)

Joan of Arc (1412-1431) - The patron saint of France, Joan of Arc inspired a French revolt against the occupation of the English. An unlikely heroine; at the age of just 17, the diminutive Joan successfully led the French to victory at Orleans. Her later trial and martyrdom only heightened her mystique.

Johann Sebastian Bach: Classical composer, wrote the "Well Tempered Clavier" (1685 - 1750)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: German writer and polymath, wrote "Faust" (1749 - 1832)

John Adams: Founding Father and 2nd U.S. president (1735 - 1826)

John Calvin: French Protestant theologian, founded Calvinism (1509 - 1564)

John F. Kennedy: 35th U.S. president, Cuban Missile Crisis (1917 - 1963)

John Locke: English Enlightenment philosopher, theorized "tabula rasa" (1632 - 1704)

Joseph Smith: American religious leader, founded Mormonism (1805 - 1844)
Joseph Stalin: Premier of USSR, involved in World War II (1878 - 1953)

Julius Caesar: Roman general and statesmen, said "Et tu, Brute?" (100 - 44 B.C.)

Karl Marx: philosopher, wrote the "Communist Manifesto" (1818 - 1883)

Katharine Hepburn (1907-2003) – An iconic figure of twentieth Century film Katharine Hepburn won 4 Oscars and received over 12 Oscar nominations. Her lifestyle was unconventional for the time and through her acting and life she helped redefine traditional views of women's role in society.

King Arthur: Mythical 6th-century King of Britain (? - ?)

Leonardo da Vinci: Italian artist and polymath, painted the "Mona Lisa" (1452 - 1519)

Louis XIV: King of France, known as The Sun King (1638 - 1715)

Louis XVI: King of France, executed in the French Revolution (1754 - 1793)

Ludwig Von Beethoven: German composer, wrote "Ode to Joy" (1770 - 1827)

Madonna (1958 -) – The most successful female musician of all time. She has sold in excess of 250 million records. She has also starred in films, such as Evita.

Malala Yousafzai (1997 -) Pakistani schoolgirl who defied threats of the Taliban to campaign for the right to education. She survived being shot in the head by the Taliban and has become a global advocate for women's rights, especially the right to education.

Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) An American women's rights advocate. Her book Women in the Nineteenth Century (1845) was influential in changing perceptions about men and women, and was one of the most important early feminist works. She argued for equality and women being more self-dependent and less dependent on men.

Margaret Thatcher (1925 - 2013) The first female Prime minister of Great Britain, she governed for over 10 years, putting emphasis on individual responsibility and belief in free markets.

Marie Curie (1867-1934) – The first woman to receive the Nobel Prize and the first person to win it for two separate categories. Her first award was for research into radioactivity (Physics 1903). Her second Nobel prize was for Chemistry in 1911. A few years later she also helped develop the first X ray machines.

Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962) American actress who became one of the most iconic film legends. Her films were moderately successful, but her lasting fame came through her photogenic good looks and aura of glamour and sophistication.

Mark Twain: American author, wrote "Huckleberry Finn" (1835 - 1910)

Martin Luther: Protestant Reformation, wrote the "95 Theses" (1483 - 1546)

Mary Magdalene (4 BC - 40AD)
Accounts from the Gospels and other sources suggest Mary Magdalene was one of Jesus' most devoted followers. Mary Magdalene stood near Jesus at his crucifixion and was the first to see his resurrection.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) – Mary Wollstonecraft wrote the most significant book in the early feminist movement. Her tract "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" laid down a clear moral and practical basis for extending human and political rights to women. – A true pioneer in the struggle for female suffrage.

Michelangelo: Italian sculptor and Renaissance man, sculpted "David" (1475 - 1564)

Millicent Fawcett (1846 - 1929) – A leading suffragist and campaigner for equal rights for women. She led Britain's biggest suffrage organisation, the non-violent (NUWSS) and played a key role in gaining women the vote. She also helped found Newnham College, Cambridge.

Mirabai (1498-1565) – Indian mystic and poet. Mirabai was born into a privileged Hindu family, but she forsook the expectations of a princess and spent her time as a mystic and devotee of Krishna. She helped revitalise the tradition of bhakti (devotional) yoga in India.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi: Indian nationalist leader, instrumental in non-violence (1869 - 1948)

Mother Teresa (1910-1997) – Devoting her life to the service of the poor and dispossessed Mother Teresa became a global icon for selfless service to others. Through her Missionary of Charities organisation she personally cared for 1000s of sick and dying people in Calcutta. She was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1979.

Muhammad: prophet and founder of Islam (570 - 632)

Napoleon: Emperor of France, involved in the Battle of Waterloo (1769 - 1821)

Nicolaus Copernicus: Astronomer, theorized a heliocentric cosmology (1473 - 1543)

Nikola Tesla: Inventor, discovered alternating current (1856 - 1943)

Oliver Cromwell: Lord Protector of England, involved in the English Civil War (1599 - 1658)

Oprah Winfrey (1954 –) – Influential talk show host, Oprah Winfrey was the first woman to own her own talk show host. Her show and book club is tremendously influential, usually focusing on issues facing American women.

Oscar Wilde: Irish author and poet, wrote "The Picture of Dorian Grey" (1854 - 1900)

Otto von Bismarck: 1st chancellor and unifier of modern Germany (1815 - 1898)

Paul the Apostle: Christian apostle and missionary (A.D. 5 - A.D. 67)

Philip II: King of Spain, organized the Spanish Armada (1527 - 1598)

Plato: Greek philosopher, wrote "The Republic" (427 - 347 B.C.)

Pope John Paul II: 20th-century Polish Pope, Solidarity (1920 - 2005)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: Russian composer, wrote the "1812 Overture" (1840 - 1893)

Queen Elizabeth II (1926 –) Since ascending to the British throne in 1952, Elizabeth has served as the second longest serving British monarch. She has witnessed rapid social and economic change and has been a unifying influence for Britain and the Commonwealth.

Queen Victoria (1819-1901) – Presiding over one of the largest empires ever seen, Queen Victoria was the head of state from 1837-1901. Queen Victoria sought to gain an influence in British politics whilst remaining aloof from party politics. She came to symbolise a whole era of Victorian values.

Rene Descartes: French philosopher, coined "I think, therefore I am" (1596 - 1650)

Richard Nixon: 37th U.S. president, involved in Watergate (1913 - 1994)

Richard Wagner: German composer, wrote "Der Ring Des Nibelungen" (1813 - 1883)

Robert E. Lee: Confederate General during the U.S. Civil War (1807 - 1870)

Rosa Luxemburg (1870-1919) – A leading Marxist revolutionary, Rosa

Luxemburg sought to bring Social revolution to Germany. She wrote fiercely against German imperialism and for international socialism. In 1919, she was murdered after a failed attempt to bring about a Communist revolution in Germany.

Rosa Parks (1913-2005) – Rosa Parks refusal to give up her bus seat to a white man indirectly led to some of the most significant civil rights legislation of American history. She sought to play down her role in the civil rights struggle but for her peaceful and dignified campaigning she became one of the most well respected figures in the civil rights movements.

Saint Peter: Early Christian leader (?-?)

Sappho (c 570 BC) One of the first published female writers. Much of her poetry has been lost but her immense reputation has remained. Plato referred to Sappho as one of the great 10 poets.

Shirin Ebadi (1947-) An Iranian lawyer, Ebadi has fought for human rights in Iran – representing political dissidents and founding initiatives to promote democracy and human rights. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003.

Sigmund Freud: neurologist and creator of psychoanalysis (1856 - 1939)

Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) – One of the leading existentialist philosophers of the Twentieth Century, Simone de Beauvoir developed a close personal and intellectual relationship with Jean Paul Satre. Her book "The Second Sex" depicted the traditions of sexism that dominated society and history. It was a defining book for the feminist movement.

Socrates: Greek philosopher and teacher, sentenced to death by hemlock (469 - 399 B.C.)

St Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) – Spanish mystic, poet and Carmelite reformer. St Teresa of Avila lived through the Spanish inquisition but avoided been placed on trial despite her mystical revelations. She helped to reform the tradition of Catholicism and steer the religion away from fanaticism.

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) – Campaigner against slavery and for the promotion of women's and workers' rights. She began campaigning within the temperance movement and this convinced her of the necessity for women to have the vote. She toured the

US giving countless speeches on the subjects of human rights.

Tegla Loroupe (1973 –) Loroupe held the women's marathon world record and won many prestigious marathons. Since retiring from running, she has devoted herself to various initiatives promoting peace, education and women's rights. In her native Kenya, her Peace Race and Peace Foundation have been widely praised for helping to end tribal conflict.

Theodore Roosevelt: 26th U.S. president, Progressive Movement (1858 - 1919)

Thomas Aquinas: Italian theologian, "Summa theologiae" (1225 - 1274)

Thomas Edison: Inventor of the light bulb and phonograph (1847 - 1931)

Thomas Jefferson: 3rd U.S. president, co-wrote the Declaration of Independence (1743 - 1826)

Ulysses S. Grant: 18th U.S. president and Civil War general (1822 - 1885)

Vincent Van Gogh: Post-impressionist painter, painted "Starry Night" (1853 - 1890)

Vladimir Lenin: Soviet revolutionary and Premier of USSR (1870 - 1924)

Voltaire: French Enlightenment philosopher, wrote "Candidate" (1694 - 1778)

Wangari Maathai (1940 – 2011) Kenyan born environmentalist, pro-democracy activist and women's rights campaigner. Awarded Nobel Peace Prize for efforts to prevent conflict through protection of scarce resources.

William Shakespeare: English playwright, wrote "Hamlet" (1564 - 1616)

William the Conqueror: King of England, Norman Conquest (1027 - 1087)

Winston Churchill: Prime Minister of Britain, involved in World War II (1874 - 1965)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Austrian composer, wrote "Don Giovanni" (1756 - 1791)

Woodrow Wilson: 28th U.S. President, involved in World War I (1856 - 1924)