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[History and Government](http://www.infoplease.com/history.html) > [World History](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001196.html)

**Millennium Milestones**

**The 100 Most Significant Events of the Last Thousand Years**

Reducing the millennium to a laundry list of highlights cannot pretend to be a definitive or accurate exercise. Note that only events judged to have *world* significance are included. Apologies for the inevitable bias toward Western as well as twentieth century events—we are all prisoners of our own history. For a less whirlwind glance at the last thousand years, see our [Millennium Timeline](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/A0777090).

* **1066—**[Norman Conquest](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE037547) of Britain
* **1095—**Pope Urban II calls for the [Crusades](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE013403)
* **1100s—**[Angkor Wat](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE002177) is built
* **1206—**[Genghis Khan](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE026804) begins creation of largest land empire in history
* **1215—**[Magna Carta](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE032152) signed
* **1260—**[Chartres Cathedral](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE010320) consecrated
* **1271—**[Marco Polo](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE041555) begins travels to Asia
* **1273—**[Thomas Aquinas](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE051617)'s *Summa theologica*
* **1300s—**[Renaissance](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE043724) begins in Italy
* **1347—**[Bubonic plague](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE041211) (Black Death) spreads in Europe
* **c.1387—**[Chaucer](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE010359)'s *Canterbury Tales*
* **1399—**[Tamerlane](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE050735) begins last great conquest
* **1438—**[Incan Empire](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE025422) formed in Peru
* **1455—**[Gutenberg](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE022345)'s movable-type printing press produces the Bible
* **1492—**[Columbus](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE011993) reaches the New World
* **1509—**[Michelangelo](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE034242) begins painting Sistine Chapel
* **1513—**[Machiavelli](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE031927)'s *The Prince*
* **1517—**[Martin Luther](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE031634) initiates Reformation
* **1519—**[Aztec Empire](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE003928) at height as Spanish arrive
* **1520—**[Suleiman I](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE050046) “the Magnificent” presides over the Ottoman Empire's greatest period
* **1522—**[Magellan](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE032132)'s expedition circumnavigates the globe
* **1543—**[Copernicus](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE012634) postulates a [heliocentric universe](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE012633)
* **1582—**[Pope Gregory XIII](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE021913) reforms [calendar](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE008522)
* **1603—**[Shakespeare](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE047236)'s *Hamlet*
* **1605—**[Cervantes](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE009923)'s *Don Quixote,* first modern novel
* **1609—**[Galileo](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE019961) makes first astronomical observations with a telescope
* **1637—**[Descartes](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE014597) publishes *Discours de la méthode*
* **1643—**[Taj Mahal](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE050651) completed
* **1664—**[Newton](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE037094)'s theory of universal [gravitation](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE021671)
* **1667—**[Milton](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE034505)'s *Paradise Lost*
* **1684—**[Leibniz](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE030138)'s [calculus](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE008501) published
* **1690—**[Locke](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE031038)'s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
* **1721—**[Bach](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE004006) completes the Brandenburg Concertos
* **1755—**[Johnson](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE027172)'s *Dictionary of the English Language*
* **1760—**[Industrial Revolution](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE025582) begins in England
* **1762—**[Rousseau](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE044879)'s *The Social Contract*
* **1764—**[Mozart](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE035736) (aged eight) writes first symphony
* **1769—**[Watt](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE055121) patents first practical [steam engine](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE049445)
* **1776—**U.S. [Declaration of Independence](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE014245); [Adam Smith](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE048266)'s *Wealth of Nations*
* **1787—**[U.S. Constitution](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE012456) signed
* **1789—**[French Revolution](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE019544) begins
* **1792—**[Wollstonecraft](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE056203)'s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
* **1796—**[Jenner](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE026811) discovers [smallpox vaccine](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE048247)
* **1808—**[Beethoven](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE005202)'s *Fifth Symphony*
* **1815—**Battle of Waterloo crushes [Napoleon](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE036313)
* **1819—**[Bolívar](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE006666) defeats Spanish forces at Boyacá
* **1826—**Niepce takes first [photograph](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE040769)
* **1833—**[Slavery abolished](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE048171) in British Empire
* **1842—**Long uses [first anesthetic](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE002145) (ether)
* **1859—**[Darwin](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE014002)'s *On the Origin of Species;*Lenoir builds first practical internal-combustion engine
* **1862—**[Pasteur](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE039716)'s experiments lead to germ theory; Salon des Refusés introduces [impressionism](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE025405)
* **1867—**Japan ends 675-year [shogun rule](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE047608)
* **1876—**[Bell](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE005318) patents the telephone
* **1879—**[Edison](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE016265) invents electric light
* **1880s—**Europe colonizes [African continent](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE000696)
* **1885—**World's [first skyscraper](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE048148) built in Chicago
* **1893—**[New Zealand](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE037144) becomes first country in the world to grant [women the vote](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE056216)
* **1895—**Lumiére brothers introduce [motion pictures](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE035618); [Marconi](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE032807) sends first radio signals
* **1897—**Herzl launches [Zionist movement](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE057114)
* **1900—**[Freud](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE019583)'s *Interpretation of Dreams*
* **1903—**[Wright brothers](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE056412) fly first motorized airplane
* **1905—**[Einstein](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE016420) announces theory of relativity
* **1907—**[Picasso](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE040846)'s *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*introduces cubism
* **1911—**[Rutherford](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE045148) discovers structure of atom
* **1913—**[Ford](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE018905) develops first moving [assembly line](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE003358)
* **1914—**[World War I](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE056344) begins
* **1916—**[Sanger](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE045891) founds international [birth control movement](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE006139)
* **1917—**[Lenin](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE006139) leads the [Bolshevik](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE006690) Revolution
* **1918—**Global [“Spanish flu” epidemic](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE025618)
* **1922—**[Joyce](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE027364)'s *Ulysses* published
* **1927—**[Farnsworth](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE017947) demonstrates working model of a [television](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE051115); [Lemaitre](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/A0829349) proposes [big bang theory](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE012889)
* **1928—**[Fleming](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE018643) discovers [penicillin](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE040074)
* **1929—**[Hubble](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE024681) proposes [theory of expanding universe](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE024682); U.S. stock market crash precipitates global depression
* **1936—**[Keynes](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE028233)'s *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*
* **1939—**[Hitler](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE024034) invades Poland; [World War II](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE056351) begins
* **1942—**Nazi leaders at [Wannsee Conference](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/A0001286) coordinate [“final solution to the Jewish question”](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE024213)
* **1945—**[Atomic bombs](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE003546) are dropped on [Hiroshima](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE023995) and [Nagasaki](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE036180); [first electronic computer](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE012184), ENIAC, is built;[Arab League](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE002693) launches modern [pan-Arabism](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE002693)
* **1946—**First meeting of [U.N. General Assembly](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE053332); [Churchill](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE011086)'s “Iron Curtain” speech marks beginning of [cold war](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE011800)
* **1947—**[Gandhi](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE020067)'s civil disobedience movement leads to an independent India
* **1949—**Communist victory in [China](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/A0107411) under [Mao Zedong](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE032718)
* **1950s—**[Abstract expressionism](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE000235) introduced
* **1953—**Watson, Crick, and Franklin discover [DNA's structure](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE037869)
* **1954—**[*Brown* v. *Board of Education*](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE007737) begins unraveling of [U.S. racial segregation](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE025753)
* **1957—**Russia launches [first satellite,](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE048892)*Sputnik I*
* **1959—**[Mary and Louis Leakey](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE029971) uncover [hominid fossils](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE038329)
* **1969—**Armstrong and Aldrin [walk on the Moon](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE048892); [Internet](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/A0193167) (ARPA) goes online
* **1980—**[Smallpox](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE048247) eradicated
* **1981—**Scientists identify [AIDS](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE000914)
* **1989—**[Fall of Communism](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE012108) in Eastern Europe
* **1991—**[Breakup of Soviet Union](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE012108); [apartheid ends](http://www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/id/CE002520) in South Africa

Link to more recent events:

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