1980

- Italian semiotics professor Umberto Eco publishes his medieval detective novel, *The Name of the Rose*.
- The Church of England replaces the Book of Common Prayer, used in services since 1569, with the Alternative Service Book.
- On January 6, voters reelect Indira Gandhi prime minister of India.
- On February 27, France announces the sale of weapons-grade uranium and a nuclear reactor to Iraq.
- On March 24, human rights activist Archbishop Oscar A. Romero is murdered in El Salvador.
- In April, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) raises the price of a barrel of crude oil to thirty-two dollars.
- On April 12, Samuel K. Doe leads a military coup in deposing President William R. Tolbert in Liberia.
- On April 17, Donald A. Henderson, Johns Hopkins University physician and head of the World Health Organization campaign against smallpox, announces its eradication.
- On April 18, Zimbabwe, formerly known as Rhodesia, gains independence after years of civil war.
- From April 21 to September 26, a total of 125,262 Cubans flee to the U.S. to escape poverty and repression.
- On April 24, U.S. forces fail to rescue the fifty-two hostages held by Islamic revolutionaries in Iran.
- In May, Ian Curtis, lead singer of the British rock group Joy Division commits suicide.
- On May 20, Quebec citizens vote against independence, remaining part of Canada.
- On June 6, physicists Luis Alvarez and Walter Alvarez (father and son) propose that the collision of an asteroid with Earth caused the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.
- On June 26, France announces the test of a neutron bomb.
- On June 27, Canada’s House of Commons adopts “O, Canada” as the national anthem.
- On July 5, Swede Bjorn Borg beats American John McEnroe to win the Wimbledon tennis championship. The two battled through five sets for three hours and fifty-three minutes.
- On July 14, the American Defense Intelligence Agency (ADIA) announces that its members believe that South Africa exploded an atomic bomb in September 1979.
- On July 18, India launches its first staged rocket.
- On August 14, Polish shipyard workers in Gdansk strike to protest a rise in meat prices.
- On August 19, Willy Russell performs his play *Educating Rita* at London’s Piccadilly Theatre following its opening at the Warehouse Theatre.
- On August 20, the Soviet Union, in response to continuing unrest in the East Bloc, jams western radio broadcasts in violation of the 1975 Helsinki accords.
- From September 4 to September 22, Iraqi planes and ten thousand troops attack Iranian airfields in the Shatt al Arab estuary, escalating border conflicts and beginning an eight-year war between Iran and Iraq.
- On September 17, gunmen assassinate former Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle in Asunción, Paraguay.
- On October 1, the European Economic Community (EEC) bans the use of growth hormones (steroids) in cattle feed.
Chronology of Selected World Events Outside the United States, 1980–1989

1981

- On October 4, a bomb explosion outside a Paris synagogue kills four, injures ten, and raises fear of neo-Nazi activities in France.
- In December, British unemployment reaches 2.5 million, the highest since 1935.
- On December 8, Polish-born poet Czeslaw Milosz receives the Nobel Prize in literature.

- Physicians diagnose eight cases of Kaposi’s Sarcoma, a rare cancer, in young gay men in New York City. These cases are the first that physicians document in what will become the Auto Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic.
- On January 17, Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos ends eight years of martial law and calls for free elections.
- On January 20, the day of U.S. president Ronald Reagan’s inauguration, the United States releases almost $8 billion in Iranian assets, and Iran releases the fifty-two American diplomats held hostage for 444 days.
- On January 23, the Reagan administration suspends U.S. financial aid to the revolutionary Sandinista government of Nicaragua, charging that Nicaragua, with the aid of Cuba and the Soviet Union, is supplying arms to rebels in El Salvador.
- In February, the U.S. presidential administration of Ronald Reagan resumes grain exports to the Soviet Union and agrees that the United States will not suspend grain shipments in the future.
- In March, Spain legalizes divorce.
- On May 5, Irish nationalist Bobby Sands dies following a sixty-five-day hunger strike which Sands had hoped would gain worldwide sympathy for Irish independence.
- On May 6, the Reagan administration, accusing Libya of supporting terrorism, closes the Libyan embassy in Washington, D.C.
- On May 10, voters elect Socialist Party leader François Mitterrand president of France.
- On May 13, Pope John Paul II survives an assassination attempt in Rome, Italy by a Bulgarian-trained Turk.
- On June 7, Israeli jets destroy Iraq’s Osirak nuclear reactor to prevent Iraqi production of plutonium.
- On June 22, Iranian president Abolhassan Bani-Sadr is removed from office and flees to France.
- On June 28, Islamic Republican Party chief Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, along with four aides, is killed in Teheran.
- On July 1, dramatist Nell Dunn premieres the play Steaming at London’s Theatre Royal, Stratford East.
- On July 17, Britain completes the 4,626-foot Humber Bridge at Hull, the world’s longest suspension bridge.
- On July 24, U.S. envoy Philip C. Habib negotiates a cease-fire following clashes between Israeli and Palestinian forces in Lebanon.

1982

- British actor Ben Kingsley plays the lead in British director Richard Attenborough’s Gandhi.
- Italian tenor Placido Domingo stars in Italian director Franco Zeffirelli’s movie version of Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi’s opera La Traviata.
- A census reveals that China’s population exceeds one billion.
- On March 1, two unmanned Soviet probes land on Venus, surviving long enough to transmit data on its soil and atmosphere.
- On March 23, the military overthrows the dictatorship of General Romeo Lucas Garcia in Guatemala.
- On April 1, Panama takes over the Panama Canal Area under the terms of a 1977 treaty with the United States.
- On April 2, Argentina invades the Falkland Islands in the southern Atlantic Ocean, over which it and Britain each claim possession.
- On April 12, Great Britain blockades the Falkland Islands in response to Argentina’s invasion of the islands.
• On April 17, Queen Elizabeth II of Britain signs the Constitution Act in Ottawa, Canada, replacing the North American Act of 1867 with a constitution that acknowledges Canadian autonomy.
• On April 21, Israeli forces destroy Palestinian strongholds in southern Lebanon from which members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) have launched guerrilla attacks.
• On April 25, Israel withdraws its last troops from the Sinai Peninsula under terms of the 1978 Camp David Accords and the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.
• On May 4, South African playwright Athol Fugard debuts Master Harold . . . and the Boys at New York City’s Lyceum Theater.
• On May 14, British forces storm the Falkland Islands to reclaim them from Argentina.
• On May 24, Iranian forces retake the port city of Khormasahr, seizing thirty thousand Iraqi prisoners.
• On June 3, terrorists wound the Israeli ambassador to Great Britain in London.
• On June 6, Israel invades Lebanon to destroy PLO sanctuaries.
• On June 14, Argentinean troops in the Falkland Islands surrender to the British.
• In July, Italy defeats West Germany, 3-1, to win the World Cup in international soccer competition.
• On July 17, doctors admit their inability to identify the cause of a new disease known as acquired severe immunodeficiency disease (AIDS).
• On July 27, Israeli jets bomb West Beirut, killing 120 and injuring 232.
• On August 20, Mexico defaults on its $60 billion foreign debt, the first of several Third World nations to do so.
• On August 29, two British explorers complete a three-year circumnavigation of the globe by way of both the North and South poles.
• On August 30, British anthropologist Richard Leakey, son of Louis S. B and Mary Leakey, and a team of anthropologists report the discovery in Kenya of a humanlike jawbone 8 million years old.
• On September 14, a bomb kills Christian Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel, the president-elect of Lebanon.
• On September 16, Christian Phalangist militiamen massacre Palestinian civilians in refugee camps in West Beirut.
• On October 1, the Christian Democrats defeat the Socialists in West German elections.
• On October 29, Spanish voters elect Socialist leader Felipe González as prime minister.
• On November 5, Brazil and Paraguay complete construction of the sluice gates on the Itaipu Dam, the world’s largest hydroelectric project.
• On November 10, Soviet Communist Party Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev dies after seventeen years in power in the Soviet Union. Former KGB head Yuri V. Andropov succeeds him.
• On November 16, dramatist Tom Stoppard debuts The Real Thing at London’s Strand Theatre.

1983

• The “New Romantic” style of British pop music, exemplified by artists such as A Flock of Seagulls, Duran Duran, and Culture Club, is popular in the United States and Europe.
• On March 9, dramatist Caryl Churchill premieres the play Fen at London’s Almeida Theatre.
• On March 22, the German magazine Stern reveals the existence of what it claims to be Adolf Hitler’s diaries. Scholars expose the diaries as a hoax.
• On March 30, dramatist Ray Cooney premieres the play Run for Your Wives, at London’s Shaftesbury Theatre.
• On April 18, terrorists bomb the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, killing sixty-three people to punish the United States for supporting Israel.
• On May 11, the newly discovered IRAS-Araki-Alcock comet comes within 2.9 million miles of Earth, the closest a comet has come since 1770.
• In July, Australia strips the United States of the America’s Cup for the first time since 1851 when the Australia II defeats Liberty, four races to three, in international sailboat racing.
• On August 6, the oil tanker Castillo de Bellver catches fire, spilling 250,000 tons of oil off the coast of Cape Town, South Africa.
• On August 21, Philippine senator Benigno S. Aquino returns to Manila after two years in exile to organize opposition to President Ferdinand Marcos.
• On August 29, mortar shells kill two and wound thirteen U.S. marines at their compound at the Beirut, Lebanon, airport.
• In September, Soviet haulers quit fishing the Aral Sea, once the source of 10 to 15 percent of their freshwater catch.
• On September 1, a Korean Air Lines Boeing 747 strays into Soviet airspace above Sakhalin Island in the north Pacific. A Soviet jet shoots it down, killing all 269 passengers.
• On September 15, Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin resigns. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir succeeds him.
• On September 21, David Mamet’s study of greed, Glengarry Glen Ross, opens at London’s Cottesloe Theatre.
• On October 8, the Metropolitan Teien Art Museum opens in Tokyo, Japan.
• On October 9, North Korean terrorists destroy a ceremonial mausoleum in Rangoon, Burma, killing nineteen and wounding forty-nine in an attempt to assassinate South Korean president Chun Doo Hwan.
Chronology of Selected World Events Outside the United States, 1980–1989

1984

- Famine and drought in sub-Saharan Africa kill three hundred thousand.
- On January 1, France receives its first delivery of Soviet natural gas from the new European-Soviet pipeline.
- On January 4, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that AIDS can spread through heterosexual intercourse.
- On January 18, terrorists kill American University president Malcolm H. Kerr in Beirut, Lebanon.
- In February, Japan endures a scare as extortionists claim to have poisoned candy.
- On February 10, the Soviet Union and China sign a $1.2 billion trade agreement.
- On March 16, South Africa and Mozambique sign a peace accord, the first between South Africa’s white government and a black nation.
- On March 27, Starlight Express, a musical featuring roller skating, debuts at London’s Apollo Theatre.
- On April 4, Michael Frayn debuts Benefactors at London’s Vaudeville Theatre.
- On April 21, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms reports that French researchers have identified a virus thought to cause AIDS.
- In May, French sculptor Jean Dubuffet unveils his Monument with Standing Beast before the new State of Illinois building in Chicago.
- In May, voters elect Junta leader and political moderate José Napoleón Duarte president of El Salvador.
- In June, British pop star Bob Geldof organizes Band Aid, a high-profile pop music charity for African famine victims.
- From June 5 to June 6, Indian efforts to expel Sikh separatists from the Golden Temple at Amritsar cause a riot that kills six hundred to twelve hundred people.
- On June 30, Canadian prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau resigns and calls for national elections.
- On August 3, the African nation of Upper Volta changes its name to Burkina Faso.
- On August 22, British anthropologist Richard Leakey and American anthropologist Alan Walker announce the discovery in Kenya of eighteen-million-year-old bones of what they believe to be the common ancestor of humans and the African apes.
- On August 29, the World Court denounces the U.S. mining of Nicaraguan harbors as a violation of international law.
- On September 4, the Progressive Conservative Party wins 211 of 282 seats in the House of Commons in Canadian national elections.
- On September 14, no party earns a majority of votes in Israeli elections. The Knesset agrees to a coalition government headed first by Labor leader Shimon Peres, then by Likud head Yitzhak Shamir.
- In October, a national coal strike cripples mining in Britain.
- On October 1, Sikh extremists among her own bodyguards assassinate Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi. Her son Rajiv, succeeds her and wins the ministry in his own right by year’s end.
- On October 19, the Polish security police murder pro-Solidarity priest Jerzy Popieluszko.
- On October 20, Beijing, China, allows businesses to seek profit for the first time since the communist revolution in 1949.
- On November 15, Chilean police arrest thirty-two thousand suspects in the Santiago slum of La Victoria and hold them in a soccer stadium for questioning after demonstrations against dictator Augusto Pinochet.
- On November 19, a natural gas explosion in Mexico City kills five hundred people.
- In December, Great Britain’s Thatcher government privatizes its telephone service.
- On December 3, the Union Carbide insecticide plant in Bhopal, India, leaks poison gas, killing two thousand and injuring two hundred thousand.
- On December 11, Archbishop Desmond Tutu receives the Nobel Peace Prize.
- On December 19, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain and Premier Zhao Ziyang of China sign an agreement in Beijing to transfer Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997.
- On December 21, gunmen seize two Merrill Lynch couriers in Montreal, Canada, and escape with $51.3 million in securities.
1985

- British author D. H. Lawrence is enshrined in Poet’s Corner at London’s Westminster Abbey.
- On February 4, New Zealand refuses to allow a U.S. warship into its waters on the grounds that the ship carries nuclear arms.
- On February 17, British scientists report the existence of a “hole” in the ozone layer over Antarctica.
- In March, orchestras throughout the world sponsor Bach festivals to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of German composer Johann Sebastian Bach’s birthday.
- On March 13, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain commissions a group to study the problem of violence at soccer games following two widely publicized soccer riots.
- On May 1, President Ronald Reagan of the United States ends trade with Nicaragua, denouncing the Sandinista regime as a threat to U.S. security.
- On May 29, a soccer riot at the European Cup Finals in Brussels, Belgium, collapses a platform, killing thirty-eight.
- On July 10, the French secret service bombs the antinuclear protest ship _Rainbow Warrior_ in Auckland harbor, New Zealand.
- On July 20, South Africa declare an indefinite state of emergency, the first in twenty-five years in response to racial violence.
- On August 17, in the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq attacks the Iranian oil terminal of Kharg Island with French Exocet missiles.
- On September 1, explorer Robert D. Ballard, leading a joint French-U.S. team, discovers the wreck of the _Titanic_ in the Atlantic Ocean five hundred miles south of Newfoundland.
- On September 13, Saudi Arabian oil minister Ahmad Zaki Yamani announces an oil discount, reducing oil prices for the next six months.
- On October 7, terrorists hijack the Italian cruise ship _Achille Lauro_ in the Mediterranean Sea and kill an American passenger the next day.
- On October 8, _Les Misérables_ debuts at London’s Palace Theatre.
- In November, British anthropologist Richard Leakey and American anthropologist Alan Walker make what biochemist and historian of paleoanthropology Roger Lewin dubbed the discovery the Turkana Boy because Leakey and Walker had found it near Lake Turkana, Kenya, and because the remains were of a nine-year-old boy, Leakey and Walker estimated.
- On November 3, Tanzanian president Julius K. Nyerere, who led his nation to independence, resigns after twenty-one years in power. Vice President Ali Hassan Mwinyi succeeds him.
- On November 9, Soviet chess master Gary Kasparov defeats world chess master Anatoly Karpov in Moscow.
- On November 11, Nicaraguan Sandinista president Daniel Ortega Saaavedra rejects a peace plan of the Contradora (neutral Latin American) nations, citing the absence of a provision to forbid U.S. military maneuvers in the region.
- On December 21, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbatchev and President Ronald Reagan of the United States meet for a summit on foreign affairs.
- On December 25, the musical _Black and Blue_, featuring vaudeville songs from the 1920s and 1930s, debuts at Paris’s Chatelet theater.
- On December 9, French novelist Claude Simon receives the Nobel Prize in literature.
- On December 10, Italian-born Franco Modigliani receives the Nobel Prize in economics.
- On December 27, terrorists kill eighteen and injure 111 at airports in Rome, Italy and Vienna, Austria.
- On December 30, Pakistani president General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq declares an end to eight and one-half years of martial law.

1986

- On January 1, President Ronald Reagan of the United States and Soviet general secretary Mikhail Gorbatchev exchange New Year’s greetings televised in the United States and Soviet Union.
- On January 6, General Samuel K. Doe is inaugurated as president of Liberia.
- On February 6, Haitian President-for-Life Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier, thirty-four, flies to France following a week of protests.
- On February 11, the U.S.S.R. frees Russian dissident Anatoly Shcharansky in an East-West prisoner exchange.
- On February 26, engineers complete the Annacis Bridge in Vancouver, British Columbia, the world’s longest cable-stayed bridge.
- On February 26, Philippine ruler Ferdinand Marcos flies to Hawaii after ten days of protest against election fraud.
- In March, Argentinean director Luis Puenzo’s _La historia oficial_ (The Official Story), wins an Oscar for best foreign film.
- On March 4, former United Nations secretary-general Kurt Waldheim wins election as president of Austria despite evidence he had been a Nazi during World War II.
Chronology of Selected World Events Outside the United States, 1980–1989

- On March 7, President Pieter W. Botha of South African lifts martial law in effect in black districts since 1985.
- On March 14, the European Space Agency’s Giotto spacecraft passes within 335 miles of the core of Halley’s Comet.
- On March 15, voters elect Paris mayor Jacques Chirac to head a Conservative Parliament and share power with Socialist president François Mitterrand, who has been in power since 1981.
- On April 5, a terrorist bombing at a West Berlin discotheque kills two people, including a U.S. serviceman, and injures 230.
- On April 10, the U.S. government warns consumers not to drink Italian wine after some twenty people die in Italy from drinking wine contaminated with methanol.
- On April 13, Pope John Paul II visits Rome’s main synagogue in what may be the first papal visit to a Jewish temple.
- On April 14, the Anglican Church appoints civil rights leader Desmond Tutu Archbishop of South Africa.
- On April 15, the United States bombs the Tripoli and Benghazi headquarters of Libyan leader Mu’ammar Gadhafi to punish Libya’s bombing a West Berlin discotheque.
- On April 18, South Africa repeals laws that had restricted the movement of blacks.
- On April 26, an accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant near Kiev, Ukraine, releases a radioactive cloud into the atmosphere.
- In May, an international commission names the AIDS virus the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- On May 1, nearly 1.5 million South Africans protest apartheid in the nation’s largest strike.
- On May 24, Margaret Thatcher begins a three-day visit to Israel, the first by a British prime minister.
- On May 27, the United States agrees to comply with the 1979 Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, suspended since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
- On June 12, South Africa again declares a state of emergency in anticipation of protests to mark the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising.
- On June 24, Margaret Thatcher begins a three-day visit to Israel, the first by a British prime minister.
- On June 26, an international commission names the AIDS virus the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- On July 26, Shiite Muslim terrorists release American priest Lawrence Jenco from captivity in Lebanon following a Reagan administration secret arms trade to Iran.
- On August 18, the Soviet Union announces it will continue its moratorium on nuclear testing, which had expired on August 6.
- From August 21 to August 26, volcanic explosions release toxic gas, killing fifteen hundred to seventeen hundred people in Cameroon.
- On September 11, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel meet in the first summit between the nations in five years.
- On September 16, the European Economic Community (ECC) issues economic sanctions against South Africa for oppressing blacks.
- In October, French physicians begin trials of the abortion drug, RU 486.
- On October 5, Nicaragua shoots down a U.S. cargo plane carrying arms and captures the pilot, Eugene Hasenfus of Wisconsin.
- On October 7, a politically neutral daily, The Independent, begins publication in London.
- On October 9, Andrew Lloyd Weber debuts the musical The Phantom of the Opera, starring Michael Crawford, at London’s Majesty Theatre.
- On October 12, President Ronald Reagan of the United States offers Soviet general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev complete nuclear disarmament at a summit in Reykjavík, Iceland.
- On October 14, holocaust survivor and human rights activist Elie Wiesel wins the Nobel Peace Prize.
- On October 21, British playwright Hugh Whitemore debuts Breaking the Code, at London’s Haymarket Theater.
- On November 30, Punjabi extremists hijack a public bus in India and kill twenty-two Hindus.
- On November 1, a fire at the Sandoz pharmaceutical warehouse in Switzerland discharges one thousand tons of toxic chemicals into the Rhine River, killing millions of fish and contaminating the water.
- On November 2, Shiite extremists in Lebanon exchange American University administrator David Jacobsen for U.S. weapons.
- On November 5, Soviet general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev visits India, the first by a Soviet leader since 1980.
- On November 28, the United States violates the 1979 Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty with the Soviet Union by deploying a B-52 bomber capable of carrying cruise missiles.
- On November 30, Punjabi extremists hijack a public bus in India and kill twenty-two Hindus.
- On December 8, Prime Minister Jacques Chirac of France withdraws a bill to reform French universities following more than two weeks of student protests.
- On December 17, Nicaragua releases American pilot Eugene Hasenfus whom it had held since October 5.
- On December 20, some fifty thousand students march for democracy in Shanghai, China.

1987

- A Sicilian Mafia trial ends in prison sentences for 338 of 432 defendants charged with heroin trafficking.
On December 31, the United States protests the release of
Mexican drug lord Jorge Luis Ochoa from a Colombian prison.
On December 17, Milos Jakes, a Gorbachev-style reformer, becomes prime minister of Czechoslovakia.
On December 16, voters elect Roh Tae Woo, whom South Koreans call the "Great pumpkin", president of the country.
On December 11, President Oscar Arias Sanchez of Costa Rica wins the Nobel Peace Prize.
On December 7, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev arrives in Moscow to preside over the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
On November 9, a bomb explosion in Colombo, Sri Lanka, kills thirty-two and injures more than seventy.
On October 27, dramatist Peter Shaffer premieres the play Lettice and Lovage, starring Maggie Smith, at London's Globe Theater.
On October 2, Great Britain begins tests of the French abortion pill, RU 486.
On October 3, Canada and the United States sign a free-trade agreement.
On October 27, dramatist Peter Shaffer premieres the play Lettice and Lovage, starring Maggie Smith, at London's Globe Theater.
On October 1, Nicaragua's anti-Sandinista newspaper, La Prensa, resumes publication.
On September 24, France and China allow the public to use the abortion pill, RU 486.
On December 1, voters elect Benazir Bhutto, daughter of former prime minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, prime minister of Pakistan.
On December 5, the West German environmental ministry confirms a U.S. report of an accident at a nuclear power plant near Frankfurt in December 1987.
On December 8, Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz receives the Nobel Prize in literature.
On December 21, a Pan Am 747 explodes in midair over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 passengers and eleven people on the ground.

1988

- Iranian novelist Salman Rushdie's satire, The Satanic Verses, incenses Muslim readers with alleged "blasphemies".
- Italian novelist Umberto Eco publishes the mystery Foucault's Pendulum.
- Floods in Bangladesh—the worst in seventy years—kill thousands and leave millions homeless.
- In January, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip launch an intifada (uprising) against Israeli occupation of Palestine.
- On January 28, the Canadian Supreme Court overturns a law restricting abortion.
- On February 5, a U.S. grand jury indicts Panamanian dictator and one-time CIA informant General Manuel Noriega on charges of accepting bribes from drug traffickers.
- On March 16, Iraqi troops kill four thousand to twelve thousand Kurdish civilians with poison gas in the town of Halabja.
- On April 14, the Soviet Union announces it will begin to withdraw from Afghanistan on May 17.
- In July, the U.S. Stars and Stripes successfully defends the America's Cup against New Zealand.
- On July 1, delegates to a Communist conference in Moscow endorse Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms, including transfer of power to a democratically elected legislature.
- On July 3, the U.S. warship Vincennes mistakes an Iran Air A300 Airbus for an attacking plane and shoots it down, killing all aboard.
- On July 8, French voters reelect President François Mitterrand.
- On July 13, Peace talks among Angola, South Africa, and Cuba end fighting in Angola and Namibia.
- On July 20, Iran and Iraq cease fire after nearly eight years of war.
- In August, Polish workers strike to pressure the government to rescind its ban on the union Solidarity.
- On August 18, President General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan and U.S. ambassador Arnold I. Raphel die in a midair explosion of a Pakistani Air Force plane.
- On August 12, the U.S. warship Vincennes mistakes an Iran Air A300 Airbus for an attacking plane and shoots it down, killing all aboard.
- On August 12, Peter Shaffer premieres the play Lettice and Lovage, starring Maggie Smith, at London's Globe Theater.
- On November 9, a bomb explosion in Colombo, Sri Lanka, kills thirty-two and injures more than seventy.
- On December 7, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev arrives in Washington for a three-day summit with President Ronald Reagan of the United States.
- On December 11, President Oscar Arias Sanchez of Costa Rica wins the Nobel Peace Prize.
- On December 16, voters elect Roh Tae Woo, whom South Korean military leader and president Chun Doo-Hwan had chosen to succeed him.
- On December 17, Milos Jakes, a Gorbachev-style reformer, replaces Czech Communist Party leader Gustav Husak, who has ruled for eighteen years.
- On December 31, the United States protests the release of Medellin drug lord Jorge Luis Ochoa from a Colombian prison.
1989

On January 27, the World Health Organization estimates that the number of AIDS cases worldwide will increase from 450,000 to 5 million in 2000.

On February 2 to February 3, the military overthrows Alfredo Stroessner, Paraguay’s dictator for thirty-five years.

On March 26, voters elect Moscow politician Boris N. Yeltsin, who had broken with the Communist Party, leader of the non-communist party.

On March 30, the Louvre Museum in Paris reopens following renovations that feature a glass pyramid entrance designed by architect I. M. Pei.

On April 15, Chinese students meet in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square to mourn the death of Politburo member Hu Yaobang, seventy-three.

On May 7, Panamanians vote to oust Gen. Manuel Noriega, but he ignores their decision.

On May 11, Kenya calls for a worldwide ban on the trade of ivory to protect the African elephant from extinction.

On May 14, Argentine voters elect Peronist leader Carlos Saúl Menem president in the first peaceful transfer of power since 1927.

On May 24, the Exxon Valdez hits a reef in Prince William Sound off the coast of Alaska, spilling ten million gallons of oil.

On June 4, President Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran dies. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani succeeds him.

On June 8, Chinese troops fire on protesters in Tiananmen Square, killing scores and wounding hundreds.

On July 23, Japan’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party, mired in scandal, loses elections for the first time since 1955.

On August 18, the Polish government, following non-Communist victories in June parliamentary elections, forms a cabinet with non-Communist leaders, the first Polish multiparty government in forty years.

On August 23, hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians form a human chain across their three states to demand independence from the Soviet Union.

On September 26, the last Vietnamese troops leave Cambodia after eleven years of occupation.

On October 5 to October 7, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev visits East Germany to celebrate its fortieth anniversary.

On October 7, the Hungarian Communist Party renames itself the Hungarian Socialist Party and renounces communism in favor of democratic socialism.

On October 9, the Supreme Soviet allows workers to strike under limited conditions for the first time since 1917.

On October 19, the British Court of Appeals voids the conviction of the “Guildford Four,” Irish prisoners convicted of 1974 bombings of pubs in Guildford and Woolwich.

On October 23, Hungary declares itself a free republic on the thirty-third anniversary of the 1956 uprising.

On October 28, Czech police disperse ten thousand people in Prague for staging a pro-democracy rally and arrest dissidents, including playwright Vaclav Havel.

On November 3, nine thousand people demonstrate for democracy in Sofia, Bulgaria.

On November 9, East Germany allows citizens to visit the West without visas.

On November 10, President Todor Zhivkov of Bulgaria resigns after eighteen years in power.

On November 11, the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) launches a “final offensive” in its ten-year civil war against the government of El Salvador.


On November 24, the Czechoslovakian Communist Party Presidium, including General Secretary Milos Jakes, resigns en masse.

On November 29, the southern republic of Serbia severs economic ties with the northern republic of Slovenia in Yugoslavia.

On December 1, President Mikhail Gorbachev meets Pope John Paul II at the Vatican, the first meeting between a head of the Soviet Union and the Pope.

On December 3, the entire leadership of East Germany’s ruling Socialist Unity party resigns, including all 163 members of the Central Committee.

On December 10, nearly fifty thousand people demonstrate in Sofia for an end to communist rule in Bulgaria.

On December 10, Norwegian Trygve Haavelmo receives the Nobel Prize in economics.

On December 11, two hundred thousand people demonstrate in Leipzig for the reunification of Germany.

On December 15, demonstrators in Timisoara, Romania, surround a church to prevent the secret police from arresting a popular cleric, Reverend Laszlo Tokes.


On December 20, the Lithuanian Communist Party declares independence from the Soviet Communist Party.

On December 22, Germans celebrate the opening of the Brandenburg Gate between East and West Berlin, symbolically reuniting East and West Germany and ending the Cold War.

On December 29, voters elect dramatist Vaclav Havel president of Czechoslovakia.