



Chronology

c. 75,000 *BCE*:

First specialized stone tools, including spear tips, developed.

c. 50,000 *BCE*:

Homo sapiens sapiens, modern man, appears.

c. 20,000 *BCE*:

Bow and arrow probably developed, although some theories hold that it did not appear until as late as 8,000 *BCE*. Beginning of agriculture as last Ice Age begins to recede.

c. 10,000 *BCE*:

With the full withdrawal of the glaciers, the Holocene period begins. Rise of modern human civilization. Houses of mud brick constructed in the first cities.

c. 8,000 *BCE*:

Earliest known wall constructed around Jericho.

c. 4,000 *BCE*:

Ur and Babylon founded. Sumerians begin to use wheeled vehicles. Around the same time, Central Asian horsemen begin migrating into Central Europe, spreading Indo-European language and belief systems.

c. 3,100 *BCE*:

Cuneiform writing developed in Sumeria.

2,697 *BCE*:

Traditional date of “The Yellow Emperor”, Huang Ti, the legendary first emperor of China, coming to the throne.

c. 2,625 *BCE*:

Egyptian Pharaoh Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid, dies.

c. 2,500 *BCE*:

Bow and arrow first used in warfare.

2,279 *BCE*:

Sumeria and Akkad united under Sargon the Great; first known empire.

c. 1,750 *BCE*:

Code of Hammurabi, a set of laws, established in Babylon.

c. 1,600 *BCE*:

Aryan (Indo-European) invasion of India.

c. 1,500 *BCE*:

Pharaoh Thutmoses III conquers Canaan and Egyptian civilization reaches its greatest point of expansion. Domesticated horses introduced to Egyptian and Chinese civilizations around this time by Central Asian horsemen.

c. 1,200 *BCE*:

Canaan conquered by Hebrews under Joshua.

1,184 *BCE*:

Likely date for historical Trojan War.

c. 1,025 *BCE*:

Unified kingdom of Israel under Saul, David, and Solomon.

c. 900 *BCE*:

Hunting from chariots a favorite sport in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

776 *BCE*:

First recorded Olympic Games.

753 *BCE*:

Date of the traditional founding of Rome.

c. 705 *BCE*:

Assyrian Empire reaches height of power under Sennacherib.

- 701 *BCE*:
Babylon razed by Assyrians. The city will be rebuilt within a generation.
- 671 *BCE*:
Egypt conquered by Assyria.
- c.* 600 *BCE*:
Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Lao-tse, the Hebrew prophets, and Greek philosophers and artists all active around the same time. “Hanging Gardens of Babylon” built. Rome declared a republic.
- 594*BCE*:
Solon pushes through democratic reforms in Athens.
- 529*BCE*:
Rise of Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great.
- 490*BCE*:
Greeks defeat Persians at Battle of Marathon.
- 480*BCE*:
Second Persian invasion of Greece. Battle of Thermopylae. Battle of Salamis.
- 479*BCE*:
Battle of Plataea ends Persian Wars, marks beginning of Greek Golden Age.
- 431*BCE*:
Beginning of Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta.
- 401*BCE*:
Ten thousand Greek mercenaries fight their way home through the heart of the Persian Empire after ending up on the wrong side of a dynastic struggle.
- 390*BCE*:
Rome sacked by invading Gauls.
- 356*BCE*:
Philip II becomes king of Macedon.
- 338*BCE*:
Philip defeats Athenians and Thebans, establishes Macedonian domination of Greece.
- 336*BCE*:
Philip assassinated, succeeded by son Alexander.
- 332*BCE*:
Egypt conquered by Alexander’s army; Alexandria founded.
- 330*BCE*:
Persian Empire totally conquered by Alexander.
- 326*BCE*:
Alexander reaches the Indus River, but is then forced to turn back by generals.
- 323*BCE*:
Death of Alexander.
- 319*BCE*:
Chandragupta Maurya reconquers Macedonian possessions in the Indus Valley and founds the Mauryan dynasty.
- c.* 275*BCE*:
Babylon abandoned.
- 264*BCE*:
Beginning of First Punic War between Rome and Carthage.
- 260*BCE*:
King Asoka of India renounces violence and becomes a Buddhist following a particularly bloody conquest.
- 219*BCE*:
Beginning of Second Punic War between Rome and Carthage.
- 218*BCE*:
Hannibal crosses Alps, defeats Scipio.
- 202*BCE*:
Scipio Africanus defeats Hannibal at Zama.
- 197*BCE*:
Macedon defeated by Rome, Greek city states fall under Roman domination.
- 149*BCE*:
Beginning of Third Punic War.
- 147*BCE*:
Carthage leveled by Scipio the Younger.
- 114*BCE*:
Old Silk Road opens up trade between China and Europe.
- c.* 100 *BCE*:
Great Wall of China completed.
- 71*BCE*:
Slave revolt in Italy led by Spartacus.
- 54*BCE*:
Britain invaded by Julius Caesar; British tribes agree to pay tribute to Rome.
- 50*BCE*:
Julius Caesar completes his conquest of Gaul.
- 49*BCE*:
Caesar crosses Rubicon, begins civil war with Pompey.
- 44*BCE*:
Julius Caesar assassinated.
- 31 *BCE*:
Marc Antony and Cleopatra defeated by Julius Caesar’s appointed heir, Octavian.
- 30*BCE*:
Octavian, retitled Caesar Augustus, becomes first Roman emperor.
- 6*BCE*:
Judea annexed by Rome.
- 4*BCE*:
Probable date of birth of Jesus Christ.

- 9CE: Invading Roman legions destroyed by German tribes at the Battle of Teutoburg Forest.
- 30CE: Probable date of Christ's crucifixion.
- 43CE: Roman invasion of Britain; Londinium founded.
- 60 CE: British queen Boudicca (or Boadicea) leads unsuccessful rebellion against Rome.
- 64 CE: Great Fire of Rome. Christians persecuted on Emperor Nero's orders.
- 70 CE: Jewish Revolt against Rome. Jerusalem destroyed.
- 98 CE: Beginning of Trajan's reign, under whom the Roman Empire will reach its greatest extent.
- c. 110: Paper first used for writing in China.
- 125: Hadrian's Wall built in northern Britain.
- 164: A great plague begins to sweep through the Roman Empire, permanently weakening it.
- c. 200: Bishop of Rome begins to gain papal authority.
- 212: Roman citizenship granted to every free-born subject of the empire.
- 257: Goths invade Black Sea region, Franks invade Spain, Alemanni and Suevi invade Italy.
- 268: Goths sack Athens, Sparta, and Corinth.
- 285: Roman Empire divided into Western and Eastern halves.
- 303: Beginning of last Christian persecutions.
- 306: Constantine the Great becomes Western Roman emperor, then unites the two empires.
- 313: Edict of Milan establishes tolerance of Christians.
- 330: Constantinople founded.
- 337: Constantine baptized a Christian on his deathbed.
- 340: Rome split again into two empires.
- 360: Scrolls begin to be replaced by books. Huns invade Europe. Picts and Scots cross Hadrian's Wall.
- 402: Roman legions withdraw from Britain.
- 410: Rome sacked by Goths led by Alaric. Saxon invasions of Britain begin.
- 411: Saint Augustine writes *City of God*.
- 425: German kingdoms established throughout Western empire.
- 451: Atilla the Hun invades Gaul.
- 453: Atilla dies after ravaging northern Italy and threatening Rome.
- 476: Last Western Roman emperor deposed by barbarian Odoacer; end of Western Empire.
- 507: Frankish kingdom expands under King Clovis.
- 517: Buddhism begins spreading into central China.
- 527: Beginning of the reign of Justinian the Great, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire.
- 535: Eastern general Belisarius destroys Ostrogoth kingdom in Italy. Resurgence of Eastern Roman Empire.
- 543: Europe ravaged by plagues and earthquakes.
- c. 550: The crucifix becomes ornamental art in Constantinople.
- c. 570: Muhammad, founder of Islam, born.
- 587: First Buddhist monastery founded in Japan.
- 614: Persians conquer Damascus and Jerusalem, take the reported True Cross as war booty.
- 616: Persians conquer Egypt.
- 622: The Hegira: Muhammad flees from Mecca to Medina. Year One on the Muslim calendar.
- 633: Arabs invade Persia, conquering Syria and Iraq. Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, all important Christian centers, are also overrun.
- 639: Muslims invade Egypt.
- 641: Persian Empire ceases to exist after Muslim conquest under Omar.
- 649: First naval battles between Byzantines and Arabs. Greek fire is used shortly thereafter.
- 673: First Arab attack on Constantinople.
- 686: Last pagan kingdom in Britain converts to Christianity.
- 697: Arabs destroy Carthage, drive Byzantines out of North Africa.
- 711: Roderic, last king of the Visigoths, defeated by invading Arabs; Spain now almost entirely controlled by Muslims.
- 720: Muslim armies cross the Pyrenees into France, take Narbonne.
- 732: Frankish leader Charles Martel defeats Arabs at battles of Tours and Poitiers, halts westward Arab expansion.
- 771: Charlemagne becomes sole ruler of Frankish kingdom.
- 778: Basques defeat Charlemagne at Battle of Roncesvalles.

- 793: First Viking attack on Britain at Lindisfarne Monastery.
- 800: Charlemagne crowned first Holy Roman Emperor.
- 804: Frankish Empire extends to the Elbe River.
- 812: First paper money issued in China.
- 814: Death of Charlemagne, decline of his Western Empire.
- 817: Charlemagne's successor, Louis the Pious, divides the empire among his three sons.
- 825: Muslim conquest of Sicily begins.
- 838: Arabs sack Marseilles, move into southern Italy.
- 840: Dublin founded by Viking settlers.
- 843: Frankish Empire formally divided into three kingdoms by Treaty of Verdun.
- 846: Arabs sack Rome, plunder the Vatican.
- 850: Vikings establish Rus civilization centered on Kiev. Trading with Constantinople and the Khazars begins.
- 859: Norse raids in the Mediterranean.
- 861: Iceland discovered by Viking sailors.
- 865: Constantinople attacked by Rus Vikings. Norse kingdom of York established in England.
- 871: Danes occupy London. Alfred the Great becomes king of Wessex.
- 878: Alfred defeats Danes at Edington.
- 879: The Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicate each other.
- 890: Alfred the Great establishes an English militia and navy, encourages growth of market towns.
- 895: Magyars under leadership of Arpad enter Hungary.
- 900: Reconquest of Spain begins under Alfonso II of Castile. Greenland discovered by Norse.
- 907: Magyar raids into Germany and Italy.
- 911: Holy Roman Emperor becomes an elected position.
- 939: Revolts against Japanese Emperor set off two-hundred-year period of civil war.
- 955: Magyars and Slavs defeated by Otto of Germany.
- 964: Mayan empire founded.
- 975: Arabic numerals, imported from India, introduced to Europe.
- 1008: Mahmud of Gazni defeats Hindus in India.
- 1013: King Ethelred the Unready flees England, which comes under Danish control.
- 1016: Canute of Denmark assumes English throne upon Ethelred's death.
- 1035: Death of Canute. His empire is divided among his three sons.
- 1041: Movable type invented in China.
- 1066: Harold II crowned in England. Defeats Norse invaders at Stamford bridge on September 25, then is in turn defeated by William of Normandy at Hastings on October 14.
- 1071: Byzantine Emperor Romanus V defeated and captured by Seljuk Turks at Manzikert.
- 1094: Spanish leader El Cid takes Valencia from the Moors.
- 1095: Pope Urban II proclaims the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont.
- 1099: Crusaders take Jerusalem.
- 1145: Pope Eugene III proclaims the Second Crusade.
- 1147: Second Crusade fails.
- 1150: Paper manufacture begins in Spain.
- 1151: Chess arrives in England.
- 1183: Muslim leader Saladin takes Aleppo from Christians.
- 1187: Saladin annihilates Crusader army at Hattin, takes Jerusalem.
- 1189: Richard the Lionheart leads Third Crusade, which fails to retake Jerusalem.
- 1192: Richard completes a truce with Saladin guaranteeing access for Christian pilgrims.
- 1202: Fourth Crusade begins, which conquers Constantinople in 1204 at Venice's behest. The numeral zero is introduced to Europe by Leonardo Fibonacci.
- 1206: Genghis Khan declared chief prince of the Mongols.
- 1208: Beginning of Albigensian Crusade against Cathar heretics in Southern France.
- 1212: Children's Crusade ends with thousands of children sold into slavery.
- 1214: Peking conquered by Genghis Khan.
- 1215: English King John puts his seal on the Magna Carta at Runnymede.
- 1221: First use of shrapnel in bombs by Chinese.
- 1223: Mongols invade Russia.
- 1228: Francis of Assisi canonized.
- 1236: Mongol leader Kublai Khan conquers China.
- 1240: Mongol conquest of Russia completed.
- 1241: Mongols defeat Germans at Battle of Liegnitz, invade Poland and Hungary, then withdraw upon death of Ughetai Khan.

- 1258: Mongols take Baghdad, overthrow Caliphate.
- 1260: Travels of Italian explorer Marco Polo begin.
- 1274: Mongol invasion of Japan turned back by typhoons.
- 1281: Second Mongol invasion fleet once again destroyed by typhoons, which the Japanese call “divine winds”, or *kamikaze*.
- 1288: First known gun made in China.
- 1297: Scottish victory over English at Stirling Bridge.
- 1298: Marco Polo’s account of his journeys is published.
- 1302: First “Estates General” called in France.
- 1314: Scots led by Robert the Bruce rout English army at Battle of Bannockburn.
- 1327: Completion of the 1,100 mile Grand Canal in China.
- 1333: Edward III takes English throne.
- 1337: Beginning of Hundred Years’ War between France and England.
- 1347: Black Death ravages Europe for the next three years. One third of Europe’s population dies.
- 1356: Edward the Black Prince defeats French at Battle of Poitiers, captures King John of France.
- 1363: Warlord Tamerlane begins conquest of Asia.
- 1364: Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan built.
- 1415: English led by King Henry V defeat French at Agincourt.
- 1420: Treaty of Troyes grants Henry V heir apparent status to France, but Henry dies in 1422 before he can take the French crown.
- 1429: French peasant Joan of Arc raises Siege of Orleans. She is captured and burned at the stake two years later.
- 1441: Portugal begins West African slave trade.
- 1448: Ottoman ruler Murad II wins decisive Battle of Kosovo over Serbs.
- 1453: Turks take Constantinople, ending the Byzantine Empire. England and France formally end Hundred Years’ War. England loses all Continental possessions except Calais. Gutenberg prints first bible at Mainz.
- 1455: Wars of the Roses begin in England.
- 1463: Turks conquer Bosnia.
- 1486: Spanish Inquisition begins.
- 1485: Englishman Henry Tudor defeats and kills Richard III, ending the Wars of the Roses. Beginning of Tudor dynasty.
- 1492: Granada, last Muslim kingdom in Spain, conquered by Spanish. Jews given three months to leave the country. Christopher Columbus, financed by Spain, discovers “New World.”
- 1493: Portugal and Spain, with papal support, divide the world between themselves.
- 1495: Leonardo da Vinci begins work on *The Last Supper*.
- 1507: The name “America” first applied to the New World.
- 1508: Michaelangelo begins painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.
- 1517: Martin Luther posts his 95 theses in protest against the Church, beginning the Protestant Reformation. Turks take Cairo.
- 1521: 1521 Turkish leader Suleiman I takes Belgrade, begins moving against Hungary. Aztec nation destroyed by Hernán Cortés.
- 1522: Turkish ruler Suleiman takes Rhodes from the Knights of St. John.
- 1525: Battle of Pavia: first mass use of muskets by Spanish.
- 1526: Sultan Suleiman defeats Hungarians, takes Buda.
- 1529: Turks lay siege to Vienna, but are forced to raise siege.
- 1542: First European contact with Japan.
- 1556: Akbar the Great becomes Mogul emperor.
- 1567: Oda Nobunaga deposes Japanese shogunate.
- 1581: Akbar the Great conquers Afghanistan.
- 1582: In Japan, Toyotomi Hideyoshi assumes power after death of Nobunaga. Pope Gregory reforms the calendar by dropping eleven days in October.
- 1588: Spanish Armada defeated by English.
- 1592: Japanese invasion of Korea fails.
- 1595: English army abandons use of bow in war.
- 1598: Tokugawa Ieyasu restores shogunate in Japan.
- 1600: East India Company founded in England.
- 1611: King James Bible published.
- 1618: The Defenestration of Prague, in which two Imperial Regents are thrown out a window, begins the Thirty Years War.
- 1620: The *Mayflower*, a ship carrying Puritan settlers, leaves England and lands in Massachusetts.
- 1622: Treaty of Montpellier ends Huguenot rebellion in France.
- 1626: Dutch colony of New Amsterdam (New York) founded.

- 1628: Construction of Taj Mahal begins.
- 1646: English Civil War ends with Oliver Cromwell triumphant; King Charles I captured while trying to escape.
- 1648: Peace of Westphalia brings Thirty Years War to end.
- 1649: King Charles I tried by Parliament and executed.
- 1653: Oliver Cromwell named Lord Protector of England.
- 1660: Following death of Cromwell, Parliament invites Charles II to return.
- 1663: Turks invade Transylvania and Hungary.
- 1667: First use of hand grenades.
- 1671: Turks declare war on Poland.
- c. 1680: Dodo extinct.
- 1683: Turks begin siege of Vienna; lifted after three months by Polish army. Greatest extent of Ottoman power in Europe.
- 1688: The “Glorious Revolution” deposes James II of England and brings in William and Mary as king and queen.
- 1690: Calcutta founded by English in India.
- 1692: Beginning of Salem witch trials.
- 1697: Peter the Great of Russia travels Europe in disguise.
- 1700: Great Northern War begins with Saxon invasion of Livonia.
- 1701: War of Spanish Succession begins.
- 1704: Duke of Marlborough wins victory over French and Bavarians at Blenheim.
- 1706: Marlborough conquers Spanish Netherlands.
- 1707: England and Scotland united as Great Britain.
- 1709: Peter the Great defeats Charles XII at Poltava.
- 1739: Sack of Delhi by Persians.
- 1740: Frederick the Great introduces freedom of the press and freedom of worship in Prussia.
- 1756: Britain declares war on France, outbreak of Seven Years War. One hundred British soldiers die in the “Black Hole of Calcutta.” Frederick the Great defeats Saxons.
- 1757: Prussians defeat Austrians at Prague, then are defeated at Kolin, then once again defeat Austrians at Rossback and Leuthen. Robert Clive wins Battle of Plassey in India; beginning of British Empire on the subcontinent.
- 1759: British take Quebec from France.
- 1764: Mozart writes his first symphony at the age of eight.
- 1767: British taxes on American colonies lead to American trade embargo.
- 1775: Battles of Lexington and Concord begin the American Revolution.
- 1783: Revolutionary War ends with Treaty of Paris.
- 1788: French king Louis XVI calls the Estates General for the first time since 1613.
- 1789: Beginning of French Revolution. George Washington sworn in as first American president.
- 1793: In France, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette executed; Reign of Terror begins.
- 1795: Metric system adopted in France.
- 1796: French general Napoleon Bonaparte defeats Austrians.
- 1798: Napoleon campaigns in Italy and Egypt. French fleet destroyed at Alexandria by British captain Horatio Nelson.
- 1799: Napoleon becomes Consul of France.
- 1800: Eli Whitney makes the first muskets with interchangeable parts.
- 1804: Napoleon crowned Emperor in Paris.
- 1805: Austro-Russian forces defeated by Napoleon at Austerlitz.
- 1806: Prussia declares war on France and is defeated at Jena and Auerstadt.
- 1809: British general Arthur Wellesley scores victories against France fighting in Spain.
- 1812: Napoleon invades Russia. Defeats Russians at Borodino and takes Moscow, but is forced to retreat. United States declares war on Britain. Publication of *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*.
- 1813: In the “Battle of the Nations” at Leipzig, Napoleon defeated.
- 1814: Napoleon exiled to Elba on April 11. British burn Washington, D.C.
- 1815: Americans defeat British at Battle of New Orleans after peace has been declared. Napoleon returns to power, subsequently defeated by allied Anglo-Dutch and Prussian armies at Battle of Waterloo.
- 1821: Simón Bolívar secures Venezuela’s independence after defeating Spanish army at Carabobo.
- 1831: French Foreign Legion founded to help control French possessions in Africa.
- 1836: Boers begin the “Great Trek” in South Africa.

- 1837: British queen Victoria begins her reign.
- 1842: British gain control of Hong Kong after First Opium War.
- 1843: Maori Wars against Britain begin in New Zealand.
- 1848: Revolutions in Paris, Venice, Berlin, Milan, Parma, Rome, and Vienna. *Communist Manifesto* published by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.
- 1849: British defeat Sikhs, annex Punjab region in India. Gold Rush begins in California.
- 1850: Taiping Rebellion in China. The fourteen-year war will result in the deaths of over twenty million people.
- 1853: Turkey declares war on Russia; beginning of Crimean War. France and Britain join Turkey's side the following year.
- 1859: British naturalist Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* published.
- 1861: American Civil War begins.
- 1863: July 1–3: Battle of Gettysburg, turning point of Civil War in favor of Union. French capture Mexico City and set up Archduke Maximilian as Emperor.
- 1864: Union general Sherman's "March to the Sea" and the burning of Atlanta.
- 1865: President Abraham Lincoln assassinated. End of the American Civil War.
- 1866: Alfred Nobel invents dynamite.
- 1867: Dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary established.
- 1870: Franco-Prussian War begins. French ruler Napoleon III defeated at Sedan.
- 1871: France surrenders Alsace-Lorraine to Prussia. German Empire proclaimed.
- 1876: General George Custer killed at Little Big Horn by Native Americans. Telephone invented.
- 1877: Russo-Turkish War breaks power of Ottoman Empire in Europe for good.
- 1879: British massacred by Zulus at Isandlwana in Januray; go on to defeat Zulu king Cetshwayo in July.
- 1882: British bombard Alexandria, occupy the Suez Canal.
- 1884: Berlin West Africa Conference kicks off the "Scramble for Africa".
- 1885: British General Charles "Chinese" Gordon killed at Khartoum.
- 1888: "Jack the Ripper" murders in London.
- 1889: Eiffel Tower built in Paris.
- 1890: Sioux chief Sitting Bull arrested and killed at Pine Ridge. Three hundred more Sioux massacred at Wounded Knee.
- 1895: First Sino-Japanese War ends with Chinese defeat and installation of a puppet ruler in Korea.
- 1898: Spanish-American War grants the United States control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.
- 1899: Second Boer War begins.
- 1903: Wright Brothers make their first airplane flight.
- 1904: Russo-Japanese War ends in surprise Japanese victory.
- 1912: Balkan Wars between Turkey and Eastern European nations.
- 1914: June 28: Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria assassinated by Serbs in Sarajevo, touching off First World War.
- 1916: First use of tanks in war.
- 1917: United States declares war on Germany. Russia's Czar Nicholas abdicates on March 16. Lenin takes power on November 7.
- 1918: Armistice goes into effect on November 11. Worldwide influenza epidemic begins; by 1920, it will have killed twenty million.
- 1922: Benito Mussolini forms Fascist government in Italy.
- 1925: Adolf Hitler publishes Volume 1 of *Mein Kampf*.
- 1929: Collapse of American stock market, beginning of Great Depression.
- 1933: Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.
- 1936: Spanish Civil War begins with Francisco Franco's attempted coup.
- 1937: Japanese take several Chinese cities during Second Sino-Japanese War. Chinese Nationalists and Communists unite to repel the invaders.
- 1938: Led by Hitler, Germany occupies Austria and the Sudetenland.
- 1939: Germany invades Poland on September 1, beginning World War II.
- 1940: Germany invades Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France; German troops enter Paris on June 14. Britain left to stand alone against Nazi threat and the Battle of Britain air campaign.
- 1941: War in North Africa between Britain and Germany and Italy. Germany invades the

- Soviet Union in June. Japan bombs Pearl Harbor on December 7, bringing the United States into the war.
- 1942: Americans defeat Japanese at Midway. U.S. troops land in North Africa. Germany begins its “Final Solution” by sending millions of Jews to gas chambers.
- 1943: In the Soviet Union, the Battle of Stalingrad turns tide against Germany. Battle of Kursk in July is the largest tank engagement ever fought. Allies land in Sicily and Italy falls soon afterwards, but is quickly occupied by German troops.
- 1944: June 6: “D-day”, Allied landings in Normandy. The Soviet army launches a major offensive in July, capturing 100,000 Germans at Minsk. Attempt on Hitler’s life fails. U.S. invasion of the Philippines.
- 1945: Okinawa captured. Russians take Berlin and meet Western Allies at the Elbe River. Germany surrenders on May 8. First atomic bomb attacks against Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 6 and 9. Japan surrenders on August 14, ending the Second World War.
- 1947: India granted independence, divided into India and Pakistan.
- 1948: State of Israel proclaimed.
- 1949: China becomes a Communist republic.
- 1950: North Korea invades the South on June 25. American Douglas MacArthur commands U.N. forces and retakes Seoul, crosses into North Korea, then is forced to retreat when China enters the war.
- 1951: Seoul once again taken and lost by North Korea. Border re-established at 38th parallel.
- 1954: The first volume of *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien is published.
- 1962: Cuban Missile Crisis nearly sets off World War Three.
- 1964: Escalation of American involvement in Vietnam.
- 1967: Six-Day War between Israel and Arab nations ends in resounding Israeli victory.
- 1968: Assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. Riots in Paris. Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Tet Offensive in Vietnam.
- 1971: Indochina conflict expands into Laos and Cambodia.
- 1972: Arab terrorists kill two Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic games.
- 1973: Last U.S. forces withdrawn from Vietnam. The South will fall to the North two years later.
- 1979: Shah of Iran deposed, Ayatollah Khomeini takes power. Hostages taken at the U.S. embassy in Teheran. Soviets invade Afghanistan.
- 1980: Iraq invades Iran.
- 1981: Iranian hostages freed.
- 1982: Britain defeats Argentina in the Falklands War. Israel invades Lebanon.
- 1983: 237 U.S. Marines killed in Beirut terrorist bombing.
- 1988: Pan Am 747 explodes over Lockerbie, Scotland, due to terrorist bomb, killing 270. End of Iran-Iraq War.
- 1990: Collapse of Soviet Union begins. Iraq invades Kuwait. United States and allies deploy to Saudi Arabia and prepare for war.
- 1991: Iraq defeated after one-hundred-hour ground war, Kuwait liberated. Warsaw Pact dissolved. Soviet Union officially broken up on December 25.
- 1993: Terrorists detonate 1,100-pound bomb under World Trade Center; six killed, 1,000 wounded.
- 1994: Rwandan genocide; at least 800,000 killed. International terrorist “Carlos the Jackal” captured.
- 1995: November 4: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin assassinated at peace rally by a Jewish extremist.
- 1998: August 20: U.S. cruise missile attacks on suspected terrorist bases in Afghanistan and chemical weapons factory in Sudan.
- 2001: September 11: Terrorists hijack and fly three commercial airliners into both towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. A fourth plane crashes in Pennsylvania during a struggle between the passengers and hijackers. Nearly three thousand killed in the largest terrorist attack on American soil in history. Afghanistan invaded October 7.
- 2003: March 18: Iraq invaded by American forces. Major combat operations declared over by

- May 1. Iraqi insurgency begins. Saddam Hussein captured on December 30.
- 2004: April: First Fallujah marks turning point in perception and tone of war.
- 2006: Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein executed.
- 2007: U.S. Coalition casualties for Iraq invasion and occupation top four thousand.