

The following topics have several sources that are easy to access and use. Topics are listed alphabetically and labeled with one or more icons showing the type(s) of history they fit within. If a topic seems interesting to you, click the link for a reliable summary article.



Activism



Art



Discrimination



Equality



Expansion



Food



Health



Industry



Labor



Laws & Courts



Literature



Music



Politics





Science



























Sports


























War











Type(s)	Topic	Description
	Anesthesia	A drug used during surgery or medical procedures to make patients unconscious.
	Battle of Gettysburg	The deadliest battle of the U.S. Civil War, fought from July 1st-3rd, 1863. This victory for the Union ended General E. Lee's march north.
	Berlin Wall	The Berlin Wall split the city in half after WWII. West Berlin was free and democratic. East Berlin was under rule of the communist Soviet Union.
	Black Power Salute, 1968 Olympics	When Tommie Smith and John Carlos won medals at the 1968 Olympics, they raised their fists in the air. They wanted to show support for the civil rights movement. This was the "black power salute."
	Bob Dylan	Bob Dylan was a popular singer in the 1960s. He wrote "protest music" against the Vietnam War.








	<u>Boston Massacre</u>	The British Army shot and killed five protesters fighting British rule over the colonies on March 5, 1770. This led to the Revolutionary War.
	<u>Boxer Rebellion</u>	The Boxer's fought against the spread of Western and Japanese influence in China during the Qing Dynasty (1899-1901).
	<u>Brown v. Board of Education</u>	This 1954 Supreme Court case made segregation in public schools illegal. It overturned "separate but equal."
	<u>Cesar Chavez</u> and <u>Dolores Huerta</u>	Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta fought for Latino rights and organized labor. They founded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962.
	<u>Charles Darwin</u>	Charles Darwin was a naturalist who studied in the Galapagos Islands. He invented the theory of evolution.
	<u>Che Guevara and Marxist Revolution</u>	Che Guevara was a Marxist revolutionary. He is known for his work with Fidel Castro in the Cuban Revolution.
	<u>Chernobyl Disaster</u>	Chernobyl was a nuclear accident in 1986 in Ukraine. Many people got sick from the radiation.
	<u>Chinese Exclusion Act</u>	The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882. It stopped Chinese immigration to the United States.
	<u>Civil Rights Act of 1964</u>	This legislation banned discrimination based on skin color. It outlawed segregation in public places.
	<u>Claude Monet and Impressionism</u>	Claude Monet started the painting style called Impressionism. He painted nature and outdoor scenes.
	<u>D-Day</u>	On June 6, 1944, the Allies invaded France on the coast of Normandy. It was the largest seaborne invasion in history, turning the tide of WWII.
	<u>Declaration of Independence</u>	In 1776, the colonies declared independence from Britain and sent a document to King George, which started the Revolutionary War.

	<u>Dred Scott v. Sanford</u>	In 1856, Dred Scott was a slave who sued for his freedom, and the case went all the way to the Supreme Court.
	<u>Eli Whitney and the Cotton Gin</u>	Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793 to allow farmers to work faster and produce more cotton.
	<u>Elizabeth Blackwell</u>	Elizabeth Blackwell was the first female doctor in the United States. She led the way for other women in medicine.
	<u>Emancipation Proclamation</u>	Abraham Lincoln made slavery illegal in 1863 with the Emancipation Proclamation. More than three million slaves were freed by this executive order.
	<u>Fidel Castro</u>	Fidel Castro was a communist leader of Cuba for over 30 years. He led the Cuban Revolution.
	<u>Frank Lloyd Wright</u>	Frank Lloyd Wright is known as the greatest American architect. He designed many buildings throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.
	<u>Great Chicago Fire</u>	The Great Chicago Fire was in 1871. The fire killed almost 300 people. Over three square miles of Chicago burned to the ground.
	<u>Hawaiian Annexation</u>	The United States made Hawaii a territory in 1898. This ended the monarchy in Hawaii led by Queen Lili'uokalani.
	<u>Ho Chi Minh</u>	Ho Chi Minh was the communist leader of the People's Army of Vietnam. He fought against the U.S. during the Vietnam War.
	<u>Hubert H. Humphrey</u>	Hubert H. Humphrey was a senator from Minnesota. He led many campaigns against segregation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
	<u>Indian Removal Act</u>	Andrew Jackson signed this law in 1830 to force Native Americans to give up their land. Their journey to far away reservations is known as the Trail of Tears.
	<u>Indian Salt March</u>	Mohandas Gandhi led a peaceful march in 1930 to protest British rule over India. Gandhi and many others were arrested.

	<u>Irish Civil War</u>	Ireland was in a Civil War in the early 1920s. People disagreed on how to run the country after fighting for independence.
	<u>Jackie Robinson</u>	Jackie Robinson was the first African American to play Major League Baseball in 1947. He made it possible for others to play professional sports.
	<u>Jackson Pollock and Abstract Expressionism</u>	Jackson Pollock is known for starting the Abstract Expressionism art movement. His style of “drip painting” is the most popular.
	<u>James J. Hill</u>	James J. Hill was a railroad billionaire. He owned the Great Northern Railroad. He became very rich for his expansion of the railroad lines.
	<u>Jane Goodall</u>	Jane Goodall is an expert on chimpanzees after studying them in Tanzania. Goodall has brought awareness to animal welfare issues.
	<u>Jim Crow Laws</u>	Jim Crow Laws were created to segregate African Americans after the ending of slavery.
	<u>Kent State Shooting</u>	On May 4, 1970, four students were killed at Kent State University in Ohio after protesting the Vietnam War. The National Guard was called to help and opened fire on the students.
	<u>Kristallnacht</u>	Kristallnacht, or “Night of the Broken Glass,” happened in Germany in 1938. Many Jewish businesses and synagogues were destroyed.
	<u>Lewis Hine</u>	Lewis Hine was a photographer. He took photos of young children working in poor conditions, which helped change child labor laws in the US.
	<u>Louisiana Purchase</u>	Thomas Jefferson purchased over 800,000 square miles of territory from France in 1803 to double the size of the United States.
	<u>Lusitania Incident</u>	On May 7, 1915, the <i>Lusitania</i> ship was sunk by a German submarine. Nearly 2,000 people died. This event caused the United State to enter WWI.
	<u>Mao Zedong and China's Cultural Revolution</u>	Mao Zedong was a communist leader of China and began the Cultural Revolution in 1966 to get rid of traditional Chinese culture.

	<u>Margaret Sanger and Birth Control</u>	Margaret Sanger fought for women's right to use birth control. She started the American Birth Control League in 1921. This is now known as Planned Parenthood.
	<u>Martin Luther King Jr.</u>	Martin Luther King Jr. was a leader of the Civil Rights Movement. He used peaceful protests to fight racism.
	<u>Mayo Brothers and Mayo Clinic</u>	The Mayo Brothers were surgeons at the first hospital in Rochester, Minnesota. They later created the Mayo Clinic.
	<u>Cyrus McCormick and the Mechanical Reaper</u>	McCormick invented a new mechanical reaper in 1834 that allowed farmers to harvest more with fewer workers.
	<u>Mexican-American War</u>	The United States fought with Mexico from 1846 to 1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war and gave the US some of Mexico's land.
	<u>Miranda v. Arizona</u>	On March 13, 1963, Ernesto Miranda was arrested in Phoenix, Arizona and claimed his 5th Amendment rights were violated. The Supreme Court ruled his confession could not be used.
	<u>Munich Olympics</u>	During the 1972 Olympics, Palestinian terrorists took eleven Israeli Olympians hostage to try to get prisoners released from an Israeli jail. All of the hostages were killed.
	<u>Music Censorship</u>	Parents created the Parent Music Resource Center in 1985 to keep their children from hearing music that was not age-appropriate. The Parental Advisory Label was introduced in 1994.
	<u>Navajo Code Talkers</u>	The Navajo Code Talkers were US Marines and Native Americans. They used their language to communicate during WWII; Japan could not break their language code.
	<u>Nelson Mandela and Apartheid</u>	Apartheid in South Africa segregated blacks from whites. Nelson Mandela worked to end apartheid. He became the first black president in 1994.
	<u>New Deal</u>	President Franklin Roosevelt created several programs called the New Deal. These programs helped America recover from the Great Depression.

	Pure Food and Drug Act	<p>Upton Sinclair's wrote <u>The Jungle</u> in 1906, which brought attention to unsafe working conditions in the meat industry. It helped inspire the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906 to improve the working conditions in the food industry.</p>
	Roe v. Wade	<p>Abortion became legal in the United States in 1973. The Supreme Court case of Roe v. Wade said that no state could ban abortion within the first three months of pregnancy.</p>
	Rosa Parks	<p>Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in 1955. She was arrested. This started the Montgomery Bus Boycott.</p>
	Roy Wilkins	<p>Roy Wilkins was a Civil Rights leader. He was the executive director of the NAACP in 1955. He helped fight for African American civil rights.</p>
	Ryan White	<p>In 1984, Ryan White received a blood transfusion. He was then diagnosed with AIDS. There was little information about HIV/AIDS. He was not allowed to return to school. White brought awareness to the AIDS/HIV movement.</p>
	Scopes Trial	<p>In 1925, Tennessee made the teaching of evolution illegal. A teacher named John Scopes taught evolution. The case went to trial. It was an important event in the teaching of evolution.</p>
	Second Wave Feminism	<p>In the 1960s, Betty Friedan wrote <i>The Feminist Mystique</i>. Her book inspired women to fight for equal representation. By the 1980s, women had more rights. This also led to the creation of women's studies programs in colleges.</p>
	Secret War	<p>At the same time the United States was fighting Vietnam, Laos was in a Civil War. To stop the spread of Communism, the US secretly bombed Laos. This is known as the Secret War.</p>
	Seneca Falls Convention	<p>Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. They wanted support for women's right to vote.</p>
	Sister Kenny	<p>Sister Kenny was a nurse that treated polio patients. She used physical therapy to help patients, instead of keeping them in bed.</p>

	<u>Stonewall Riots</u>	<p>The Stonewall Inn was a gay bar in New York. On June 28, 1969, it was violently raided by the police. The Stonewall Riots was an important step in the modern gay rights movement.</p>
	<u>The Beatles</u>	<p>The Beatles are the best-selling band in history. They formed in 1960. Their new style of music made them very popular.</p>
	<u>Tiananmen Square Protests</u>	<p>In 1989, Chinese students wanted more freedom. They protested in Tiananmen Square. The government sent tanks to the square to fight back. Protesters were killed.</p>
	<u>Titanic</u>	<p>The Titanic was the largest ship in the world when it was built in 1912. On its first voyage across the ocean, it hit an iceberg and sank. There were not enough lifeboats on board, which caused 1,500 passengers to die.</p>
	<u>Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire</u>	<p>A fire started at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in 1911. The owners locked the doors so workers kept working, so many were unable to escape the fire. 146 people died. Citizens began fighting for worker safety after the fire.</p>
	<u>Women's Suffrage Movement</u>	<p>This was the fight for women's right to vote. It became popular in 1848 after the Seneca Falls Convention. Women gained the right to vote in 1919.</p>
	<u>Zoot Suit Riots</u>	<p>Zoot suits were a large type of suit with lots of fabric. Many Mexican Americans wore these in the 1940s in California. During WWII, white servicemen thought wearing a zoot suit was unpatriotic. Fights broke out between these two groups over the clothing.</p>

Visit our website for more information on topic selection and this year's theme:

mnhs.org/historyday/theme-and-topics

Updated: August 2023