

The Story of America Timeline

A Kid-Friendly Guide to Important Events in American History

Early Exploration

c. 1000

Leif Erikson explores North America and lands in a place called Vinland.

1492

Christopher Columbus sails across the Atlantic and reaches the Americas.

1513

Juan Ponce de León explores Florida.

1541

Hernando de Soto explores the southeastern regions of North America.

The First Colonies

1565

St. Augustine is founded in Florida, the oldest European settlement in the U.S.

1607

Jamestown becomes the first permanent English settlement in North America.

1619

The first representative assembly meets in Virginia.

1620

The Pilgrims arrive at Plymouth aboard the Mayflower.

1630

Puritans establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

1676

Bacon's Rebellion highlights tensions in colonial Virginia.

The Road to Revolution

1754–1763

The French and Indian War is fought between Britain and France.

1765

The Stamp Act taxes printed materials in the colonies.

1770

The Boston Massacre increases tensions between colonists and British soldiers.

1773

The Boston Tea Party protests British taxation.

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1775

Battles of Lexington and Concord begin the American Revolution.

The American Revolution

1776

The Declaration of Independence is adopted on July 4.

1777

American victory at the Battle of Saratoga turns the tide of the war.

1781

British forces surrender at Yorktown.

1783

The Treaty of Paris officially recognizes the United States.

Building a Nation

1787

The U.S. Constitution is written in Philadelphia.

1789

George Washington becomes the first President.

1791

The Bill of Rights is added to the Constitution.

1803

The Louisiana Purchase doubles the size of the United States.

1804–1806

Lewis and Clark explore the western territories.

Expansion and Conflict

1812–1815

The War of 1812 is fought between the United States and Britain.

1820

The Missouri Compromise attempts to balance slave and free states.

1848

Gold is discovered in California.

1861–1865

The Civil War divides the nation.

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1863

The Emancipation Proclamation declares freedom for enslaved people in Confederate states.

1865

The Civil War ends and slavery is abolished.

A Modern Nation

1898

The Spanish-American War expands U.S. influence.

1903

The Wright brothers achieve the first powered airplane flight.

1917–1918

The United States joins World War I.

1929

The stock market crash begins the Great Depression.

1941–1945

The United States fights in World War II.

America Today

1955–1968

The Civil Rights Movement works to end racial segregation.

1969

Apollo 11 lands the first humans on the Moon.

1989

The Cold War begins to end with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

2001

The September 11 attacks change the nation and the world.

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