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Major Figures in World History

Name	Who the Person Was	What the Person Did
Abraham (2000 B.C.?)	Hebrew leader	Founded Judaism.
Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.)	Macedonian king	Built an empire that included Greece, Persia, Egypt, and part of Central Asia.
Aristotle (384–322 B.C.)	Greek philosopher	Summarized most knowledge up to his time and invented rules of logic that contributed to the modern scientific method.
Bonaparte, Napoleon (1769–1821)	French general and emperor	Built a vast French empire and is considered one of the world's great military geniuses along with Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and Julius Caesar.
Caesar, Julius (100–44 B.C.)	Roman general and dictator	Expanded the Roman Empire.
Gandhi, Mohandas K. (1869–1948)	Indian political and religious leader	Helped India gain its independence from Great Britain by a method of nonviolent resistance.
Hitler, Adolf (1889–1945)	German dictator	Initiated World War II and the Holocaust.
Jefferson, Thomas (1743–1826)	American president, architect, and inventor	Wrote the Declaration of Independence.
Jesus (4 B.C.?–A.D. 28?)	Jewish religious leader	Founded Christianity.
King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1929–1968)	American civil rights leader	Led the civil rights movement in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s.
Lenin, Vladimir (1870–1924)	Russian dictator	Founded the Communist Party in Russia and established the world's first Communist Party dictatorship.
Lincoln, Abraham (1809–1865)	American president	Led the United States through the American Civil War.
Locke, John (1632–1704)	English philosopher	Was a leader of the Enlightenment and promoted democratic thinking.
Luther, Martin (1483–1546)	German theologian	Started the Reformation.
Mandela, Nelson (1918–)	South African anti-apartheid leader	Became the first black president of South Africa.
Mao Tse-tung (1893–1976)	Chinese dictator	Led the Communist revolution in China.
Marx, Karl (1818–1883)	German philosopher	Founded the mass movements of democratic socialism and revolutionary communism.
Moses (1300s B.C.?)	Israelite leader	Led the Jews out of Egypt and received the Ten Commandments.
Muhammad (A.D. 570?–632)	Muslim prophet	Founded Islam.
Pericles (494?–429 B.C.)	Greek statesman	Led Athens during its golden age, often called the Age of Pericles.
Plato (427–347 B.C.)	Greek philosopher	Wrote <i>The Republic</i> , in which he described his ideal society.
Socrates (469–399 B.C.)	Greek philosopher	Taught students to examine their beliefs and developed a question-and-answer method of teaching called the Socratic method.
Stalin, Joseph (1879–1953)	Soviet dictator	Used terror to transform the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state and to modernize its economy.
Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925)	Chinese leader	Became known as the "father of modern China" for leading a revolution that overthrew the last Chinese emperor.
Washington, George (1732–1799)	American general and president	Commanded the Continental Army during the American Revolution and served as the first president of the United States.

Major Inventions of the Modern Age

Some dates are historically debated.

Invention	Date	Significance
Magnifying Glass	1250	Used for study of small matter and used in crafts
Gun / Cannon	1260	Enabled weapons to be used at long range for better defense
Mechanical Clock	1360	Allowed better planning, especially in cities and in traveling
Printing Press	1454	Spread written information and scholarship and new ideas, especially in religion
Cast Iron Pipe	1455	A conduit for water and sewage; improved sanitation
Graphite Pencil	1560	Helped in art, science, mathematics and education for drafting ideas
Microscope	1590	Allowed study of cells and microorganisms; new knowledge of life processes
Telescope	1608	Study of the stars, planets, objects, and motion in space; better navigation
Submarine	1620	Used for ocean exploration and later for warfare
Analytic Geometry	1637	System for describing points, planes, and curves in abstract space
Steam Engine	1639	Helped pave the way for the industrial revolution
Barometer	1643	Measured atmospheric pressure; allowed more accurate weather prediction
Tourniquet	1674	Used in medicine to apply pressure and stop blood flow to a part of the body
Piano	1709	Produced a greater range of sounds than previous musical instruments
Mercury Thermometer	1714	Measured heat by degrees; improved chemistry, meteorology, and medicine
Ship Chronometer	1728	Allowed timekeeping at sea; led to longitude measurements; improved mapping
Threshing Machine	1732	Sped up crop production; improved farming
Classification of Species	1735	Allowed shared data about global discoveries within a scientific naming system
Wool Carding Machine	1743	Sped production of fibers for wool cloth
Leyden Jar	1746	First electrical condenser, led to understanding of current and circuits
Dynamomotor	1750	Measured mechanical forces, used in developing new machines
Watt's Steam Engine	1769	More efficient engine powered the industrial revolution
Cotton Gin	1793	Cotton could be cleaned by machine rather than by hand; sped production
Smallpox Vaccine	1796	helped stop the spread of epidemic disease
Locomotive	1825	First locomotive and first passenger railroad, sped shipping and transport
Photograph	1826	Faithful production of images from life by machine
Telegraph	1837	First long-distance communication without human travel
Bessemer Steelmaking	1850s	Furnace hot enough to melt iron and carbon; facilitated steel and skyscrapers
Pasteurization	1860s	Sterilization of liquids; increased shelf-life of milk and other perishables
Telephone	1876	Person-to-person long-distance communication by speech
Edison's Light Bulb	1879	Made long-lasting indoor electric lighting possible
Automobile	1885-96	First gas engine, diesel engine, motorcycle, automobile, and tires
Radioactivity (X-Ray)	1895-8	Accidental X-ray led to discovery of radioactivity; used in medicine and energy
Airplane	1903	Sped transportation and shipping, also maximized military weapons
Television	1923	Long-distance transmission and receipt of sound and moving image
Rocket	1926	First liquid-propelled rocket, led to later space flight
Penicillin	1928	mold spores that killed bacteria, later used to cure bacterial infections, led to other antibiotics
Satellite	1957	Mechanical explorer able to orbit Earth through space; used for communications, surveillance, weapons, and space exploration
Computer	1964	Used for engineering; data storage, sharing, and processing; robotics and other artificial intelligence applications
Global Computer Network	1969	U.S. Defense Department creates ARPANET; precursor to 1991 Internet
Genetic Engineering	1973	First successful recombination of DNA; led to improved food production