

1492 – 1969

US History Timeline

This timeline walks through some of the biggest milestones in United States history, from the first European voyages to the Moon landing.

1492 — Columbus Reaches the Americas

Christopher Columbus sails across the Atlantic and reaches islands in the Caribbean.

> **Why it mattered:** *His voyages opened lasting contact between Europe and the Americas, changing life on both sides of the ocean.*

1607 — Jamestown Founded

The first permanent English colony in America is founded in Virginia.

> **Why it mattered:** *It became the first lasting English foothold in America — the start of what grew into the thirteen colonies.*

1620 — The Pilgrims Land

The Pilgrims arrive on the Mayflower and found Plymouth Colony.

> **Why it mattered:** *Their agreement to govern themselves became an early model for later American ideas about self-rule.*

1776 — Declaration of Independence

The thirteen colonies declare independence from Britain.

> **Why it mattered:** *It announced a brand-new nation founded on the ideas of liberty and equality.*

1787 ## The Constitution

Leaders write the U.S. Constitution, the plan for the new government.

> **Why it mattered:** *It created the framework of government the United States still uses today.*

1803 ## Louisiana Purchase

The United States buys a huge area of land from France, doubling in size.

> **Why it mattered:** *It doubled the size of the country and opened the West to exploration and settlement.*

1861 ## Civil War Begins

The war between the Union and the Confederacy begins; slavery ends in 1865.

> **Why it mattered:** *The war decided that the nation would stay united and brought slavery in the United States to an end.*

1869 ## Transcontinental Railroad

A railroad links the country from coast to coast for the first time.

> **Why it mattered:** *It tied the country together, turning a months-long journey across the continent into a matter of days.*

1920 ## Women Win the Vote

The 19th Amendment gives American women the right to vote.

> **Why it mattered:** *It roughly doubled the number of Americans allowed to vote, a huge step for equal rights.*

1969 ## Moon Landing

Apollo 11 astronauts become the first people to walk on the Moon.

> **Why it mattered:** *It showed the United States reaching a goal many once thought was impossible.*