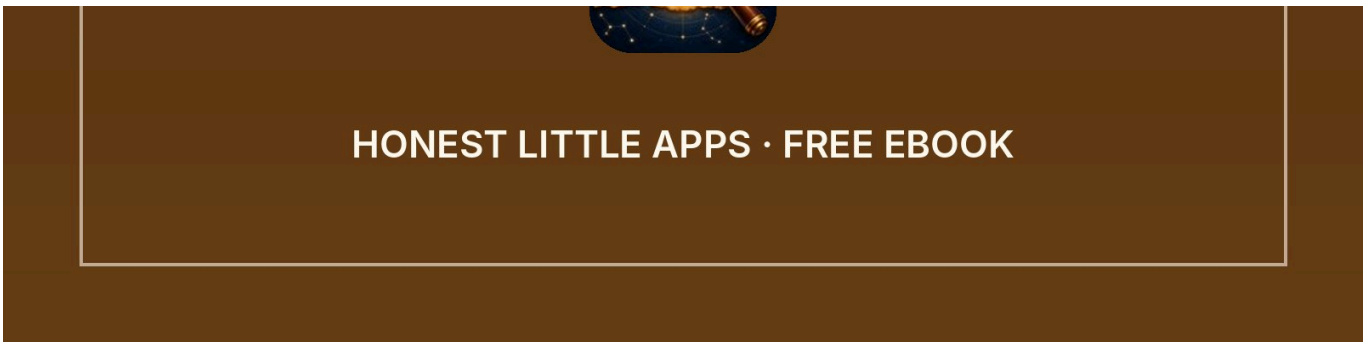
On This Day: History Detective

Dated events, each with a question to investigate





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Each page is a real date in history and one detective question: who wrote it, when, and why. Great for classrooms and curious kids.

1863: Abraham Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address

Detective question: Five handwritten copies exist, and they differ. Which is 'the' speech?

1901: The first Nobel Prizes are awarded

Detective question: Why December 10? Check Alfred Nobel's life.

1773: The Boston Tea Party

Detective question: Who were the participants, and why did they disguise themselves?

1903: The Wright brothers make the first powered, controlled flight…

1903: The Wright brothers make the first powered, controlled flight at Kitty Hawk.

Detective question: How long was the first flight, and who took the famous photo?

2007: Steve Jobs unveils the first iPhone in San Francisco

Detective question: What did people use for maps and music on the go before 2007?

1759: The British Museum opens to the public in London

Detective question: Who was allowed in at first, and how would you find out?

1809: Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin are born on the same day

Detective question: What sources would confirm a birth date from 1809?

1876: Alexander Graham Bell makes the first telephone call: "Mr

1876: Alexander Graham Bell makes the first telephone call: "Mr. Watson, come here."

Detective question: The famous line comes from Bell's notebook. How reliable is a source written by the person who made the call?

44 BC: Julius Caesar is assassinated in Rome on the Ides of March…

44 BC: Julius Caesar is assassinated in Rome on the Ides of March (Roman calendar).

Detective question: Most accounts were written decades later. What does that mean for the details?

1889: The Eiffel Tower is inaugurated in Paris

Detective question: It was built for a world's fair. Was it meant to be permanent?

1961: Yuri Gagarin becomes the first human in space

Detective question: What did the Soviet announcement leave out at first?

1912: The Titanic sinks in the North Atlantic

Detective question: Survivors' accounts disagree about whether it broke in two. Which evidence settled it?

1906: An earthquake and fires devastate San Francisco

Detective question: Why are early death-toll estimates now thought to be far too low?

1954: Roger Bannister runs the first sub-four-minute mile

Detective question: How was the time recorded, and by whom?

1869: The golden spike completes the first US transcontinental…

1869: The golden spike completes the first US transcontinental railroad.

Detective question: Whose labor built it, and who appears in the famous photo?

1953: Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reach the summit of Everest

Detective question: Both refused for years to say who stepped up first. Why might that matter?

1944: D-Day: Allied forces land in Normandy

Detective question: Why was the date kept secret, and how was it nearly delayed?

1215: King John seals Magna Carta at Runnymede

Detective question: Most of its clauses were later dropped. Why is it still famous?

1815: The Battle of Waterloo ends Napoleon's rule

Detective question: What do British and French accounts each stress?

1914: Archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated in Sarajevo

Detective question: Did one event cause the First World War, or did it trigger one already waiting?

1867: Canadian Confederation creates the Dominion of Canada

Detective question: Which provinces joined first?

1776: The Continental Congress adopts the Declaration of Independence

Detective question: Most delegates signed on August 2, not July 4. Why do we celebrate the 4th?

1789: Crowds storm the Bastille in Paris

Detective question: Only seven prisoners were inside. Why did it become the symbol of the Revolution?

1969: Apollo 11 lands on the Moon

1969: Apollo 11 lands on the Moon. Neil Armstrong steps out hours later.

Detective question: What evidence do we have that it happened, and who could check it independently?

AD 79: The traditional date of Mount Vesuvius' eruption, which…

AD 79: The traditional date of Mount Vesuvius' eruption, which buried Pompeii.

Detective question: An inscription found in 2018 suggests October instead. How do historians weigh a new clue against an old letter?

1963: Martin Luther King Jr

1963: Martin Luther King Jr. gives the "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington.

Detective question: The most famous part wasn't in his prepared text. How do we know?

1939: Germany invades Poland and the Second World War begins in Europe

Detective question: Why do different countries give different start dates for the war?

1666: The Great Fire of London begins in a bakery on Pudding Lane

Detective question: Official records list very few deaths. Why are historians suspicious?

1787: The US Constitution is signed in Philadelphia

Detective question: Which delegates refused to sign, and why?

1928: Alexander Fleming notices mould killing bacteria, the start…

1928: Alexander Fleming notices mould killing bacteria, the start of penicillin.

Detective question: Fleming's account was written later. Which details might have been tidied up?

1957: The Soviet Union launches Sputnik 1, the first artificial…

1957: The Soviet Union launches Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite.

Detective question: How could ordinary people on the ground confirm it was up there?

1492: Columbus's expedition makes landfall in the Caribbean

Detective question: Whose accounts of the landing survive, and whose don't?

1066: The Battle of Hastings

1066: The Battle of Hastings. William of Normandy defeats Harold II.

Detective question: The Bayeux Tapestry was made for the winners. What might it leave out?

1517: Martin Luther's 95 Theses (traditional date for the start of…

1517: Martin Luther's 95 Theses (traditional date for the start of the Reformation).

Detective question: Did he really nail them to a church door? What's the evidence?

1922: Howard Carter finds the steps to Tutankhamun's tomb

Detective question: Who else was digging, and who got the credit?

1989: The Berlin Wall opens after a garbled press announcement

Detective question: How did one mistaken answer at a news conference change history?

1918: The Armistice ends fighting in the First World War at 11am

Detective question: Why did soldiers still die that morning?

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