

Famous People Vocabulary List

1. **Abraham** : The first patriarch in the Bible. Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his son, Isaac, and was rewarded for being prepared to do so. He is considered by Jewish people as the father of the Israelites through his son Isaac, and by Muslims as the father of Arab peoples through his son Ishmael.
2. **Akbar the Great** : (1542-1605) Emperor of the Mughal Empire in India. He is considered to be their greatest ruler. He is responsible for the expansion of his empire, the stability his administration gave to it, and the increasing of trade and cultural diffusion.
3. **Alexander the Great** : (356 BCE-323 BCE) He conquered most of the ancient world from Asia Minor to Egypt and India, which began the Hellenistic culture which was a blending of Greek, Persian, Indian, and Egyptian influences.
4. **al-Sadat, Anwar** : (1918-1981) President of Egypt between 1970 and 1981. He was assassinated by Islamic fundamentalists for making peace with Israel.
5. **Arafat , Yasir** : (1929-) President of the Palestine National Authority and Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Considered by many to be a terrorist, he has in recent years been accepted as the legitimate authority to speak for the Palestinians. His goal is to create a homeland for the displaced Palestinians.
6. **Archimedes** : (287-212 BCE) Greek mathematician and inventor. He wrote works on plane and solid geometry, arithmetic, and mechanics. He is best known for the lever and pulley.
7. **Asoka** : (?-232 BCE) King of the Maurya dynasty. He ruled nearly the entire subcontinent of India. He also was instrumental in the spread of Buddhism after his conversion.
8. **Ataturk, Mustafa Kemal** : (1881-1938) Nationalist leader of Turkey who is responsible for modernizing and westernizing his country after World War I. This enabled Turkey to resist imperialist attempts at takeover by various European powers.
9. **Augustus** : (63 BCE – 14 CE) First emperor of Rome (27 BCE – 14 CE) He restored order and prosperity to the Empire after nearly a century of turmoil. Grandnephew to Julius Caesar.
10. **Ayatollah Khomeini** : (1900?-1989) Islamic religious leader who led a fundamentalist revolution in Iran in 1979. Ruled until 1989.
11. **Baron de Montesquieu** : (1689-1755) Enlightenment thinker from France who wrote a book called, *The Spirit of the Laws* in 1748. He states that government should divide itself according to its powers, creating a Judicial, Legislative, and Executive branch. Montesquieu explained that under this system each branch would Check and Balance the others, which would help protect the people's liberty.

12. **Batista, Fulgencio** : (1901-1973) Cuban president from 1940 to 1944 and 1952 to 1959, he overthrew the legitimate government and ruled as a dictator until he was forced from office by Fidel Castro.
13. **Bolívar, Simón** : (1783-1830) Latin American revolutionary responsible for the ousting of Spain from much of South America during the 19th century. He is considered to be the most important figure in the fight for Latin American independence.
14. **Bonaparte, Napoleon** : (1769-1821) Emperor of the French. Responsible for many French Revolution reforms as well as conquering most of Europe. He was defeated at Waterloo, and died several years later on the island of Saint Helena.
15. **Brezhnev, Leonid** : (1906-1982) Leader of the Soviet Union from 1964 to 1982. During his control of the Soviet Union, relations with the West, as well as the Soviet economy, experienced a long period of stagnation.
16. **Buddha** : Hindu for “enlightened one.” See also Siddhartha Gautama.
17. **Caesar, Julius** : (100-44 BCE), Roman general and statesman. He is responsible for setting up the imperial system in Rome which placed his grandnephew, Augustus, on the throne.
18. **Calvin, John** : (1509-1564) Theologian and church reformer who developed a form of Protestantism during the Reformation. His church is known for the idea of predestination, which states certain people are predestined for heaven.
19. **Castro, Fidel** : (1926?-) Leader of the Cuban Revolution and communist dictator of Cuba. He is responsible for making Cuba a socialist country which has often been at odds with the United States. Notably, the bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis.
20. **Catherine the Great** : An enlightened despot who ruled over Russia. She is responsible for many positive changes in Russia, as well as securing the country a warm water port.
21. **Cavour, Camillo** : (1810-61) Prime Minister of Sardinia, a large Italian State. He formed alliances with other foreign powers to help end Austria's and Spain's control. Instrumental in the unification of Italy.
22. **Chamberlain, Neville** : (1869-1940) Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1937 to 1940. He is responsible for the policy of appeasement with Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany.
23. **Christ, Jesus** : (8-4 BCE- 29? CE) Founder of Christianity. Considered by Christians to be the son of God and the Messiah. He is the central figure in the Christian Religion.
24. **Churchill, Sir Winston** : (1874-1965) British politician and Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1940 to 1945, and 1951 to 1955. He is regarded as the finest British leader of the 20th century and was instrumental in leading Britain to victory during World War II.

25. **Columbus, Christopher** : (1451-1506) Italian explorer working for Spain who, in 1492, crossed the Atlantic Ocean and discovered the Americas for Spain.
26. **Confucius** : (551-479 BCE?) Chinese philosopher and writer of The Analects, a collection of moral and social teachings, including the concept of the Five Relationships. Also known as Kong Fu Zi.
27. **Constantine** : (274 CE – 337 CE) Roman Emperor between 306 CE and 337 CE. He issued the Edict of Milan which outlawed the persecution of Christians. He also founded the city of Constantinople, the future capital of the Byzantine Empire.
28. **Copernicus, Nicolaus** : (1473-1543) Polish astronomer who wrote *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*. Theorized that the Earth orbited the Sun (heliocentric system) and laid the foundations of modern astronomy.
29. **Cortez, Hernan** : (1485-1547) Spanish conquistador who was responsible for the conquest of the Aztec Empire and the claiming of much of Central America for the Spanish.
30. **Cromwell, Oliver** : (1599-1658) Leader of the English Revolution that deposed the Stuart monarchs in favor of a short lived Republic. Cromwell acted as Lord Protector until the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660.
31. **Czar Nicholas II** : (1868-1918) Czar of Russia (1894-1917). He was overthrown during the Russian Revolution of 1917. Later, he and his family were killed by the revolution's leadership.
32. **Da Gama, Vasco** : (1469?-1524) Portuguese explorer who, in 1498, established an all water route to India
33. **Da Vinci, Leonardo** : (1452-1519) An Italian painter, sculptor, engineer, and inventor. Famous works include paintings Mona Lisa and The Last Supper. Also left a variety of sketches showing flying machines and underwater boats centuries before the invention of planes and submarines.
34. **Dalai Lama** : The spiritual leader of the Tibetan sect of Buddhism, and is considered to be the reincarnation of the bodhisattva, or "buddha-to-be."
35. **Dante** : (1265-1321) Italian poet and Renaissance writer. His greatest work is The Divine Comedy.
36. **de San Martín, José** : (1778-1850) Latin American revolutionary. He is one of the main leaders of the Latin American independence movement.
37. **Deng Xiaoping** : (1904-1997) Chinese Communist leader. Ruled from 1978 until 1997. Tried to institute reform inside of Communist China.

38. **Descartes, Rene** : (1596-1650) French philosopher that said that human reason was capable of discovering and explaining the laws of nature and man. The idea of human reason being superior to tradition led to the beginning of the Enlightenment, a time of political awakening that became revolution.
39. **Diocletian** : (245-313) Emperor of Rome who was responsible for dividing Rome into different provinces and districts. Eventually, the eastern portions of the Empire became known as the Byzantine Empire.
40. **Elizabeth I** : (1533-1603) Queen of England and Ireland between 1558 and 1603. She was an absolute monarch and is considered to be one of the most successful rulers of all time.
41. **Engels, Friedrich** : (1820-1895) German socialist and co-author of The Communist Manifesto.
42. **Ferdinand and Isabella** : During the late 15th century, they became King and Queen of a united Spain after centuries of Islamic domination. Together, they made Spain a strong Christian nation and also provided funding to overseas exploration, notably Christopher Columbus.
43. **Ferdinand, Franz** : (1863-1914) Archduke of Austria, nephew to the Emperor. He was assassinated in Bosnia in 1914. This resulted in the start of World War I.
44. **Frederick the Great** : (1712-1786), King of Prussia from 1740 to 1786. Enlightened despot who enlarged Prussia by gaining land from Austria when Maria Theresa became Empress.
45. **Galilei, Galileo** : (1564-1642) Italian astronomer. One of the founders of Europe's scientific revolution, one of his main contributions is the application of the telescope to astronomy. He was able to prove Copernicus' heliocentric model correct.
46. **Gandhi, Mohandas** : (1869-1948) Nationalist leader in India, who called for a non violent revolution to gain his country's freedom from the British Empire.
47. **Garibaldi, Guiseppe** : (1807-1882?) Military leader whose Red Shirt army liberated most of southern Italy, before conquering the northern section. He was instrumental in the unification of Italy.
48. **Gautama, Siddhartha** : (563?-483?BCE), Indian philosopher and the founder of Buddhism. He deduced that desire was the root cause of all suffering. Also known as the Buddha.
49. **Genghis Khan** : (1167?-1227) One of the Mongol's greatest leaders and founder of the Mongol Empire.

50. **Gorbachev, Mikhail** : (1931-), leader of the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991. His policies of Perestroika and Glasnost, which aimed at revitalizing the Soviet Union contributed to the downfall of communism.
51. **Guevara, Che** : (1928-1967) Latin American guerilla leader. In the mid 20th century Guevara was instrumental in helping Fidel Castro lead the Cuban Revolution. He was later killed in Bolivia while trying to lead a revolution there.
52. **Gutenberg, Johannes** : (1400?-1468) German printer and European pioneer in the use of movable type.
53. **Henry VIII** : (1491-1547) King of England who transformed his country into a Protestant nation during the Reformation.
54. **Hirohito** : (1901-1989) Emperor of Japan from 1926 until 1989. He is the last Japanese emperor to be considered divine. Led Japan through World War II.
55. **Hitler, Adolf** : (1889-1945) Austrian-born leader of Germany. He co-founded the Nazi Party in Germany, and gained control of the country as chancellor in 1933. Hitler started World War II with the invasion of Poland. He was responsible for the Holocaust.
56. **Ho Chi Minh** : (1890-1969) Vietnamese leader who is responsible for ousting first the French, then the United States from his country. Supported by both communist China and the Soviet Union, he guided Vietnam through decades long warfare to emerge as a communist nation.
57. **Hobbes, Thomas** : (1588-1679) English philosopher and political theorist. Wrote *Leviathan*, where he favored an absolute government as the only means of balancing human interests and desires with their rights of life and property.
58. **Hussein, Saddam** : (1937-) President of Iraq since 1979. He has led his control into two devastating wars, one against Iran in 1980 to 1988, and the Persian Gulf War in 1990 – 1991 which started as a result of his invading Kuwait.
59. **Jiang Jieshi** : (1887-1975) Leader of the Guomindang, or Nationalist Party in China. Fought to keep China from becoming communist, and to resist the Japanese during World War II. He lost control of China in 1949, and fled to Taiwan where he setup a rival government. Also known as Chang Kai Shek.
60. **Kaiser Wilhelm** : (1859-1941) King of Prussia and Emperor of Germany whose political policies led his country into World War I. He was forced from power when Germany lost the war.
61. **Kenyatta, Jomo** : (1894?-1978) Independence leader who help lead Kenya out of European imperialism after World War II.

62. **Khrushchev, Nikita** : (1894-1971) Leader of the Soviet Union from 1953 to 1964. Khrushchev was critical of Stalin's policies and attempted to reverse some of them. He is responsible for placing nuclear missiles in Cuba which resulted in the Cuban Missile Crisis.
63. **King Leopold** : (1835-1909) King of Belgium who began imperialistic trade inside of Africa which resulted in the Scramble for Africa.
64. **Kipling, Rudyard** : (1865-1936) British writer and poet. His poem *The White Man's Burden* became a popular justification for European imperialism.
65. **Kublai Khan** : (1215-1294) Grandson of Genghis Khan and founder of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in China.
66. **Lao Tze** : (570-490 BCE?) Chinese philosopher credited with originating Taoism/Daoism. His teachings were collected and published as the *Tao-te Ching*.
67. **Lenin, Vladimir** : (1870-1924) Russian revolutionary leader and political theorist. He was the first leader of the new communist government of Soviet Russia. Later, he was also the first leader of the Soviet Union, which was composed of most of the republics of the former Russian Empire.
68. **Locke, John** : (1632-1704) English philosopher and political theorist. He wrote *Two Treaties on Government* which explained that all men have Natural Rights, which are Life, Liberty, and Property, and that the purpose of government was to protect these rights.
69. **Louis XIV** : (1638-1715) Known as the Sun King, he was an absolute monarch that completely controlled France. One of his greatest accomplishments was the building of the palace at Versailles.
70. **Louis XVI** : (1754-1793) King of France between 1774 and 1792. He was overthrown during the French Revolution and later beheaded.
71. **L'Ouverture, Toussaint** : (1743?-1803) Revolutionary leader who is responsible for ousting France from Haiti during the Latin American Revolutions in the early 19th century.
72. **Loyola, Ignatius** : (1491-1556) Founded the Society of Jesus, the Order of the Jesuits. He worked to combat the Protestant Reformation by providing strong Catholic leadership to monarchs across Europe.
73. **Luther, Martin** : (1483-1546) Theologian and religious reformer who started the Reformation with his *95 Theses* which protested church corruption, namely the sale of indulgences.

74. **Machiavelli, Niccolo** : (1469-1527) Italian historian, statesman, and political philosopher of the Renaissance. His greatest work is *The Prince*. This book was used to defend policies of despotism and tyranny. Machiavelli wrote that “*the ends justifies the means.*”
75. **Magellan, Ferdinand** : (1480?-1521) Spanish explorer who was the first to circumnavigate the globe.
76. **Mandela, Nelson** : (1918 -) A black South African leader who protested the policy of Apartheid and spent over thirty years in prison before becoming the first black president of South Africa.
77. **Mansa Musa** : Emperor of the kingdom of Mali in Africa. He made a famous pilgrimage to Mecca and established trade routes to the Middle East.
78. **Mao Zedong** : (1893-1976) Leader of the Communist Party in China that overthrew Jiang Jieshi and the Nationalists. Established China as the People’s Republic of China and ruled from 1949 until 1976.
79. **Marco Polo** : (1254-1324) Italian explorer and author. He made numerous trips to China and returned to Europe to write of his journeys. He is responsible for much of the knowledge exchanged between Europe and China during this time period.
80. **Marx, Karl** : (1818-1883), German political philosopher and writer. Coauthor with Friedrich Engels of *The Communist Manifesto* which described the new philosophy of scientific socialism, which is the basis for modern communism.
81. **Maurya, Chandragupta** : (?-286 BCE) First king of the Maurya dynasty in India.
82. **Meiji** : (1852-1912) Emperor of Japan from 1867 to 1912. He was responsible for the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the rapid modernization and industrialization of Japan.
83. **Michelangelo** : (1475-1564) An Italian sculptor, painter, poet, engineer, and architect. Famous works include the mural on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and the sculpture of the biblical character David.
84. **Milosevic, Slobodan** : (1941-) Former Yugoslavian President. During the 1990s, he used his army to commit genocide against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, who were asking for self rule. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) finally put a stop to this violence, and Milosevic has since been arrested and awaits trial for war crimes.
85. **Mohammed** : Prophet of Allah; founder of Islam.
86. **Mussolini, Benito** : (1883-1945) Italian leader. He founded the Italian Fascist Party, and sided with Hitler and Germany in World War II. In 1945 he was overthrown and assassinated by the Italian Resistance.

87. **Nehru, Jawaharlal** : (1889-1964) Indian nationalist leader and the first prime minister of independent India from 1947 to 1964. Along with Mohandas Gandhi, he was instrumental in freeing India from Britain's control.
88. **Nkrumah, Kwame** : (1909-1972) Independence leader who help lead Ghana out of European imperialism after World War II.
89. **Osama bin Laden** : (1957-) Saudi Arabian multimillionaire and leader of the terrorist organization al-Qaeda. He is responsible for numerous terrorist attacks on the United States including the destruction of the World Trade Center.
90. **Pahlavi, Muhammad Reza** : (1919-1980), Dictator ruler of Iran from 1941 to 1979. He was supported by the United States throughout most of the Cold War due to his anti communist stance. Overthrown during the Iranian Revolution in 1979.
91. **Perry, Matthew** : (1794-1858) Commodore. United States Navy officer who is responsible for opening Japan to trade and imperialism.
92. **Philip II** : (1527-1598) King of Spain from 1556 to 1598. Absolute monarch who helped lead the Counter Reformation by persecuting Protestants in his holdings. Also sent the Spanish Armada against England.
93. **Pizarro, Francisco** : (1476?-1541) Spanish conquistador who was responsible for the conquest of the Incan Empire.
94. **Pol Pot** : (1925-1998) Leader of Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. Pol Pot is responsible for the deaths of almost 2 million of his own people due to starvation, execution, and beatings.
95. **Pope Urban II** : (1040?-1099) The head of the Roman Catholic Church who issued the proclamation the began the First Crusade.
96. **Rousseau, Jean Jacques** : (1712-1778) French writer and Enlightenment philosopher who wrote a book called, *The Social Contract*,. Rousseau believed that government should be run according to the will of the majority, which he called the General Will. He claimed that the General Will would always act in the best interest of the people.
97. **Shakespeare, William** : (1564-1616) English poet and playwright. He wrote 37 plays between 1590 and 1613. His plays reflect the ideas of individualism and the unconquerable human spirit, and most of them are still performed today.
98. **Smith, Adam** : (1723-1790) British philosopher, writer, and economist. His book, *The Wealth of Nations*, describes his theory on free trade, otherwise known as laissez-faire economics.

99. **Stalin, Josef** : (1879-1953) The General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party from 1922 until 1953. Known for his brutality in dealing with opponents and his failed policies of collectivism that caused widespread famine across the Soviet Union.
100. **Sun Yixian** : (1866-1925) Chinese nationalist leader who fought to end foreign domination. He formed the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party, which overthrew the Manchu Dynasty and established a republican form of government in its place. Also known as Sun Yat-sen.
101. **Voltaire** : (1694-1778) French philosopher. He believed that freedom of speech was the best weapon against bad government. He also spoke out against the corruption of the French government, and the intolerance of the Catholic Church.
102. **von Bismarck, Otto** : (1815-1898) Appointed Prussian chancellor in 1862. he began a program of war to unify all the German states under the control of Prussia. His policy as Blood and Iron. He was the most powerful statesman in Europe as chancellor of the new German Empire from 1871 to 1890.
103. **Wilson, Woodrow** : (1856-1924) President of the United States during World War I. He also proposed the League of Nations to avoid future conflicts through diplomacy in his 14 Points Speech.
104. **Yeltsin, Boris** : (1931-) President of Russia. He was elected before the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. He served until 1999. Yeltsin was instrumental in keeping a coup d'etat from occurring which would have returned hard line communists to power in Russia.
105. **Zheng He** : (1371-1433?) Chinese naval explorer who sailed along most of the coast of Asia, Japan, and half way down the east coast of Africa before his death.