

## **15 Memorizing Dates**

This document was originally in response to a question on Quora and I thought that it would make a suitable podcast. I took The 10 Most Important Moments in History as an interesting set of dates and chose the site [Owlcation](#) to use. There are several other sites on the internet, but this is a good site and covers the history of the world although I am sure that a few of you will disagree with the choices – and I am disappointed that the Greeks are missing – so feel free to make up your own list.

### [The 10 Most Important Moments in History - Owlcation](#)

1 The Neolithic Revolution: The Shift From Hunting-Gathering to Farming in 10,000 B.C.

2 The End of the Western Roman Empire: September 4th, 476 CE

3 The First University Opened in 895 CE in Fez (Morocco)

4 The Renaissance (1300s in Florence, Italy)

#### High Points of the Renaissance

- The invention of eyeglasses (around 1300)
- The printing press was invented (and the Gutenberg Bible published), 1455
- The Age of Exploration: 1476 to 1500
- First modern atlas published, 1570
- Telescope invented, 1608
- Microscope invented, in late 1660s

5 Start of the First Industrial Revolution: 1760

6 "The Shot Heard Around the World" on April 19, 1775: The Start of the American Revolution

7 The Ogé Rebellion of the Haitian Revolution: August–September 1791

8 1796 First Vaccine Invented (The Start of the Medical Revolution)

9 November 9, 1989: The Day the Berlin Wall Came Down (The End of the Cold War)

10 The Invention of the Internet, the 1960s and the first message sent from UCLA to Stanford in 1969.

The message was LOGIN but the system crashed so Stanford only received the first two letters LO. This is a memorable fact about the invention that now rules our lives. I suggest that you choose other such snippets to help you memorize the other 9 dates. I will add scraps of information to go with each date but I hope you will flesh them out with information of your own –

remember our brain likes linking stories.

To remember dates, you need to use one of the 3 numerical mnemonics: shape – (1-10), rhyming – (1-20) and the Major System (1-99).

The Major System is best for dates, as you have different images for numbers 1-99. However, if you have not learned the Major System, you can use a combination of the Shape system and the rhyming system, but as you will see, it is clumsy, and this exercise is a good chance to brush up on the Major System.

Break the date up into 2 parts.

### **1 The Neolithic Revolution: Shift From Hunting-Gathering to Farming in 10,000 B.C.**

12,000 years ago, a move from wild harvesting towards agriculture triggered a major transformation in the way humans lived, leading to permanent settlements and farms. Reliable food sources freed up time for people to build, invent and create, leading to culture and civilizations.

The first date is 10,000 BC – You have a choice of images, and rhyming HEN makes the most sense as it ties in with a farm. So think Hen and the beginning of farming

### **2 The End of the Western Roman Empire: September 4th, 476 CE**

You need to use the Major System here, so I hope you have committed it to memory. You can either have the image of a door- 4 plus 76 cash. So, have a picture of a door being smashed down by the barbarians and the Romans running away with their cash. As a large number of cash hoards have been found in Britain, buried by the Romans, who were never able to retrieve them, this image makes sense. If you haven't learned the Major System you might like to use the shape/rhyming systems with a sailboat launched off a cliff and being rowed with sticks. 476 CE is often pointed to as the transition from the Age of Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

### **3 The First University Opens in 895 CE in Fez (Morocco)**

This institution of higher learning is still in operation. It is the University of Karueein and was founded by a lady called Fatima – yes! a woman! That is the sort of titbit of information that helps facts stick in your brain.

Imagine a gate (I am sure your school had a gate) and 95 is ball in the Major System. That is easy – go through the school gate and play ball in the playground, or if you prefer, go through a gate into a football stadium. Add in some music: I recall 'STAR Doris Day is a star' which was a rhyme for a playground ball game for me, but that rhyme belongs in the history books now, so perhaps 'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles' or 'You'll Never Walk Alone' as football chants might be more suitable.

### **4 The Renaissance (1300s in Florence, Italy)**

The Renaissance arrived in different countries at varying times- Italy was the first to experience this movement, beginning in the 14th century, while it did not reach England until the sixteenth century. A general consensus is that by the early 17th century, the Renaissance had come to an end.

You may want to go back and remember these dates, but we will stick with 1300 and the beginning of the Renaissance and the invention of glasses.

In the Major System, 13 is tomb, and in the rhyming system it is 'Hurting', so create an image which includes either a tomb or hurting and glasses. For me, Mr Magoo springs to mind, which is odd because he didn't wear glasses, although he definitely needed them. However, I am happy thinking of him stumbling into a tomb, which of course makes me think of Ab Fab and Patsy 'grave diving'.

### **5 The Start of the First Industrial Revolution: 1760**

In the Major System, 17 is deck or dog and 60 is cheese. I think the first image to spring to mind for most people would be factories or Blake's 'dark satanic mills'. So imagine a dog chasing a cheese through a factory. Easy really, you just must think of the famous Cheese Rolling Race in

Gloucestershire and think of it going through those mills.

### **6 1775: The Start of the American Revolution**

17 deck and 75 coal.

[Battles of Lexington and Concord](#) on April 19, 1775, marked the beginning of the [American Revolutionary War](#) but [The Boston Tea Party](#) 2 years earlier was a significant event that helped accelerate and intensify colonial support for the American Revolution. The Boston Tea Party was when a consignment of tea from Great Britain was thrown off a ship into Boston harbour. Although it was a sailing ship, deck and coal fits in well with ships and it should be enough to give you the correct date.

### **7 The Ogé Rebellion of the Haitian Revolution: August–September 1791**

17 deck again and the slave ships is one of the many images people have around slavery, although it was institutionalized by the time of the first civilizations 3,500 BC. 91 is bat but it also means bad, which certainly works for slavery. However, a more positive image could be a highly successful West Indian cricket team playing on the deck of a ship.

### **8 1796 First Vaccine Invented (The Start of the Medical Revolution)**

17 use dog this time and 96 beach. A dog runs along the beach, scattering people waiting for Covid or Flu vaccinations.

### **9 November 9, 1989: The Day the Berlin Wall Came Down (The End of the Cold War)**

You will know it is the 20th century so to remember 89, think of the Beatles - FAB in the Major System- or 8 gate 9 line/wine in the rhyming system and imagine a gate in the wall with a line of people dancing through, drinking wine.

### **10 The Invention of the Internet, 1960s and the first message sent from UCLA to Stanford in 1969.**

The message was LOGIN, but the system crashed, and so Stanford only received the first two letters LO. Lo and behold - an amazing invention that now rules our lives.

69 is Ship in the Major System, and it could also stand for Chip so that would work well with the image of computers.

You will see by now how The Major System is best for dates, as you have different images for numbers 1-99, and so you can cut down on the number of images you have to remember. The Major System is also used as a basis by Tony Buzan, in his book [‘Master Your Memory’](#). In this, he introduces ‘The Self-Enhancing Master Memory Matrix (SEM3) which gives suggestions for taking numbers up to 9999

I found images for 100-999 easy to remember, especially as they use the Major System 1-9 letters to begin each hundred: d,n,m,r,l,sh,c,f,p.

However, I struggled with the rest of the matrix and for 1000 onwards, I found it easier to run 2 numbers together as I suggested around dates. I have tested repeatedly everything I have written about here and so there is little point in my putting in the full matrix if personally I could not use it. However, his book is excellent with several detailed lists you can learn, so if you are interested, do buy it.

Below is what I did find useful and I have used the image for rowing 44 with each 100

100-199: **Dinosaur** – I tend to use an image of Dino from The Flintstones, which shows my age, but perhaps setting your images in Jurassic Park would be a good idea, 144 – Rowing in Jurassic Park to get away from T Rex.

200-299: **Nobility** – 244 – I just put a crown on whoever is rowing.

300-399: **Moonlight** – 344 – I had difficulty making moonlight a strong enough image until I remembered the Moonlight Sonata, so now Beethoven is my image for the 300’s. It would also work very well for the number 327 – Beethoven Knocking (Vth symphony)

400-499: **R**avine – 444 – rowing at the base of a ravine. Very visual, I use the Grand Canyon.

500-599: **L**ightning – Another image I had difficulty with, until I thought of Zeus and his bolts of lightning. 544 – Zeus rowing, you could also add in Benjamin Franklin and his kite.

600-699: **C**hurch – easy, 644, rowing in a church.

700-799: **C**oncorde – Oh dear! How sad, but such a strong image and useful: put people or things in the plane. Living near Heathrow, I used to watch Concorde take to the skies and think 'one day' but it was not to be. 744, rowing along the aisle of Concorde.

800-899: **F**ire – 844, rowing away from a fire, think Fire of London.

900-999: **P**icture – frame your images in a picture or place them in an Art Gallery.

Two further examples of using the SEM system for numbers over 100

Speed of Light in an hour: All these numbers are 600, and so they take place in a church – 670,616,629 – in church, open a case (70), put in or take out a dish (16), steal it (29, nab).

Speed of Light in a second: 186,000. dino fishing

So there are the dates. If you want to practice some more, add in the dates of the high points in the Renaissance.

The invention of eyeglasses (around 1300)

The printing press was invented (and the Gutenberg Bible was published), 1455

The Age of Exploration: 1476 to 1500

The first modern atlas was published, 1570

The telescope was invented, 1608

The microscope was invented, the late 1660s

Have fun with these dates and don't forget to review them so they go into long-term memory.