

10 people who changed the world

1. Bill Gates :

Bill Gates created his first computer program while still at high school, co-founded Microsoft in 1977, and by 1993 was the richest man on Earth. In 2000 Gates and his wife formed the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation, which is the largest charity in the world. One of its aim is to exempt the Third World of polio and other deadly diseases.

2. Martin Luther King :

Martin Luther King was a Baptist minister who campaigned against the segregation of blacks in the Southern states of the United States. He was influenced by Gandhi and believed in peaceful protest. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. King was assassinated in 1968, but will always be remembered for his dignified, passive resistance to an unjust society.

3. Nelson Mandela :

Nelson Mandela dedicated his life to the fight against apartheid – a policy which kept black and white South Africans apart and denied black citizens the vote. He was imprisoned in 1964 for his aggressive opposition to South Africa's racist government and was held for 26 years. In 1990, after his release, Mandela was elected President of the African National Congress. In 1993 he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work to end apartheid

4. Adolf Hitler :

Adolf Hitler was Germany's leader from 1933 – 1945, during time which he led the world into the most devastating war in history. Hitler's hatred of Jewish people and his desire for a blue-eyed, blond-haired master race led to the murder of six million people during World War II; most died in concentration camp in Eastern Europe.

5. Albert Einstein :

Albert Einstein was one of the greatest of all physicists and his name has become a symbol of genius. When his most famous work, the General Theory Of Relativity was proven in 1919, Einstein became the most celebrated scientist in the world and he won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921. Einstein was a firm believer in pacifism but his scientific theories helped his adopted country, the USA, to develop the atomic bomb. A week before he died Einstein wrote to Bertrand Russell, a British Philosopher and leading antinuclear campaigner, asking to put his name to a manifesto urging all countries to give up their nuclear weapons.

6. Mahatma Gandhi :

Gandhi began his career as a lawyer but became a great political and spiritual leader. He led the peaceful civil

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disobedience of Indians against British rule in India and negotiated with the British Government until 1947, when India was granted independence. Gandhi became the first icon of a people's struggle against oppression. His simple lifestyle and his belief in religious tolerance have made him a symbol of decency and peace ever since.

7. Karl Marx :

Karl Marx's ideas on economic history and sociology changed the world. Marx was a social philosopher who attacked the state and predicted a future in which everyone was equal. He explained his theories in the Communist Manifesto (compiled with Friedrich Engels and published in 1848) and Das Kapital (1867 – 94). His ideas eventually led to the Russian Revolution and communism. By 1950 almost half of the world's people lived under communist regimes.

8. Charles Darwin :

Naturalist Charles Darwin established the theory of evolution. He began forming his ideas when he served as official naturalist on a world voyage on HMS Beagle (1831 – 36) and spent the rest of his life back in England developing them. When his famous book The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selections was published in 1859, there were violent reactions against it. Darwin challenged the Bible's account of creation and explained that human beings are descended from an ape-like ancestor. Another English naturalist, Alfred Russell Wallace, independently developed very similar ideas at the same time as Darwin.

9. William Shakespeare :

William Shakespeare is generally agreed to be the greatest play writer in the English language. He began as an actor and wrote at least 154 love poems and 37 plays, including Hamlet, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth. Shakespeare also probably introduced more than 1,700 new words to the English Language.

10. Christopher Columbus :

Christopher Columbus is one of the most famous of all explorers. He believed he could reach Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean and in 1492 he set sail in the Santa Maria to prove his theory. Instead, he landed on the islands now known as the West Indies. His discoveries led to the European explorations and settlement of the Americas.

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