

History Lessons – Events from October

Learning Objectives: To highlight some of this month's history anniversaries. Practise language of debate, ranking and discussion.

Skill/Grammar: Reading, speaking/ranking importance, *more important than*, giving reasons

Resources: Student text

Preparation Time: 0 minutes

Completion Time: 15–30 minutes

Age/Level: Secondary–Adult/
Intermediate and above

- Ask students if they know any important historical events that took place in October.
- Give out the list of historical anniversaries to students and ask them to read them.
Some key vocabulary: *commercial, controversial, carbon emissions, by-product, to execute, on the brink, consequent, tension, diffused, explorer, colonisation, to foment, iconic, constitution, legalise, federal republic, formalise*

Give them two minutes to read the anniversaries then ask them to turn over the text so they can't see it. Ask the following comprehension questions:

Who got rid of an emperor? (Mexico)

Who was the queen of France? (Marie Antoinette)

Which place almost caused a war? (Cuba)

Who sailed across an ocean? (Christopher Columbus)

Who was a revolutionary? (Ernesto 'Che' Guevara)

What country made laws about relationships? (Denmark)

What country had 'clean' energy? (Britain)

- Ask students to get into seven groups. Give each group a historical anniversary and ask them to prepare an argument to say why it is the most important event. They might want to use language such as '*... the most important because ...*', '*Obviously/Clearly ...*', '*While ... are important ...*', '*... more significant than ...*', etc.
- Bring the class together and ask each group to state their case in one minute. Other groups can ask questions.
- Ask the class which event they really believe is the most important.
- Finally, direct students to the discussion questions about the type of world in which they would prefer to live. They're not supposed to be serious, only to get people discussing pros and cons.

History Lessons – Events from October

You have two minutes to read about some important historical events that happened in October.

1956 The first commercial nuclear power station was opened

The first commercial nuclear power station was opened in Britain. Nuclear power is very controversial. Although nuclear power doesn't create carbon emissions it has very dangerous by-products that can't be easily disposed.

1793 Marie Antoinette was executed during the French Revolution

Marie Antoinette was the wife of King Louis XVI of France. She is famous for responding to complaints from the poor that they had no bread with the words 'Let them eat cake.' She was executed by the revolutionaries for a variety of offences.

1962 The Cuban Missile Crisis

The world was on the brink of a nuclear war and consequent destruction as the USA objected to the USSR placing missile bases in fellow communist country Cuba. Luckily the tension was diffused and the missiles were removed.

1492 Christopher Columbus reaches the Americas

The Italian explorer Christopher Columbus crossed the Atlantic and landed for the first time at an island in the Caribbean now known as San Salvador. It was the first action of Spanish and European colonisation of North and South America.

1967 Revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara was killed in Bolivia

Guevara was a famous communist revolutionary who was a key part of the Cuban revolution. He tried to foment revolutions in various other countries but was captured and executed in Bolivia with the help of the C.I.A. His image is now iconic around the world.

1825 Mexico creates its first constitution and becomes a federal republic

After Mexico won independence from Spain it was an empire under Agustín Cosme Damián de Iturbide y Arámbaru. However, people were not happy and he was exiled leaving Mexico with a decision to make on what type of government it had.

1987 Denmark becomes the first country to legalise civil unions between same-sex couples.

Although same-sex relationships were legal in various parts of the world, Denmark passed laws that formalised the relationships between same-sex couples.

History Lessons – Events from October

1 Your teacher is going to ask you some questions. Don't look at the text. Who can answer the quickest?

2 Ask your teacher about the words you don't understand.

3 Get into groups of four. Your teacher will give you an event. You must say why that event is more important than all the others.

4 Present your ideas to the class. Tell other groups why they are wrong!

5 Which event do you really believe is the most important?

6 Discuss in pairs.

Is nuclear power worth it for nuclear weapons?

Are revolutions worth the pain and killing?

Are republics always better than monarchies?