

## History Lessons – Events from December

**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 December.
- Give out the list of historical anniversaries to students and ask them to read them. Some key vocabulary you may want to pre-teach: *segregate, spark, boycott, energise, seek, colony, settlement, suffering, draft, endowed with, aims, explorer, prejudice, unofficial, sledge, vendor, official, inspire, step down*

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 was murdered? (John Lennon)

Who killed himself? (Mohammed Bouzizi)

Where were the explorers going? (the South Pole)

What happened after a war? (The Declaration of Human Rights)

Who wouldn't move? (Rosa Parks)

What was the name of the ship? (*Mayflower*)

- 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 December

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

### **1955 Rosa Parks refuses to give up her bus seat to a white man**

In the town of Montgomery in the state of Alabama in the USA, buses were segregated with seats for white people and black people. Rosa Parks was an African-American woman who refused to give up her seat in the white area. She was arrested. It sparked a bus boycott and energised the civil rights movement that was arguing for racial equality. Legal equality for African-Americans followed some years later.

### **1620 Mayflower pilgrims land in America**

A group of people seeking religious freedom left England and started a colony in North America. This settlement led to what became the United States of America over a century later. Their ship was called the *Mayflower*.

### **1980 John Lennon was shot and killed in New York**

John Lennon was a song writer in one of the most popular bands of all time, The Beatles. He also had a successful solo career with songs such as *Imagine*. He was also a political activist. He was murdered by mad man Mark David Chapman.

### **1948 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations**

After the destruction and suffering of the Second World War the UN drafted a document to ensure the rights of human beings. The first article reads ‘All humans are born free and equal in dignity of rights. They are endowed with reason and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.’ The declaration aims to defend rights and dignity of humans without prejudice of race, sex, language or religion.

### **1911 The Norwegian Explorer Roald Amundsen reaches the South Pole**

At the beginning of the twentieth century people began to explore the Antarctic and there was an unofficial race to see who could reach the South Pole first. A Norwegian exploration got there first with their clever use of dogs and sledges.

### **2010 Mohamed Bouazizi sets fire to himself and the Arab Spring starts**

Mohamed Bouazizi was a Tunisian street vendor who was so angry about the confiscation of his equipment and humiliation and harassment by officials he set fire to himself and died. His actions inspired Tunisians to revolution and the president stepped down. Soon after more revolutions started in Arab countries and the ‘Arab Spring’ was born.

## History Lessons – Events from December

**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 (even if you don't believe it).**

**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.**

*When is it right to defy authority?*

*Was Mohammed Bouazizi's sacrifice worth it?*

*What's the point in exploring the Antarctic?*

*Do human rights laws give too many rights to criminals?*

*Should pop stars be political activists too?*

*Is America good for the world?*