

Giving Women Their Place in History

Here is a game that celebrates the many famous firsts in women's history. Put the events in the correct order to win.

Setup

- Print a copy of the [40 game cards](#) and cut out along the solid lines.
- Using the list below, write the corresponding date on the back of the cards.

Let's play!

1. Deal four or five cards to each player, event side up.
2. The object of the game is for each player to arrange their cards (left to right) in the order in which the "firsts" occurred, from earliest to most recent. Decide in advance how much time will be allowed.
3. When everyone has settled on an order, turn the cards over and check the dates. Are they in order?
4. Players get one point for each correct placement. The easiest way to check the number of correct placements is to rearrange the cards in order. How many cards did you *not* have to move? That is your score.
5. Award an extra point if all of the cards are in the correct order.
6. Gather up the cards, shuffle the deck, and play as many rounds as you want.
7. At the end of the game, the person with the most points wins.



Tips & Variations

- Cut a long strip of paper or piece of masking tape and write *1st*, *2nd*, *3rd*, *4th*, and *5th* along it. Give each player a strip and ask them to place their card under the correct number.
- Use the cards for solitary games or one-on-one activities.
- Have players work in pairs or teams.

40 Women's Firsts

1. 1567 – **Mary, Queen of Scots is the first woman to play golf in Scotland.** Per many sources, she is also believed to have coined the term *caddy*.
2. 1587 – **Virginia Dare is the first child (female) born in the American colonies.** She was born on Roanoke Island, Virginia (which is in present-day North Carolina).
3. 1789 – **Martha Washington becomes the first First Lady of the U.S.** She was a wealthy widow with children when she met George Washington.

4. 1837 – **Queen Victoria is the first English monarch to live at Buckingham Palace.** St. James's Palace was the prior royal residence.
5. 1849 – **Elizabeth Blackwell becomes the first licensed woman physician in the U.S.** She graduated from medical college first in her class and went on to create a medical school solely for women in the late 1860s.
6. 1855 – **Lucy Stone is the first woman to marry and keep her maiden name.** She and her husband were both activists for woman's rights. It took him two years of courting before convincing her that they could create an equal marriage.
7. 1863 – **Harriet Tubman is the first woman to lead a military expedition (the Combahee River Raid) in the U.S.** During the Civil War, she led Union forces through plantations along the Combahee River. More than 700 slaves were freed, many of which joined the Union army.
8. 1885 – **Annie Oakley joins Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and becomes America's first female superstar.** As a teenager, she developed an amazing ability in marksmanship and earned enough money to help pay off her mother's mortgage. It was these skills that later won her fame; she was known for her remarkable shooting tricks.
9. 1901 – **Annie Taylor becomes the first woman to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel.** She was a 63-year-old schoolteacher, but she claimed she was in her 40s at the time.
10. 1903 – **Marie Curie is the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.** Curie won for her work in physics. She and her husband studied spontaneous radiation, which was discovered by Antoine Henri Becquerel (who was awarded the other half of the Prize). In 1911, she received a second Nobel Prize, this time in chemistry for her work with radioactivity.
11. 1904 – **Helen Keller becomes the first deaf and blind person to graduate from college.** Along with graduating cum laude from Radcliffe College in 1904, she published five books, wrote articles for national magazine publications, gave numerous lectures, and was even involved in making a movie about the difficulties of being blind.
12. 1910 – **Madam C. J. Walker becomes the first self-made female millionaire in the U.S.** She was the first in her family to not be born into slavery. She created a hair care product line for African Americans in 1905 after suffering from an ailment that led to losing her own hair.
13. 1917 – **Jeannette Rankin is the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress (as a representative for Montana).** This was especially remarkable because many women still did not have the right to vote.
14. 1921 – **Edith Wharton is the first female to win a Pulitzer Prize for fiction.** She received it for *The Age of Innocence*. She also wrote *Ethan Frome* and *The House of Mirth*. In fact, she wrote over 40 books in 40 years. She was also the first woman to receive an honorary doctorate of letters from Yale University and a full membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters.
15. 1925 – **Nellie Tayloe Ross becomes the first woman governor (of Wyoming) in the U.S.** She was also the first woman to direct the U.S. Mint, which she went on to do for 20 years.

16. 1926 – **Gertrude Ederle is the first woman to swim across the English Channel.** She also competed in the 1924 Olympics in Paris; her team won three medals.
17. 1932 – **Amelia Earhart is the first woman to make a transcontinental nonstop solo flight.** In 1937, her plane disappeared over the Pacific Ocean when attempting to circumnavigate the globe, and she was never seen again.
18. 1933 – **Frances Perkins is the first woman to be appointed to the Cabinet when she becomes secretary of labor under FDR.** With Franklin D. Roosevelt, she played a role in creating the New Deal and Social Security programs.
19. 1936 – **Wallis Warfield Simpson is *Time* magazine’s first “Woman of the Year.”** She was the American divorcée who had been at the center of the abdication scandal in Great Britain. This was when King Edward, who had ascended to the throne in January of that year, declared he would be stepping down as king to be with her.
20. 1940 – **Margaret Chase Smith is the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.** She later attempted to become the Republican presidential nominee in 1964, but Barry Goldwater won.
21. 1953 – **Jacqueline Cochran becomes the first woman to break the sound barrier.** She advocated for female aviators to be involved in WWII, led the Women’s Air Force Service Pilots training program, and holds more records for speed and distance than any other aviator in history.
22. 1958 – **Julia Child becomes the first woman designated as a full-fledged chef.** In 1963, her first cooking program aired on television, and she went on to create 201 episodes of *The French Chef*.
23. 1963 – **Valentina Tereshkova from Russia is the first woman in space.** She orbited Earth 48 times in less than three days.
24. 1964 – **Golda Meir is the first female prime minister of Israel.** Before that, she had also worked for the Israeli government as minister of labor and foreign minister among other titles.
25. 1970 – **Diane Crump is the first female jockey to ride in the Kentucky Derby.** She didn’t win that race, but she did go on to win 230 victories in her horse-racing career.
26. 1975 – **Junko Tabei from Japan is the first woman to climb Mount Everest.** Only six years earlier, she had formed a climbing club for women only. Their motto was “Let’s go on an overseas expedition by ourselves.”
27. 1976 – **Barbara Walters is the first female co-anchor on a TV network news program in the U.S.** She was known for her trademark interviewing technique that maintained a casual feel but also delved deeply into the issues.
28. 1977 – **Janet Guthrie is the first woman to drive in the Indy 500.** She was also the first female to race in the NASCAR Winston Cup stock car race and Daytona 500. She was later inducted into the Women’s Sports Hall of Fame in 1980 and the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in 2006.

29. 1979 – **Margaret Thatcher is elected first woman prime minister of England.** Her nickname was the “Iron Lady,” Thatcher served three terms (from 1979 to 1990).
 30. 1981 – **Sandra Day O’Connor becomes the first woman justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.** She received unanimous Senate approval and served on the court for 24 years.
 31. 1987 – **Aretha Franklin is the first woman inducted into the Rock ’n’ Roll Hall of Fame.** She was also the second woman ever to be inducted into the U.K. Music Hall of Fame, and she’s won 18 Grammy Awards. She’s even been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
 32. 1984 – **Geraldine Ferraro is the first female vice-presidential candidate.** She had previously been a women’s rights advocate in Congress, and her running mate was Walter Mondale.
 33. 1989 – **Oprah Winfrey is the first woman to own and produce her own syndicated TV show.** She was also the youngest person ever to win the International Radio and Television Society’s “Broadcaster of the Year” award.
 34. 1990 – **Dr. Antonia Novello becomes the first woman U.S. surgeon general.** She was also the first person of Latin descent (born in Puerto Rico) to hold the position.
 35. 1993 – **Kim Campbell becomes Canada’s first female prime minister.** However, she was only prime minister until November of that year. Her autobiography is called *Time and Chance*.
 36. 1997 – **Madeleine Albright becomes the first woman secretary of state.** President Clinton nominated Albright for the position, and she was unanimously confirmed by the Senate 99–0.
 37. 2004 – **J.K. Rowling is the first female novelist to become a billionaire.** She is also the author of the fastest-selling book in history. Rowling wrote the *Harry Potter* series, and the final book sold 8.3 million copies in the first 24 hours.
 38. 2007 – **Nancy Pelosi becomes the first female Speaker of the House.** The Speaker of the House is third in the line of presidential succession. Therefore, Pelosi has held the highest position of power ever attained by a female in the U.S.
 39. 2010 – **Kathryn Bigelow becomes the first woman to win an Oscar for Best Director (for the film *The Hurt Locker*).** Only three other women have been nominated for Best Director: Lina Wertmuller, Jane Campion, and Sofia Coppola.
 40. 2016 – **Hillary Clinton becomes the first female presidential nominee of a major party.** She was the first First Lady to be elected to office (as a senator from New York). She was the first person to serve in both the legislative and executive branches of government at the same time, spending 20 days as both a U.S. senator and as First Lady.
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