

# The Front Page

**THE FRONT PAGE IS A NEWSPAPER'S** front door. It's the first thing a reader sees. The stories that appear there are ones that will be talked about all day.

What makes a front-page story? Important news, of course, about decisions the president has made, wars that have broken out or planes that have crashed. But editors—the people who run newspapers—want a mix of stories. A good front page might also include articles about a come-from-behind sports victory,

a medical breakthrough or an ordinary person who has done something extraordinary—what's known as a "human interest" story. Photographs that grab the readers' eyes also are important parts of the front page.

The Washington Post's front page—also known as A1, the first page of the A section—starts coming together at a 2 p.m. meeting called the story conference. Post editors talk about the stories their reporters are working on and which ones seem like

good candidates for A1. Thirty minutes later they'll have a list of 25 to 30 A1 choices.

Editors spend the afternoon reading early versions of the stories. By 5:30 they've narrowed the stories to the seven or eight they think should go on the front page. The final decision is made at a 6 p.m. meeting—though if big news breaks, the front page can still be "ripped up" to make room for new stories. The front page will be tinkered with and improved all night long.

**Here's a look at all the bits and pieces that make up a typical front page. See if you can find them on today's front page.**

**Nameplate:** This is the newspaper's name. It's also sometimes called the flag, logo or masthead. Traditionally, newspaper nameplates are printed in a fancy style called "black letter" or "old English." The design gives an air of authority to the newspaper and implies a rich tradition.

**Weather Ear:** For obvious reasons, the top corners of a newspaper page are called "ears." Little snippets of information are sometimes put here.

**Issue Number:** The Post began in 1877. But the day this paper was printed, Sept. 9, wasn't the 278th day of the year. So why does it say No. 278? Because the first issue of the Post hit the streets on Dec. 6. Every Dec. 6 the Post adds another year and start counting again at 1.

**M2 DM VA**  
**Edition:** There are at least three editions of each day's newspaper. That means stories and photos may be changed on different pages three times. The first edition—which would be marked here by an "R"—is called the Regional and starts being printed at 11:15 p.m. The second edition is the Suburban, marked with an "S" and printed starting at 12:45 a.m. The third is usually the Final, marked with an "M2," printed beginning at 2:15 a.m. Sometimes there's an M1 before the Final.

The letters "DM VA" refer to how the paper is zoned. Since readers live all over the Washington, D.C., area, they're interested in all different things. Some papers delivered to Maryland and the District ("DM") have different stories than those delivered to Virginia ("VA"). You'll notice this mostly on pages in the Metro section. The front page is usually the same in all areas ("DM VA").

Sometimes you'll also see a "K" up here. That means there was a mistake on an earlier version of the page and it had to be "killed." That's newspaper-talk for replacing it with the correct page.

**The Fold:** This is where the paper folds in half. When it's inserted into those blue street boxes or stacked on a store's counter, the top half is all you see. Some people say that stories that fall "below the fold" (on the bottom half) aren't as important as those "above the fold."

**Dateline:** Stories have a dateline if they were written by a reporter outside the Washington area. The dateline may include the date the story was written and the city in which it was written. If there is no date, the story is less than 24 hours old.

**Photo Credit:** The name of the photographer who took the picture, and the organization he or she works for, goes here. Graphic artists also get credits like this.

**Caption:** This is a sentence or two describing what's going on in the photo and identifying the person or people in it.

**Holes:** The newspaper starts out as one long, flat strip going through the presses. After it's folded vertically along the spine, it's pulled down to be cut by massive blades. Pins punch through the paper to pull it. Those pins leave marks at the bottom of every page.

**Key or Refer:** There are many important stories in the paper every day. Not all of them can get on the front page. Little boxes or lines of type called keys alert readers to other articles in which they may be interested.

**Color Dots:** These are called NIRECO dots, after the company that makes the machine that uses them. All of the color images in a newspaper are made from four colors of ink. (Look at any photo with a magnifying glass.) The four colors are: yellow, magenta, an aqua-ish blue called cyan and black. But if the colors aren't lined up properly, the photos can look muddy or blurred. As the paper goes through the press, a video camera focuses on the NIRECO dots. If they're not in a perfect line, evenly spaced, the presses are adjusted.

**UPC Code:** There's always a bar code at the bottom of the page, so the price can be rung up as the paper is swept across a scanner in the checkout line.

**Tick Mark:** These four, color lines should sit atop one another. It's a way to make sure the colors are aligned. (See "Color Dots" below.)

**Overline:** Words at the top of the page call attention to sports scores or special sections inside the paper.

**"Final":** This was the last version of the newspaper printed that day. At least three versions, or editions, are printed. (See "Edition" at left.) The first one is the Regional (it doesn't say anything in this space), the second is the Suburban (it says "Home Edition") and the last is the Final. If everything works as planned, Post subscribers get the Home Edition. It has local sports and updates in the Style, Metro and A sections. The Final is distributed at newsstands and contains West Coast sports scores and late news updates.

**Price:** The Post provides all this information for 35 cents. And if you get the paper delivered at home it's even less: 28 cents a copy. A newspaper doesn't survive on the subscriptions or newsstand sales. Most of a paper's revenue comes from the ads it sells. (There are no ads on the front page of The Post, although some papers sell space there to advertisers.)

**Gray Bar or Registration Line:** This thick line helps make sure the color photos in the paper look good. It's made up of color ink that is applied to the paper at a known density and intensity. As papers come off the press, technicians use a tool called a densitometer to measure whether the ink is right. If it's not, something is wrong, and they make adjustments. When the gray bar is correct, the color should be right everywhere on the page.

**Lead Story:** The story at the top right is the one that Post editors think is the most important of the day. Generally, the higher on the page a story is, the more important the story.

**Press Letter and Number:** The Post has two printing plants: one in Springfield, Virginia, another in College Park, Maryland. Look here to see whether this copy of the paper was printed in Maryland ("M") or Virginia ("V"). Each plant has four separate presses. The number tells you exactly on which press the paper was printed.

**Headline:** This should give the story in a nutshell, letting a reader decide whether to read the article. Usually, the bigger the headline, the more important the story.

**Subhead:** Smaller than the headline, the subhead gives a little more information.

**Byline:** This is the name of the person who wrote the story. Just underneath is the: **Agate Line/Credit Line:** If it says "Washington Post Staff Writer" or "Washington Post Foreign Service," an employee of the Post wrote the story. If it says "Special to The Washington Post," someone who doesn't work full-time for The Post was paid to write that particular story.

**Rule:** The line used to separate stories.

**Jump Line:** Stories started on the front page finish up on another page inside the A section. The jump line tells you on what page the story continues.



**Learn More**—For free curriculum guides with lesson plans and reproducible, visit The Washington Post's Newspaper in Education Web site: [www.washpost.com/nie](http://www.washpost.com/nie). For daily newspaper front pages from around the world and the nation, online exhibits and Newsmania, visit [www.newseum.org](http://www.newseum.org).



## The Washington Post

The Washington Post Newspaper in Education program provides material and resources to classroom teachers to use newspapers daily with the front page and the rest of the newspaper. In addition, on-line curriculum can be found at [washpost.com/nie](http://washpost.com/nie). Supporting a timely curriculum with reproducible and KidsPost quizzes, the Web site also offers an intensive look at the mechanics of journalism. The *Inside Journalism* curriculum covers all aspects of putting together a newspaper as well as a focus on related First Amendment rights.

## NEWSEUM

Between 1997 and 2002, The Newseum, the interactive museum of news, welcomed more than 2.25 million visitors at its Arlington, Va., site. Now a new, much larger Newseum is being developed at Pennsylvania Avenue and Sixth Street, N.W., in Washington, D.C. The project is scheduled to be completed in early 2008. The Newseum is funded by the Freedom Forum, a non-partisan foundation dedicated to free press, free speech and free spirit for all people.

# History Through the Headlines

Journalists go where the action and human conflict are to give readers a front-row seat to history. The late Post president and publisher, Phillip E. Graham considered journalism the first rough draft of history. Newspapers provide information and exercise our guaranteed right of freedom of the press. Editors seek to provide the most significant news on front pages every day. The Newseum and The Washington Post have collaborated on a historical timeline of the 20th century using front pages. Here are ten final editions—breaking news through the century—that show history in the making.



## 1903—Soared Like an Eagle

December 17 – Orville Wright flies a 750-pound aircraft, powered by a gasoline engine, for 12 seconds (120 feet) across the sand hills of Kitty Hawk, N. C. His brother, Wilbur, stays aloft for 59 seconds. It is the first time man flies in a mechanically powered machine.



## 1920—Women's Suffrage

August 18 – The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution is ratified. It prohibits discrimination in voting based on sex. One hundred and forty-four years after the birth of the Republic, American women finally have the right to vote.



## 1929—Stocks Collapse

October 29 – Thousands buy stocks with borrowed money in the soaring stock market of the late 1920s. When the bubble bursts, stocks crash. Savings, homes and jobs are lost. Banks close. Economic mismanagement leads to the Great Depression, which lasts until World War II.



## 1940-1945—The Holocaust

As American soldiers liberate the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany, April 11, 1945, they report atrocities committed by the Nazis – particularly against Jews – at this and other camps. Six million Jews die. Before 1945, few front pages tell of the Holocaust.



## 1941—Hawaii Attacked

December 7 – Japanese planes bomb the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The United States declares war on Japan. Germany declares war on the United States on Dec. 11, 1941. America is in World War II.



## 1945—Atomic Bomb

August 6 – In World War II, the U.S. bomber Enola Gay drops a new kind of bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The city is leveled and burns. More than 60,000 people die, relatively few of them soldiers. The “Atomic Age” begins.



## 1963—Kennedy Shot Dead

November 22 – President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas during a motorcade through the city. Lyndon B. Johnson becomes the 36th president of the United States. The man accused of the assassination, Lee Harvey Oswald, is shot dead Nov. 24, 1963, on national TV.



## 1969—Eagle Has Landed

July 20 – “Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed.” With these words, Neil Armstrong tells the world that mankind finally has realized an age-old dream – to walk on the moon. Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin do it after flying for eight days aboard Apollo 11.



## 1974—Nixon Resigns

August 9 – Richard Nixon resigns his presidency in disgrace, brought down by the Watergate scandals involving political spying, sabotage and cover-up. It starts with an attempted burglary at Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate Hotel on June 17, 1972. Two young Washington Post reporters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, report the Watergate burglary story and uncover in others abuses of power.



## 1989—Wall Falls

November 9 – Restrictions on travel into and out of East Germany are lifted. Germans soon are dancing on and literally chipping away at the Berlin Wall, which for so long divided them. For years the people have heard broadcasts from the West. The wall could keep East Berliners prisoners, but it could not keep out the news. The fall of the Berlin Wall is a watershed moment in the decades-long struggle between communism and democracy.

## What Will Be the Top Stories of the 21st Century?

History is being made every day. Read daily newspaper front pages from around the world at [www.newseum.org](http://www.newseum.org), then vote for the top stories from the year 2000 on. We'll keep a running total, so you can see if your choices match voters across the nation.



## 2001—9/11

September 11 -- More than 3,000 people die on one day when terrorists use airliners to attack U.S. sites. After being hit, the twin towers of the World Trade Center burn and fall. The west side of the Pentagon collapses when a jetliner slams into it. Passengers resist hijackers and a fourth airliner crashes into a Pennsylvania field. These attacks lead to the U.S. war on terrorism. The world changes.



Boldface stories are available in Quicktime movie format at [www.newseum.org](http://www.newseum.org)

The Newseum asked journalists and historians to choose the biggest stories of the 20th Century. Here are the results.

- 1 U.S. Drops Atomic Bomb 1945
- 2 Men First Walk on the Moon 1969
- 3 Japan Bombs Pearl Harbor 1941
- 4 Wrights Fly First Airplane 1903
- 5 U.S. Women Win the Right to Vote 1920
- 6 JFK Assassinated in Dallas 1963
- 7 Nazi Holocaust Exposed 1945
- 8 World War I Begins 1914
- 9 Court Ends 'Separate But Equal' 1954
- 10 U.S. Stock Market Crashes 1929
- 11 Antibiotic Penicillin Discovered 1928
- 12 DNA's Structure Discovered 1953
- 13 Soviet Union Dissolves 1991
- 14 President Nixon Resigns 1974
- 15 Germany Invades Poland 1939
- 16 Communists Take Over Russia 1917
- 17 Ford Creates Assembly Line 1913
- 18 Soviets Launch First Satellite 1957
- 19 Einstein Conceives Relativity 1905
- 20 Birth Control Pill OK'd by FDA 1960
- 21 New Polio Vaccine Works 1953
- 22 Hitler Named Chancellor 1933
- 23 M.L. King Jr. Assassinated 1968
- 24 Allies Invade France on D-Day 1944
- 25 Deadly AIDS Disease Identified 1981
- 26 Congress OKs Civil Rights Act 1964
- 27 Berlin Wall Falls 1989
- 28 Official U.S. Debut of TV 1939
- 29 Mao Starts Communist China 1949
- 30 Lindbergh Flies Atlantic Alone 1927
- 31 Apple II First Mass-Market PC 1977
- 32 World Wide Web Invented 1989
- 33 Scientists Invent Transistor 1948
- 34 FDR's New Deal Begins 1933
- 35 World Crisis over Cuba Missiles 1962
- 36 'Unsinkable' Titanic Sinks 1912
- 37 U.S. Celebrates V-E Day 1945
- 38 Roe v. Wade Legalizes Abortion 1973
- 39 World War I Ends 1918
- 40 U.S. Radio Broadcasts Begin 1909
- 41 Flu Epidemic Kills 20 Million 1918
- 42 ENIAC Accelerates Computing 1946
- 43 U.S.-Licensed TV Begins 1941
- 44 Jackie Robinson Integrates Baseball 1947
- 45 Israel Achieves Statehood 1948
- 46 Plastic Revolutionizes Products 1909
- 47 Alabama Bus Boycott Begins 1955
- 48 U.S. Tests Atomic Bomb 1945
- 49 Apartheid Ends in South Africa 1993
- 50 King Delivers 'Dream' Speech 1963
- 51 First Computer Chip Patented 1959
- 52 Radio Signal Spans Atlantic 1901
- 53 President Clinton Impeached 1998
- 54 Marshall Plan Unveiled 1947
- 55 Robert F. Kennedy Slain 1968
- 56 U.S. Rejects League of Nations 1920
- 57 'Silent Spring' Warns of Eco-Danger 1962
- 58 Beatles Tour USA 1964
- 59 Congress Passes Voting Act 1965
- 60 Gagarin First Man in Space 1961
- 61 First Jet Plane Takes Off 1939
- 62 U.S. Escalates Vietnam War 1965
- 63 North Vietnam Takes Saigon 1975
- 64 Secret Project to Make A-bomb 1942
- 65 GI Bill of Rights Strengthened 1945
- 66 Shepard First American in Space 1961
- 67 Watergate Engulfs Nixon 1973
- 68 Quake, Fire Devastates S.F. 1906
- 69 World's Nations Form U.N. 1945
- 70 Berlin Wall Goes Up 1961
- 71 Gandhi Starts Nonviolent Reform 1920
- 72 Standard Oil Trust Busted 1911
- 73 U.S. Troops Leave Vietnam 1973
- 74 NATO Established 1949
- 75 Soviet Famine Kills 25 Million 1928
- 76 FDR Defeats President Hoover 1932
- 77 Gorbachev Begins 'Glasnost' 1985
- 78 Quantum Mechanics Proposed 1900
- 79 Scientists Clone Sheep 1997
- 80 Interstate Highways Approved 1956
- 81 Panama Canal Opens 1914
- 82 Friedan Sparks Women's Rights 1963
- 83 Shuttle Challenger Explodes 1986
- 84 U.S. Defends South Korea 1950
- 85 Riots at Democratic Convention 1968
- 86 Freud Interprets Dreams 1900
- 87 China's Famine Kills 20 Million 1958
- 88 U.S. Enters World War I 1917
- 89 Babe Ruth Hits 60 Home Runs 1927
- 90 Glenn First American in Orbit 1962
- 91 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution OK'd 1964
- 92 Pathfinder Sends Mars Photos 1997
- 93 Hitler Launches 'Kristallnacht' 1938
- 94 Churchill Leads Great Britain 1940
- 95 First 'Test-tube Baby' Born 1978
- 96 Airlift Saves West Berlin 1948
- 97 Gates, Allen Start Microsoft 1975
- 98 Chernobyl Nuke Plant Explodes 1986
- 99 Scopes: Evolution v. Creation 1925
- 100 U.S. Warns of Smoking Hazards 1964