

# Writing on This Day in History

By Carla Earley

## January 1

1. On this day in AD 404, the last gladiatorial match was fought in the Roman Coliseum. Research the Roman Coliseum and find out what it was used for, why the gladiatorial matches stopped, and what it is like today.
2. On this day in AD 439, the Theodosian Code went into effect. What was this code of law like? How does it compare to today's law in your country? What was unique about it in Emperor Theodosius II's day?
3. On this day in 1449, Lorenzo de Medici was born in Florence. What is he known for? How was he involved in the Renaissance? What were his strengths and weaknesses? Do you think you would've liked him?
4. On this day in 1735, Paul Revere was born. You know him for his famous ride, but what did he do for a living? How else was he involved in the American Revolution? What are some of his personal characteristics you would like to emulate . . . or not?
5. On this day in 1892, the first immigrants arrived at Ellis Island. Find out why this island is so famous, how long it was in operation, and why it was closed down. Do you have any relatives who came to America through this place?

## January 2

1. On this day in 1492, the Reconquista in Spain was concluded. What is the Reconquista, and how did the victory of this day get Columbus to the New World?
2. On this day in 1839, French photographer Louis Daguerre took the first photograph of the moon. Find out more about Louis Daguerre. In his honor, go out and take pictures. Pick your favorite picture and write about it.
3. On this day in 1935, the Lindbergh-baby kidnapping trial began. Why was this such big news at the time? Learn more about Lindbergh and what this kidnapping meant to America. Whose kidnapping today might be comparable to this? Why?
4. On this day in 1945, citizens of Japanese, Italian, and German descent were released from internment camps in the US. Find out why they had been there and how this affected the people of that era. How would you feel if you had been one of those interred in the camps?

### January 3

1. On this day in 1521, Martin Luther was excommunicated by Pope Leo X. What do you know about Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation? Why did the pope excommunicate him? What were the results?
2. On this day in 1892, J.R.R. Tolkien was born. Where was he born, and what is his full name? If you have never read any of his books, start with the *Hobbit* and see how you like them! Be sure to write a book review on it when you're finished!
3. On this day in 1924, King Tutankhamen's tomb was uncovered. Learn about King Tut and the man who uncovered his tomb. Why was it so special? Would you like to go see it? What would it have been like to have been there on the day his sarcophagus was opened?
4. On this day in 1959, Alaska became the 49<sup>th</sup> state. Would you like to visit Alaska? Would you like to live there? Learn about the state and record your results.

### January 4

1. On this day in 1785, children's author Jakob Grimm was born. Read some of his work and find out more about him.
2. On this day in 1809, Louis Braille was born. He developed a system of reading for the blind. What was used before this? How did his invention revolutionize the world for blind people? What would it be like to be blind? Try walking around your house blindfolded, with a parent who can make sure you don't run into anything dangerous, and record your experiences. (DO NOT walk anywhere that is unsafe, like close to stairs or the oven.)
3. On this day in 1896, Utah became the 45<sup>th</sup> state. Find out more about Utah. How was it founded? What kept it from entering the United States earlier? Would you like to visit there?
4. On this day in 1813, Sir Isaac Pitman, the British publisher who invented shorthand, was born. What is shorthand? What was it used for, and why do we not use it much anymore?

### January 5

1. On this day in 1066, King Edward the Confessor died. Who succeeded him, what happened to him, and what happened to England afterward?
2. On this day in 1589, Catherine de Medici died. Who was she, and what did she do? What was her life like? Do you think you would've liked to be her?

3. On this day in 1825, Alexandre Dumas had his first duel. Who was he, and what is he known for? Would you have liked to have been one of his musketeers? Do you think they lived as romantic a life as he suggested?
4. On this day in 1943, George Washington Carver died at age 81. What successes did he have in his life? What is he known for? Find out some of the many uses of a peanut. What were peanuts used for before Carver? Write a poem about a peanut butter sandwich.

### January 6

1. On this day in 926, Good King Wenceslas was murdered. Read the song about this Christian king. What good did he do for his people? Why was he killed? What about him would you like to emulate in your own life?
2. On this day in 1759, George Washington married Martha Custis. What do you know about their marriage? What kind of person was she? Find out about Martha and her children. What happened to them?
3. On this day in 1854, Sherlock Holmes was “born.” Choose a few stories about him and write summaries.
4. On this day in 1878, American poet Carl Sandburg was born. Why did he win a Pulitzer Prize? Read some of his poetry and write one or two of your own poems.

### January 7

1. On this day in 1610, Galileo Galilei discovered the four moons of Jupiter. What else did he discover? Why did the Catholic church of the time force him to renounce his works? What would you have done if you had been Galileo?
2. On this day in 1867, Mark Twain began his “Grand Tour” of Europe. What was he doing, and why? What book did he write after this? Write a witty description of one of your family’s trips.
3. On this day in 1924, George Gershwin completed *Rhapsody in Blue*. What else did he write? Listen to some of his compositions, and write how they make you feel or what you think about when you hear them.
4. On this day in 1927, transatlantic telephone service began between New York and London. What led up to this, and how did it change the world? Compare and contrast these changes with the changes begun by the Internet.

5. On this day in 1999, President Bill Clinton went on trial before the Senate. Why was he on trial? What do you think should have happened? Write about a person, whether real or imaginary, whom you think would be a good president. What qualities would he/she have?

### **January 8**

1. On this day in 396, Augustine of Hippo was ordained. He is known for his writings. What books did he write? What were they about? Read a few entries in one of his devotions, and write a response to it. Augustine's mother, Monica, had a great influence on his life. Write about how your parents have influenced your life.
2. On this day in 1815, Andrew Jackson led his troops to victory over the British in the Battle of New Orleans. Learn about this battle and its wide-reaching effects. How did the war end? How did this battle affect American history?
3. On this day in 1918, President Woodrow Wilson outlined his "Fourteen Points" after World War I. Find out what his points were and how they were accepted by the world. How did the end of World War I lead to World War II?
4. On this day in 1982, the Justice Department broke up the AT&T monopoly. What is a monopoly? Do you think the government should have the right to break up a monopoly? Defend your answer.

### **January 9**

1. On this day in 1324, Marco Polo died in Venice. Many people did not believe the story of his travels. Do you have a story that is almost unbelievable? Write it down! Feel free to stretch the truth, as Marco Polo may have done, to make your point, but be sure to note at the end what parts are true and what parts are not.
2. On this day in 1793, Jean Pierre Blanchard used a hot air balloon to fly between Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Woodbury, New Jersey. Find out the history of the hot air balloons and record your findings. How would you have felt if you lived back then and saw a hot air balloon sailing over your town?
3. On this day in 1928, The Seeing Eye was opened in Nashville, TN. What did this place do? How is it beneficial? Would you like to work there?

### **January 10**

1. On this day in 1738, Ethan Allen was born. What group of men did he lead in the Revolutionary War? What was their greatest success?