



Top News Stories from 1961

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World Events

- US breaks diplomatic relations with [Cuba](#) (Jan. 3).
- 1,200 US-sponsored anti-Castro exiles invade [Cuba](#) at the [Bay of Pigs](#) (April 17); the attackers are all killed or captured by Cuban forces.
- East [Germany](#) erects the [Berlin Wall](#) between East and West [Berlin](#) to halt flood of refugees (Aug. 13). Background: [The Cold War](#)
- USSR detonates 50-megaton [hydrogen bomb](#) in the largest man-made explosion in history (Oct. 29). Background: [nuclear weapons](#)
- There are 2,000 US military advisers in South [Vietnam](#). Background: [Vietnam War](#)
- [OPEC](#) (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) formally constituted.

World Statistics

Population: 4.378 billion

[population by decade](#)Nobel Peace Prize: [Dag Hammarskjöld \(Sweden\)](#)[More World Statistics...](#)

U.S. Events

- [Robert Frost](#) recites "The Gift Outright" at [John F. Kennedy's](#) inauguration (Jan. 20).
- [First US astronaut](#), Navy Cmdr. [Alan B. Shepard, Jr.](#), rockets 116.5 miles up in 302-mile trip (May 5).
- [Virgil Grissom](#) becomes [second American astronaut](#), making 118-mile-high, 303-mile-long rocket flight over Atlantic (July 21).

U.S. Statistics

President: [John F. Kennedy](#)Vice President: [Lyndon B. Johnson](#)

Population: 183,691,481

Life expectancy: 70.2 years

Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000): 19.1

Property Crime Rate (per 1,000) 17.5

Homicide Rate (per 100,000): 4.7

Economics

US GDP (1998 dollars): \$544.8 billion

Federal spending: \$97.72 billion

Federal debt \$292.6 billion

Consumer Price Index: \$29.9

Unemployment: 5.5%

Cost of a first-class stamp: \$0.04

[More U.S. Statistics...](#)

[More Economics...](#)

Sports

World Series

NY Yankees d. Cincinnati

NBA Championship

Boston d. St. Louis Hawks

Stanley Cup

Chicago d. Detroit

Wimbledon

Women: Angela Mortimer d. C. Truman (4-6 6-4 7-5)

Men: Rod Laver d. C. McKinley (6-3 6-1 6-4)

Kentucky Derby Champion

Carry Back

NCAA Basketball Championship

Cincinnati d. Ohio St. (70-65 OT)

NCAA Football Champions

Alabama (AP, UPI, NFF) (11-0-0) & Ohio St. (FW) (8-0-1)

Sports Links

[Pro Football Summary](#)

[Pro Basketball Summary](#)

[Pro Baseball Summary](#)

Entertainment

Events

- Patsy Cline releases "I Fall to Pieces" and "Crazy." The success of the songs help her cross over from country to pop.
- *West Side Story* is adapted for the big screen, and will go on to win [Oscars](#) for Best Picture, Supporting Actor (George Chakiris),

Entertainment Awards

Pulitzer Prizes

Fiction:

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Music: *Symphony No. 7*, Walter Piston

Drama: *All the Way Home*, Tad Mosel

Supporting Actress ([Rita Moreno](#)), and Directing (Robert Wise and [Jerome Robbins](#)).

- [Audrey Hepburn](#) delights as Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, but [Henry Mancini](#) emerges as the real star. He won two [Oscars](#) and four [Grammy Awards](#) for the score, which included the hit "Moon River."

Movies

- *West Side Story*, *The Hustler*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*, *La Dolce Vita*

Music

- Patsy Cline, "I Fall to Pieces" and "Crazy"

Books

- [Joseph Heller](#), *Catch-22*
- [Henry Miller](#), *Tropic of Cancer*
- [Lewis Mumford](#), *The City in History*
- [V. S. Naipaul](#), *A House for Mr. Biswas*
- [Walker Percy](#), *The Moviegoer*
- [J. D. Salinger](#), *Franny and Zooey*

Science

- Moscow announces putting first man in orbit around earth, Major [Yuri A. Gagarin](#) (April 12). Background: [Soviet Staffed Space Flight Programs](#)
- Gherman Stepanovich Titov is launched in Soviet spaceship *Vostok II*: makes 17 1/2 orbits in 25 hours, covering 434,960 miles before landing safely (Aug. 6). Background: [Space Exploration](#)
- [Alan B. Shepard](#) becomes the first American man in space aboard the *Freedom 7*. Background: [US Staffed Space Flights](#)
- Jack Lippes develops the [contraceptive](#) intrauterine device (IUD). Background: [Birth](#)

Academy Award, Best Picture: *The Apartment*, Billy Wilder, producer (United Artists)

Nobel Prize for Literature: Ivo Andric (Yugoslavia)

Record of the Year: "Theme From A Summer Place," Percy Faith

Album of the Year: *Button Down Mind*, Bob Newhart (Warner Bros.)

Song of the Year: "Theme From Exodus," Ernest Gold, songwriter

Miss America: Nancy Fleming (MI)

[More Entertainment Awards...](#)

Nobel Prizes in Science

Chemistry: Melvin Calvin (US), for establishing chemical steps during photosynthesis

Physics: Robert Hofstadter (US), for determination of shape and size of atomic nucleus; Rudolf Mössbauer (Germany), for method of producing and measuring recoil-free gamma rays

Physiology or Medicine: Georg von Békésy (US), for discoveries about physical mechanisms of stimulation within cochlea

[More Nobel Prizes in 1958...](#)

& Contraception

Death

- [Sir Thomas Beecham](#)
- [Ty Cobb](#)
- [Carl Jung](#)
- [Chico Marx](#)

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or enter a year:



[Year by Year: 1900-2014](#)

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