



Top News Stories from 1981

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World Events

- US-[Iran](#) agreement frees 52 hostages held in Teheran since 1979 (Jan. 20); hostages welcomed back in US (Jan. 25). Background: [Iran Hostage Crisis](#)
- Pope [John Paul II](#) wounded by gunman (May 14).
- [Israel](#) annexes the disputed [Golan Heights](#) territory (Dec. 14).
- Egyptian president [Anwar el-Sadat](#) is assassinated by Islamic extremists during a military parade in [Cairo](#) (Oct. 6).
- President [Hilla Limann](#) is overthrown in [Ghana](#) as [Jerry J. Rawlings](#) seizes power.

World Statistics

Population: 4.378 billion

[population by decade](#)[Nobel Peace Prize: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#)[More World Statistics...](#)

U.S. Events

- [Ronald Reagan](#) takes oath as 40th President (Jan. 20).
- [President Reagan wounded by gunman](#), with press secretary and two law-enforcement officers (March 30).
- [US Supreme Court](#) rules, 4–4, that former [President Nixon](#) and three top aides may be required to pay damages for wiretap of home telephone of former national security aide (June 22).
- [Reagan](#) nominates Judge [Sandra Day O'Connor](#), 51, of Arizona, as first woman on [US Supreme Court](#) (July 7).
- Air controllers [strike](#), disrupting flights (Aug. 3); government dismisses strikers (Aug. 11).

U.S. Statistics

President: [Ronald W. Reagan](#)Vice President: [George Bush](#)

Population: 229,465,714

Life expectancy: 74.1 years

Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000): 58.6

Property Crime Rate (per 1,000) 52.6

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

Economics

US GDP (1998 dollars): \$3,115.90 billion

Federal spending: \$678.25 billion

Federal debt \$994.8 billion

Median Household Income(current dollars): "Sailing," Christopher Cross billion

Consumer Price Index: \$90.9

Unemployment: 7.6%

Cost of a first-class stamp: \$0.15 (\$0.18 as of 3/22/81; \$0.20 as of 11/1/81)

[More Economics...](#)

Sports

Super Bowl

Oakland d. Philadelphia

World Series

LA Dodgers d. NY Yankees

NBA Championship

Boston d. Houston

Stanley Cup

NY Islanders d. Minnesota

Wimbledon

Women: Chris Evert Lloyd d. H. Mandlikova (6-2 6-2)

Men: John McEnroe d. B. Borg (4-6 7-6 7-6 6-4)

Kentucky Derby Champion

Pleasant Colony

NCAA Basketball Championship

Indiana d. North Carolina

NCAA Football Champions

Clemson (12-0-0)

Sports Links

[Pro Football Summary](#)

[Pro Basketball Summary](#)

[Pro Baseball Summary](#)

Entertainment

Events

Entertainment Awards

- MTV goes on the air running around the clock music videos, debuting with "Video Killed the Radio Star."
- The Supreme Court rules to allow television cameras in the courtroom.
- Pacman-mania sweeps the country.

Movies

- *Raiders of the Lost Ark, Chariots of Fire, On Golden Pond, Reds, Atlantic City*

Books

- [Salman Rushdie](#), *Midnight's Children*
- [John Updike](#), *Rabbit is Rich*

Science

- [AIDS](#) is first identified. Background: [Understanding AIDS](#)
- IBM introduces its first personal computer, running the Microsoft Disk Operating System (MS-DOS). Background: [Computers and Internet](#)
- The 236-m.p.h. TGV, Europe's first high-speed passenger train, begins operating out of Lyons, France.
- The FDA approves the use of the artificial sweetener [aspartame](#) (Nutrasweet). Background: [Health & Nutrition](#)

Death

- [Joe Louis](#)
- [Anwar Sadat](#)
- Bobby Sands
- Bill Haley

Pulitzer Prizes

Fiction:

***A Confederacy of Dunces*, John Kennedy Toole**

Drama: *Crimes of the Heart*, Beth Henley

Academy Award, Best Picture: *Ordinary People*, Ronald L. Schwary, producer (Paramount)

Nobel Prize for Literature: Elias Canetti (Bulgaria)

Album of the Year: *Christopher Cross*, Christopher Cross (Warner Bros.)

Song of the Year: "Sailing," Christopher Cross, songwriter

Miss America: Susan Powell (OK)

[More Entertainment Awards...](#)

Nobel Prizes in Science

Chemistry: Roald Hoffmann (US) and Kenichi Fukui (Japan), for applying quantum-mechanics theories to predict the course of chemical reactions

Physics: Nicolaas Bloembergen, Arthur L. Schawlow (both US), and Kai M. Siegbahn (Sweden), for developing technologies with lasers and other devices to probe the secrets of complex forms of matter

Physiology or Medicine: Roger W. Sperry, David H. Hubel (both US), and Torsten N. Wiesel (Sweden), for studies vital to understanding the organization and functioning of the brain

[More Nobel Prizes in 1998...](#)

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Year by Year: 1900-2014

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