

100 most influential people in the world

This is a list chosen by Michael H. Hart, from the book '[100 most influential people in the world](#)'. He chose people on a ranking of who had done the most to influence the world.

1. [Muhammad](#) (570 – 632 AD) Prophet of Islam.
2. [Isaac Newton](#) (1642 – 1727) – British mathematician and scientist.
3. [Jesus Christ](#) (c.5BC – 30 AD) Spiritual teacher and central figure of Christianity.
4. [Buddha](#) (c 563 – 483 BC) Spiritual Teacher and founder of Buddhism.
5. [Confucius](#) (551 – 479 BC) – Chinese philosopher.
6. [St. Paul](#) (5 – AD 67) – Christian missionary and one of the main writers of New Testament.
7. [Ts'ai Lun](#) (AD 50 – 121) Inventor of paper.
8. [Johann Gutenberg](#) (1395 – 1468) – Inventor of the printing press.
9. [Christopher Columbus](#) (1451 – 1506) – Italian explorer landed in America.
10. [Albert Einstein](#) (1879 – 1955) German/ US scientist discovered Theory of Relativity.
11. [Louis Pasteur](#) (1822 – 1895) French biologist. Developed a cure for rabies and other infectious diseases.
12. [Galileo Galilei](#) (1564 – 1642) Italian scientist – confirmed the heliocentric view of the universe.
13. [Aristotle](#) (384 BC – 322 BC) – Greek philosopher and polymath
14. [Euclid](#) (c. 325 – 265 BC) – Greek mathematician
15. [Moses](#) (c 1391 – 1271 BC) A key figure of Jewish / Christian history gave 10 Commandments of Old Testament

16. [Charles Darwin](#) (1809 - 1882) –Scientist who proposed and popularised theory of evolution.
17. [Shih Huang Ti](#) (259 – 210 BC) – King of the state of Qin who conquered and united different regions of China in 221 BC.
18. Augustus Caesar (63 BC-AD 14) – First Emperor of Rome
19. [Nicolaus Copernicus](#) (1473-1543) Renaissance mathematician and astronomer who believed Sun was the centre of Universe – rather than earth.
20. Antoine Laurent Lavoisier (1743 – 1794) French chemist and biologist who had leading impact on the chemical revolution.
21. [Constantine the Great](#) (272 AD – 337) Roman Emperor who accepted Christian religion.
22. [James Watt](#) (1736 – 1819) Scottish engineer. Watt improved the Newcome steam engine creating an efficient steam engine
23. [Michael Faraday](#) (1791 – 1867) – English scientist who contributed in fields of electromagnetism and electrochemistry.
24. [James Clerk Maxwell](#) (1831-1879) Scottish physicist. Maxwell made a significant contribution to understanding electromagnetism
25. [Martin Luther](#) (1483-1546) Sought to reform the Roman Catholic Church – starting the Protestant Reformation.
26. [George Washington](#) (1732 – 1799) – Leader of US forces during American Revolution and 1st President of US.
27. [Karl Marx](#) (1818 - 1883) – German Communist philosopher.
28. [Orville and Wilbur Wright](#) Orville (1871 – 1948) – Wilbur (1867 – 1912) – Created and flew the first aeroplane.
29. [Genghis Kahn](#) (1162 – 1227) – Military and political leader of the Mongols.
30. [Adam Smith](#) (1723-1790) Scottish social philosopher and pioneer of classical economics.
31. [William Shakespeare](#) (1564- 1616) English poet and playwright.

32. John Dalton (1766 – 1844) English chemist and physicist. Made contributions to atomic theory.
33. [Alexander the Great](#) (356 - 323 BC) – King of Macedonia and military leader.
34. [Napoleon Bonaparte](#) (1769 - 1821) – French military and political leader.
35. [Thomas Edison](#) (1847 – 1931) – Inventor and businessman helped introduce electricity and electric light bulbs.
36. Antony van Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723) Dutch chemist – founder of microbiology.
37. William T.G. Morton (1819 – 1868) American dentist who pioneered the use of anaesthetic.
38. Guglielmo Marconi (1874 – 1937) Italian engineer who helped develop radio transmission.
39. [Adolf Hitler](#) (1889 – 1945) – Dictator of Nazi Germany.
40. [Plato](#) (424 - 348 BC) – Greek philosopher.
41. [Oliver Cromwell](#) (1599-1658) – Leader of Parliamentarians in English civil war.
42. [Alexander Graham Bell](#) (1847 – 1922) – Scottish inventor of the telephone.
43. [Alexander Fleming](#) (1881-1955) Scottish biologist who discovered penicillin.
44. [John Locke](#) (1632-1704) English political philosopher. Locke promoted a theory of liberal democracy and a social contract.
45. [Ludwig van Beethoven](#) (1770 – 1827) German composer of the classical and romantic period.
46. Werner Heisenberg (1901–1976) German theoretical physicist – one of the pioneers of Quantum mechanics
47. Louis Daguerre (1787–1851) French artist and photographer, who is credited with the invention of the camera.
48. [Simon Bolivar](#) (1783 – 1830) – Liberator of Latin American countries

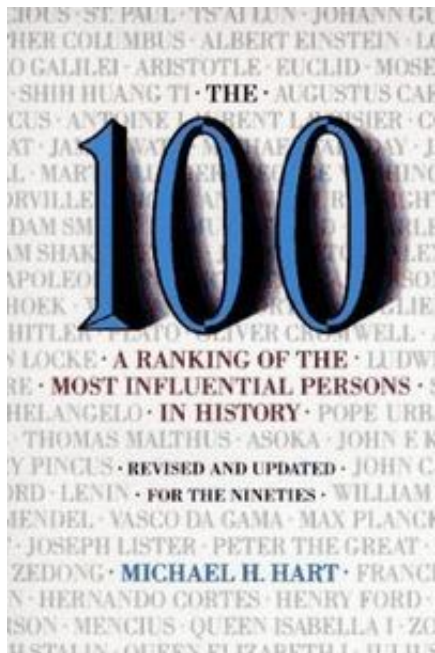
49. [Rene Descartes](#) (1596 – 1650) French philosopher and mathematician. “I think, therefore I am
50. [Michelangelo](#) (1475 – 1564) Renaissance sculptor, painter and architect
51. Pope Urban II (1042 – 29 July 1099) Influential Pope who ordered the first Crusade to the Holy Land and set up the Papal Court
52. Umar ibn al-Khattab (584 CE – 644 CE) Powerful Muslim Caliphate and senior companion of Muhammad. Influential figure in Sunni Islam.
53. [Asoka](#) (c. 260 – 232 BC) Powerful Indian King who established large empire by conquest before converting to Buddhism and pursuing a peaceful approach
54. St. Augustine (354 – 430) Influential Christian saint and writer, who shaped much of Western Christian thought.
55. William Harvey (1578 – 3 June 1657) English physician who made contributions to understanding how blood circulated in the body.
56. Ernest Rutherford (1871 – 1937) NZ born British physicist who made discoveries in atomic physics. His work on splitting the atom was influential for the development of atomic science.
57. John Calvin (1509 – 27 May 1564) Christian theologian who developed a strict brand of Protestant Christianity which stressed doctrine of predestination.
58. Gregor Mendel (1822 – 1884) Czech/Austrian scientist and friar – who founded modern science of genetics.
59. Max Planck (1858 – 1947) German theoretical physicist who developed a theory of Quantum physics and discovered energy quanta.
60. Joseph Lister (1827 – 1912) British surgeon who pioneered the use of sterilisation and antiseptic surgery.
61. Nikolaus August Otto (1832 – 1891) German engineer who developed compressed charge internal combustion engine to run on petrol
62. Francisco Pizarro (1471 – 1541) Spanish Conquistador who claimed Inca lands for Spain.

63. Hernando Cortes (1485 – 1547) Spanish Conquistador who conquered the Aztec lands of modern-day Mexico.
64. [Thomas Jefferson](#) (1743 – 1826) 3rd President of US. Principle author of the US Declaration of Independence.
65. Queen Isabella I (1451 – 1504) Queen of Castille, who helped create a powerful and unified state of Spain whose influence spread to the Americas.
66. [Joseph Stalin](#) (1878 – 1953) Absolute ruler of the Soviet Union from 1924 to his death. Led the Soviet Union in WWII.
67. Julius Caesar (100 BC – 44 BC) Roman ruler who oversaw the demise of Roman Republic to be replaced with a Roman Emperor. Militarily strengthened the power of Rome.
68. William the Conqueror (1028 – 1087) First Norman king of England
69. [Sigmund Freud](#) (1856 – 1939) An Austrian neurologist who founded psychoanalysis, which involved the investigation of the subconscious, dreams and human mind.
70. [Edward Jenner](#) (1749 – 1823) Developed world's first vaccine (the smallpox vaccine). Known as the father of immunology.
71. Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen (1845 – 1923) German physicist who discovered electromagnetic waves or X-rays.
72. [Johann Sebastian Bach](#) (1685 – 1750) Composer and organist who created some of the world's most beautiful music.
73. Lao Tzu (6th Century BC –) Author of Tao Te Ching and founder of Taoism
74. [Voltaire](#) (1694 – 1778). A key figure of European Enlightenment. His satirical writings played a role in the French Revolution.
75. Johannes Kepler (1571 – 1630) German mathematician and astronomer who created laws of planetary motion.
76. Enrico Fermi (1901 – 1954) Italian-American physicist who created the first nuclear reactor

77. Leonhard Euler (1707 – 1783) Swiss mathematician who made prolific discoveries in calculus and graph theory.
78. [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) (1712-1778) – French philosopher, author of *Social Contract*
79. Nicoli Machiavelli (1469 – 1527) Italian diplomat and Renaissance writer considered the father of political science.
80. Thomas Malthus (1766 – 1834) English scholar who raised concern over growing population.
81. [John F. Kennedy](#) (1917 – 1963) 38th President of the US. Served at the height of the Cold War and helped defuse Cuban Missile Crisis.
82. Gregory Pincus (1903 – 1967) American biologist who created the oral contraceptive pill.
83. Mani (216 –) Iranian founder of Manichaeism, a gnostic religion which for a time was a rival to Christianity.
84. [Lenin](#) (1870 – 1924) Leader of the Russian Revolution and new Communist regime from 1917 to 1924.
85. Sui Wen Ti (541 – 604) Founder of China's Sui Dynasty and reunifying China in 589
86. Vasco da Gama (1460s –1524) Portuguese explorer, first European to reach India and establish a route for imperialism.
87. Cyrus the Great (600 – 530 BC) Founder of the Achaemenid Empire, the first Persian Empire. Relatively enlightened ruler.
88. Peter the Great (1721 – 1725) Russian Emperor who expanded Tsarist Empire to make Russia European power.
89. [Mao Zedong](#) (1893 – 1976) Leader of the Communist Revolution and dictator of China from 1949-1974.
90. [Francis Bacon](#) (1561 – 1626) Creator of the scientific method and key figure in Scientific Revolution of the Enlightenment.
91. [Henry Ford](#) (1863 – 1947) Owner of Ford Motor Company. Revolutionised mass-production techniques

92. Mencius (385–303BC) Chinese philosopher one of principal interpreters of Confucianism.
93. [Zoroaster](#) (c. 1200 BC) Iranian prophet who founded the religion of Zoroastrianism.
94. [Queen Elizabeth I](#) (1533 – 1603) Queen of England from 1558 to her death in 1603. Cemented England as Protestant country, defeated Spanish Armada.
95. [Mikhail Gorbachev](#) (1931 –) Leader of Soviet Communist Party who pursued reform – perestroika and glasnost to open Eastern Europe to democracy.
96. Menes c. 3000 BC Egyptian pharaoh who united Upper and Lower Egypt to found the First Dynasty.
97. [Charlemagne](#) (742 – 814) United Europe to form Carolingian Empire. First western Emperor since fall of Rome.
98. [Homer](#) Greek poet who wrote Iliad and Odyssey
99. Justinian I (482 – 565) Emperor of Eastern Roman Empire
100. Mahavira (6th century BC) Principal figure of Jainism.

Book of 100 Most Influential People



[100 Most influential people in the world](#) by Michael H. Hart at Amazon

Hart, Michael H. 1992. The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History, Revised and Updated for the Nineties. New York: Citadel Press Book.

Runner Ups

- St. Thomas Aquinas
- Archimedes

- [Charles Babbage](#)
- Cheops
- [Marie Curie](#)
- [Benjamin Franklin](#)
- [Mohandas Gandhi](#)
- [Abraham Lincoln](#)
- Ferdinand Magellan
- [Leonardo da Vinci](#)

Influential people since 1992

- [Nelson Mandela](#)
- [Donald Trump](#) US President
- [Steve Jobs](#) (1955 – 2011) Entrepreneur who led digital revolution

Commentary on list

The list by Michael Hart is very useful for finding a list of very influential people. Like any list, everyone will have their own opinion and when it comes to ranking – there is ‘no’ right answer.

My main observation is that he has given a high weighting to scientists and writers than I might. I’m surprised at the inclusion of Thomas Malthus as his predictions of overpopulation were wrong and he was mostly ignored. Compared to say Abraham Lincoln who prevented the United States splitting apart and helped to reinvigorate the democratic principles of the Declaration of Independence.

Also, I would have included the spiritual teachers Sri Krishna (most important figure in Hinduism) and Guru Nanak. These two had far more influence than Mani and Mahavira

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– People who campaigned for equality, civil rights and civil justice. Includes Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks.

