

Students pick the best of the 20th Century

Editor's Note: The Dallas Post asked teachers at Lake-Lehman and Gate of Heaven School to have students write about their choice of most important event, innovation and person of the 20th Century. These selected essays show the range of their thought.

Event

Dorothy Çashore
Grade 8, Gate of Heaven

On October 4, 1957, humans reached new heights in space exploration. On that historic day, the world's first artificial satellite was sent into orbit by the Soviet Union. The satellite was named *Sputnik 1*. It's launching officially marked the beginning of the Space Age.

The launching of *Sputnik 1* is important not only because of the discoveries of the satellite itself, but because of the chain of events it triggered, especially in the United States. American citizens were shocked by the Soviet Union's accomplishment, for it had assumed that it was the world's leader in science and technology. Therefore, the United States almost immediately began launching satellites into space in response to the challenge presented by the Soviet Union. As other countries joined in the "contest", satellites were firmly established as some of the most useful and life-changing technology ever invented.

Since the launching of *Sputnik 1*, more than 1,000 satellites have been sent into space. The Space Age has progressed rapidly, with the inventions of lunar modules, space stations, etc. There has never been a more exciting time for scientists and people interested in the world around them. However, we have only witnessed a small sample of the wonders of the universe. Who knows what else awaits us?

Kimberly Sorber
Mrs. Gorgone
Grade 8, Lake-Lehman

The assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy is the most important event! President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, during a political trip to Dallas, Texas. The assassin was Lee Harvey Oswald. The entire world was mourning the event during which a great man was killed. Our President was shot and killed. The United States of America was heartbroken. The people in the United States lost a father. It was a sad occasion for one and all. He was one of the greatest! He helped in the public welfare. He answered people's questions and solved people's problems. He helped the racial integration at the University of Mississippi and elsewhere. He even had a space program for exploration, which called for the landing of men on the moon before the end of the 1960's. The world will never forget that sad and painful day.

Carissa Reisser
Grade 8, Gate of Heaven

I think the most significant event of the 20th century is World War II, because it changed all of our lives. The cost of the World War II, both financially and in terms of loss of life, was even greater than that of World War I. Europe lay in ruins; allied military forces occupied Germany, once the strongest European nation. The major European nations were too weak to hold on to their colonies. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged from the war as the world's leading powers. Out of the horror of this war came attempts by the nations to settle their disputes peacefully. A new international organization, the United Nations was established near the end of the war to provide a meeting place where countries would try to work out their differences.

Susan Barber
Mrs. Gorgone
Grade 8, Lake-Lehman

When my Language Arts teacher Mrs. Gorgone told us we would be writing about a significant event in the last 100 years, I began to think of a subject. At first I thought about writing about the Nineteenth Amendment (women's suffrage), the first and second World War or the assassination of John Fitzgerald

Kennedy. Then I realized that most likely a lot of people were going to write about those things. I wanted to be different.

I believe the most significant period of time this century has been the Great Depression. This is significant because a plethora of predominant people lost all their life savings during this traumatic period. Many investors killed themselves so their families would have insurance money to live on. Children were forced to sell apples on street corners of New York City and most families had only bread and water to eat, and on good days, maybe a little butter.

Today, we often take for granted what we have. We strive to always have the biggest, fastest and best things available. If society would remember to relate to the simpler times where you didn't have enough money to put food on the table maybe, just maybe, we would be thankful for what we have and just not want so much.

Melissa Strunk
Mrs. Gorgone
Grade 8, Lake-Lehman

I know we're supposed to pick an event during the twentieth century, but, to me, the most significant occurrence happened in the last year or so. This single event changed the school system nationwide, and the answer to the question, "Do you feel safe in your school?", will never be the same. Guesseed it yet? It's the shootings at Columbine, Colorado. Never before has there been such a massacre in the schools. I think everyone knows the story well, so I won't repeat it. I will say, though, it's one of those events where you knew exactly where you were when you heard the news (kind of like the J.F.K. assassination and the Challenger explosion). This also changed everyone's life in a very profound way. No longer can we joke around with each other by saying "Hey, you're on my hit list!" or "Man, I'm so mad I could kill someone!" like we could before. School dress codes changed, also. For instance in our high school banned trench coats. Parents began to be afraid to send their kids to school. Copycat crimes were feared, and students walked on eggshells around everyone. The two dissidents who started all the bloodshed certainly accomplished their goal. They changed the way everyone learns. How could society let such a thing happen?

Innovation

Steven Cardillo
Mrs. Gorgone
Lake-Lehman

I think that the most important scientific/technological innovation of the Twentieth Century is the Internet. Now we can talk to a person in Japan without leaving our chairs. We can get great information for reports and research projects easily off the Internet. You can talk to your friends without a phone, and can even send e-mail which is sent instantly, instead of using normal mail, which isn't nearly as fast. Now there is even buying and selling stocks online which has changed the world. You can keep track of your stocks and even get recent, updated information about the companies you own stock in online. Some people are even shopping for all their Christmas presents online now, and a lot of people like it more than going in crowded stores and finding that the toy you were going to buy for your kids is sold out. The Internet possibilities are infinite. That's why I think that the Internet is the most important innovation of the Twentieth Century.

Beth Ann Karwaski
Grade 8, Gate of Heaven

The automobile had both positive and negative long term effects on the world today. The automobile, first constructed in the early twentieth century, changed the way people lived, and where they built their homes and businesses. Unlike most other types of transportation, the automobile is a lot easier to use, seeing as how you don't need to get tickets to ride them or get yourself to a station or port in order to use them. A lot of things depend on the automobile including police, ambulance workers, and firemen to get where they're going ... fast. Unfortunately, there are some things that the automobile have caused that aren't so great, including pollu-

tion. Exhaust from cars and trucks leave out chemicals including, carbon dioxide, which is the main gas that causes global warming. Accidents are also a negative aspect of the automobile. Each year, 265,000 people die in auto accidents, and millions of people are injured. The automobile will continue to be an important invention and helpful tool of the world.

Blake Bradley
Grade 8, Gate of Heaven

The most significant technological innovation of the 20th century would have to be the television for the way it affected and still does affect the world. Television was one of the first most advanced ways of communicating with the entire world. It united people in a way that could not be done by writing or telephone. In the beginning it was considered the best way to get information. You could see what was going on in the world and receive local information such as weather, local affairs, and elections. Over the years this innovation has advanced in good ways and bad. The good is that we can see more about the world then we were ever able to when TV was first invented. It is able to show us live coverings from other countries. We are able to know what is going on or what is happening in the world from our own home. Since it has become so popular basically everyone has at least one television so it affects everyone. A problem with television is that maybe too many people are focusing their entire lives around it. The images shown on some programs of television influence us, telling us that that is the way we should act, look, and what we should do with our lives. It has become so based on rating for many that they will show anything that will interest people other than its first purpose which was to inform. Many may say that the television has shaped the way society is. I would have to say this is entirely true. In good ways it has opened doors for relationships with other countries, offered information, and brought around the inventions of different forms of communication. In the bad it has made many lazy, easily influenced on the nonessential, and maybe shown us a little more than should be shown on TV. No matter how you look at it the television has influenced the world as we know it.

Gregory Andrusisian
Grade 8, Gate of Heaven

I have chosen the atomic bomb, an innovation so destructive it's only been used once since its creation. The atomic bomb has changed the way people look at warfare. Living under the fear of a nuclear holocaust, the people of the entire world dreaded this invention and its deployment. The atomic bomb lead to a chain of more powerful and sophisticated weapons such as the Neutron Bomb. This invention may or may not have been for the better, but its threat has been important in securing the peace of the world since the second world war.

Leslie Rosenbaum
Mrs. Gorgone
Lake-Lehman

During the last one hundred years, there have been so many significant innovations that it was difficult to choose only one. The one I chose had an important impact on health care. I chose penicillin.

Penicillin is an antibiotic drug, that is used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Penicillin was discovered in 1928 but wasn't commonly used until the 1940's. It is prescribed regularly to treat common illnesses among adults and children such as ear and throat infections.

Before the 1940's, there was not a drug that could cure such major illnesses as scarlet fever or pneumonia. Hundreds of thousands of people died from illnesses before penicillin was invented. Even though some people are allergic to penicillin, it has saved many lives.

I think penicillin has had a major effect on society, and that is why I chose this for my topic.

Amber Kenny
Mrs. Slaby
Lake-Lehman

I think that the electric washing machine was one of the most important inventions of the 20th

century. It made washing clothes easier and less time consuming. It was a lot easier than washing them on a wash board by hand. It was also a lot more time consuming for many reasons. You don't have to wait for good weather. You can wash your clothes in Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter. You don't have to sit there and do it by hand, you can just put in your clothes and push start. If it weren't for electric washing machines we would have to spend a lot more time with our clothing. Time that most Americans don't have.

Person

Samantha Laskowski
Mrs. Gorgone
Lake-Lehman

I believe that the most significant person of the twentieth century is Henry Ford. I believe Henry Ford is the most significant person because he was considered the man who put America on wheels. The Ford Motor Company is named for him. If it were not for Henry Ford, we would not have a good means of transportation. In the twenties when the Model T arrived, Henry tried his hardest to make an affordable car that every family could own. To do this Ford had to invent assembly line style of manufacturing which reduced the amount of time it took to make a car. The Model T also known as "Tin Lizzie" sold for less than \$300 and only came in black. Ford became one of the richest men in the nation, and his family was also very famous.

Kaitlyn Moody
Grade 8, Gate Of Heaven

Eleanor Roosevelt was a very important woman during the 1930's and the 1940's. She was a social activist, author, lecturer, and United States representative to the United Nations. She was the wife of the United States President, Franklin D. Roosevelt. She was born in New York City on October 11, 1884 to Elliot and Anna Roosevelt. She was the niece of President Theodore Roosevelt. Her mother died when she was eight, and her father died when she was 10. She then lived with her grandmother and at the age of 15 was sent to a boarding school in England. She then married her distant cousin Franklin Roosevelt in 1905. They had six children; one who died while still an infant. Her discovery of Franklin's affair with her social secretary, Lucy Mercer, in 1918 was a turning point in their marriage. Eleanor became involved in the League of Women Voters, and the Woman's Trade Union League. In 1921 she began to work politically for Franklin who had become ill with poliomyelitis after his unsuccessful bid for the vice presidency in 1920. She became active in Democratic Party politics to keep her handicapped husband's career alive. When he was elected president in 1932, she still continued to assist him.

The three main events during her time were the Civil Rights Movement, the Great Depression, and World War II. During the Civil Rights Movement, she helped a black singer, Marian Anderson when she was denied the use of the facilities of the Daughters of the American Revolution, to which Eleanor belonged. Because of this incident, she resigned from this historic organization. During the great Depression, she sponsored an experiment to help coal miners and other young people to find jobs. During World War II, she visited American soldiers and urged admission to Palestine of Jewish refugees from Europe.

The innovation that she was responsible for was a large one. She was the first woman to greatly influence the policies of the United States while her husband was gravely ill. She was a very important woman and deserves to be honored for it. She also helped many people during hard times. I look up to her and I hope other people do too.

Ashley Basar
Mrs. Gorgone
Grade 8, Lake-Lehman

My idea of a very significant person would have to be someone who can stand up for themselves and what they believe is right. That is why I picked Rosa Parks. She thought that all people are equal, white or black. She was one of the many people who helped

fight for the Equal Rights Act and integration in schools, parks, and in her case buses. I give her lots of credit for standing up for herself because at that time I don't think I would have been able to do that. She was a very strong woman for even going to jail for what she believed in. I don't think I would have ever been able to do something that dangerous. Standing up for my rights I will do but I don't think I would ever go so far as to go to jail for them. But I am happy she and many others did because I hate racism. It drives me crazy that some people are too vain and prejudiced to look beyond skin color, religion, or heritage. Hate is a strong word and used the wrong way can really hurt someone.

Matt Thompson
Grade 8, Gate of Heaven

I believe that the most important people of this century are James Watson and Francis Crick. They are the scientists who are credited with discovering the double helix design of DNA. They also figured out how the different components of DNA fit together. They discovered that Adenine connects to Thiamin and Guanine connects to Cytosine. This discovery led to all of the genetic research going on today. Watson also began, the Human Genome Project. They won the Nobel Peace Prize for their work. Their discoveries shall be remembered into the next millennium. Watson and Crick's discovery, the beginning of the Human Genome Project, and the advances that have come from these are, in my opinion, the most important of the century.

Jason Austin
Gate of Heaven

Henry Ford, in my opinion, is the most significant person of the

20th century. I chose this man for several reasons. First, he made an automobile that half of the people in the United States were driving. Second, he created the assembly line. He made it possible to make things quickly, more efficiently, and cheaper. The assembly line helped him to make the Ford Automobile Company which produced thousands of cars. His invention also helped greatly in the World Wars. The assembly line was able to make weapons quickly. Some people doubt that the U.S.A. would have even won the wars if it weren't for Henry's invention of the assembly line. If we were to lose the wars, our country would be in chaos. So, I believe that Henry is the most significant person of the 20th century.

John Paul Hanish
Mrs. Gorgone
Lake-Lehman

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was like a rebel leader. He was leading the Equal Rights Rebellion. He was against the majority of the people in the United States of America. Yet, he had no army. Dr. Martin Luther King's mind was an army. King's speeches were his battles, and he usually won them. Negro Americans thought of him as a savior. His mission was to protect and make a more equal world for the Negro Americans. As a result of his work and sacrifice, almost all Black Americans can live in a non-prejudiced community. There are still problems in America and all over the world. It may not be Blacks and Whites, but it does not matter. This is what Dr. Martin Luther King told us. It does not matter what race, religion or color we are. It matters what is inside. The lesson is what King told us, and that is why I think he is the most significant person in the 20th Century.

Next week:

Dallas Middle School students write about their choices for the most significant person, event and innovation of the millennium.

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