

A First Time for Everything

"First Class" Trivia

Celebrate the first day of the first month of the year with some "first" trivia. Read and comment on the information below, or present the facts in question form for a "first class" trivia game.

At the end of the activity, ask everyone to share some "firsts" in their own lives. For example, your first car, first date, first house, first day of school, etc. In addition, ask the group how many "first" expressions they can think of - first base, first aid, first prize, first place, first class, first kiss, etc.

People Firsts

1. Thurgood Marshall became the first black associate justice of the Supreme Court on October 2, 1967.
2. David Glasgow Farragut became the first admiral of the U.S. Navy in 1866. He's also famous for saying, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!"
3. Charlotte Cooper was the first woman to win an Olympic Gold Medal (in 1900, for tennis).
4. Steve Fossett was the first balloonist to fly solo around the world when he landed in Australia on July 4, 2002.
5. Sandra Day O'Connor became the first female Supreme Court Justice in 1981. She was appointed by President Ronald Reagan.
6. Annie Taylor was the first woman to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel and live to tell about it (1901). She was 64 years old at the time.
7. Theodore Roosevelt was the first American to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1906). It was for helping mediate an end to the Russo-Japanese War.
8. Marie Sklodowska Curie was the first person ever to win two Nobel Prizes. Her first was in physics (1903) and the second was in chemistry (1911).
9. Ray Harroun was the first winner of the Indianapolis 500 car race (1911). His average speed was 74.59 mph. He finished in 6 hours, 42 minutes, and 8 seconds.
10. Alice Hyde was the first winner of the Miss World Beauty Pageant (1911). She was 17.
11. Margaret Gorman was the first Miss America (1921). She was 16 years old and had the measurements 30-25-32.
12. Al Jolson had the lead role in the first talking motion picture, *The Jazz Singer* (1927).
13. George Washington was the first president to appear on a postage stamp. It was first issued on July 1, 1847.
14. Geraldine Ferraro was the first female vice presidential candidate. She made history on July 19, 1984, at the Democratic National Convention.



15. Victoria Claflin Woodhull was the first female presidential candidate. She was nominated in 1872 by the National Woman Suffrage Association.
16. Melissa Rathbun-Nealy was the first enlisted American female to become a POW. On January 31, 1991, she was captured by Iraqi forces in the Gulf War and was imprisoned for 33 days.
17. Barbara Walters became the first female nighttime news anchor on October 4, 1976.
18. Jane Fonda made the first celebrity exercise video in 1982. It started a fitness craze and launched a franchise of videos, audio tapes, books, and fitness equipment grossing nearly \$670 million.
19. Charles Lindbergh was the first man to fly solo across the Atlantic (1927).
20. Ellen Church was the first airline hostess (1930). She served passengers flying between San Francisco, California and Cheyenne, Wyoming on United Airlines.
21. Marie, Cecile, Yvonne, Emilie, and Annette Dionne were the first quintuplets to survive infancy. They were born near Callender, Ontario, to Oliva and Elzire Dionne (1934).
22. Lettie Pate Whitehead was the first American woman to serve as a director of a major corporation, The Coca-Cola Company (1934).
23. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first U.S. president to speak on television. (He spoke at the opening session of the New York World's Fair on April 30, 1939.)
24. Chuck Yeager was the first person to break the sound barrier by flying faster than the speed of sound (1947).
25. Desi Arnaz, Jr. and Lucille Ball appeared on the cover of the first *TV Guide* (1953).
26. Count de Grisley was the first magician to perform the trick of sawing a woman in half (1799).
27. Elizabeth II was the first monarch to have a televised coronation (1953).
28. Sir Edmund Hillary was the first person to climb Mt. Everest (1953).
29. Julia Child was the first woman designated a full-fledged "chef" (1958).
30. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was the first woman to be elected as head of state (1960). She became the president of Sri Lanka. Following her were Indira Gandhi of India in 1966 and Golda Meir of Israel in 1969.
31. Joan Crawford was the first guest on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* (1962).
32. Lyndon Baines Johnson was the first U.S. president to wear contact lenses (1963).
33. Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon (1969).
34. Nadia Comaneci was the first Olympic gymnast to receive perfect 10s in 1976. She was 14 years old.



35. Frank Cannella hosted the first 30-minute infomercial for a product in the early morning hours on network TV in 1982. The product? New Generation: promoting hair growth for men.
36. Louise Brown was the first test-tube baby, born in Manchester, England, on July 25, 1978.
37. The McCaugheys were the first surviving septuplets. Born on November 19, 1997, in Des Moines, Iowa, Kenny, Kelsey, Natalie, Brandon, Alexis, Nathan, and Joel will be turning 21 this year.
38. Edward Smith was the first indicted bank robber in the U.S. (1831). He was sentenced to five years hard labor on the rock pile at Sing Sing Prison.
39. Virginia Dare was the first recorded birth to English parents in America. She was born in 1587 on Roanoke Island, North Carolina.
40. Sally Ride was the first American woman in space. First blasting off on June 18, 1983, Ride flew a total of three flights before retiring from NASA in 1987.
41. Dr. Mary Edwards Walker became the first female surgeon in the United States. She graduated from Syracuse Medical College in New York in 1855.
42. Sir Hugh Trenchard became the highest-ranking officer in Britain's Royal Air Force. He was promoted to marshal on January 1, 1927.
43. Admiral Sir Charles E. Kingsmill became the first commander of the Royal Canadian Navy in 1910.
44. Louis Timothee became the first salaried librarian in the United States when he accepted a position with the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1731.
45. Phillis Wheatley became the first African American to publish a book. *Poems on Various Subjects* was published in 1773.
46. Frank Woolworth founded the first five-and-dime store in Utica, New York, in 1879.
47. Madame Elisabeth Thible was the first woman to fly in a balloon, on June 4, 1784. A French opera singer, Mme. Thible and Mr. Fleurant sang opera as the balloon ascended. The flight lasted 45 minutes.
48. Samuel Archer King and William Black took the first aerial photographs in 1860. The photos were of Boston and are still in existence.
49. William S. Henson and John Stringfellow created the first air transport company in London. The Aerial Transit Company was born on March 25, 1843.
50. Anna May Wong was the first female Asian American to star in a movie. Her first movie opened in 1921 called *Bits of Life*.

More Firsts

1. The first railway line was built around 1594 near Liverpool, England. The rail was made of wood and had a horse-drawn tramroad that carried coal from a pit to the terminal a half-mile away.
2. Penny Black was the first adhesive postage stamp. Issued in Great Britain on May 1, 1840, the stamp displayed Queen Victoria's profile.

3. The University of Karueein is the first existing and continuously operating educational institution. It was founded in 859 AD in Fez, Morocco.
4. Harvard is the first college founded in America, in 1636. Harvard is located in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
5. *The Yellow Kid* by Richard Outcault was the first colored cartoon. It was published in *Truth Magazine* in 1894.
6. The world's first skyscraper was built in Chicago in 1885. The 10-story Home Insurance Company Building had two more floors added to it in 1890.
7. The first horse racetrack in the United States was established in 1665. Newmarket Course was located in what is now Long Island, New York.
8. Chariot racing and mounted horseracing first officially appeared by 648 BC. They were events in the Greek Olympics.
9. The first parachute jump took place on October 22, 1797. André-Jacques Garnerin dropped from 3,200 feet above Paris.
10. The world's first botanic garden is the physic garden of the University of Pisa in Italy, It was created by Luca Ghini in 1543.
11. The first botanic garden in the United States was established by John Bartram in 1728. Bartram's Garden is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
12. The world's first science museum is the Museo de Ciencias Naturales in Madrid, Spain. It opened in 1752.
13. The first traffic light was installed on August 5, 1914, on the corner of East 105th Street and Euclid Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio.
14. The first revolving restaurant opened on May 22, 1961. It is located atop of the Seattle Space Needle in Seattle, Washington.
15. The Lighthouse of Alexandria is considered the world's first lighthouse and was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Built between 280 and 247 BC, it was badly damaged by three earthquakes between AD 956 and 1323, when it became ruins. The remnant stones were used in 1480 to build the Citadel of Qaitbay on the site.
16. The first lighthouse in North America was the Boston Lighthouse in Boston Harbor. Originally built in 1716, it was destroyed during the Revolutionary War and rebuilt in 1783.
17. World's Columbian Exposition, also known as the Chicago World's Fair, had as its centerpiece the world's first Ferris wheel. The exposition and the Ferris wheel both opened on May 1, 1893.
18. NASA's Gemini 6A is known for two firsts in 1965. It was the first manned rendezvous with another spacecraft (Gemini 7), and the astronauts provided the first performance of musical instruments in space.



19. Diane Crump became the first female jockey to race in the Kentucky Derby in 1969. She finished 15th out of 17 riders.
20. In 1965, "Calypso," by Harry Belafonte, became the first full-length album to sell a million copies in a year. The biggest hit on the album was "Day-O (Banana Boat Song)."
21. Glenn Miller received the first gold record ever awarded to a recording artist (1942). It was for selling more than 1 million copies of the hit "Chattanooga Choo-Choo."
22. The first use of canned laughter (or laugh track) was in 1950 on NBC's *The Hank McCune Show*.
23. Chevrolet was the first automaker to advertise on network television (1946).
24. The first TV couple to share a bed was not on *The Brady Bunch* or *The Munsters*, but was on [The Mary Kay and Johnny Show](#) in 1947. It was the first TV situation comedy.
25. The first toilet ever seen on television was on *Leave It to Beaver*. Wally and the Beav hid a baby alligator named Captain Jack in the Cleaver family throne.
26. The first successful American TV soap opera, *Search for Tomorrow*, debuted in 1951.
27. In 1962, ABC began color broadcasting for the first time. CBS was in black and white until 1967.
28. The first electric-powered washing machine ([the Thor](#)) was introduced in 1907 by the Hurley Machine Company of Chicago, Illinois.
29. John D. Rockefeller became the world's first billionaire in 1916.
30. Richard Cadbury introduced the first Valentine's Day box of chocolates in 1868.
31. Milton S. Hershey of Lancaster, PA, introduced the first Hershey milk chocolate bar in 1900.
32. Hershey's Kisses chocolates appeared in the familiar foil wraps for the first time in 1906.
33. Fannie May Candies opened its first candy shop in Chicago in 1920.
34. The first Beatles' song to be played in the U.S. was "She Loves You."
35. In 1919, Sir Barton became the first horse to win all three of the Triple Crown races - Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, and Belmont Stakes. The phrase "triple crown" was first used for this feat by Charles Hatton in 1930.
36. Phi Delta Theta was the first fraternity to adopt a pledge pin (1894).
37. Laika, a dog, was the first living creature to orbit the earth (1957). Laika was aboard the Soviet satellite Sputnik 2.
38. The first professional basketball game was played in Trenton, New Jersey, in 1896.
39. The first Academy Awards ceremony was held on May 16, 1929.
40. The first telephone numbers weren't numbers, they were names.

For more, see [Who was the first person to...?](#)