

Review of the year: the big stories

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Wild ride: In ten years' time will we remember this was the year when Joe Biden dropped out of the presidential race, Donald Trump was nearly assassinated, Israel's war in Gaza exploded across the Middle East and AI grew by leaps and bounds?

Did the world change forever in 2024? The last 12 months have seen wars, elections, flooding and revolution.

What's happening?

2024 has been a year of twists and turns. Over 50 countries held elections. The war in Ukraine carried on. AI grew more powerful. And the world faced huge floods.

Find out more

Here are five of the year's biggest stories.

- 1. All change.** In July, the British people chose a new **prime minister** at the **general election**. Rishi Sunak and the **Conservatives** were out and Keir Starmer's **Labour** were in. It is the first time Labour have been in charge for 14 years.
- 2. Big bang.** Israel's war on **Hamas** carried on. By the end of February, the **Gaza** death toll was 30,000 and 1.1 million people were starving. The war also spilled over into **Lebanon**.
- 3. With a vengeance.** Before the 2024 American presidential election in November, **Donald Trump** survived two attempts to kill him and **Joe Biden** was forced to stand down

so **Kamala Harris** could run. In the end, Trump won.

4. Arab winter. On Sunday 9 December, rebels overthrew **Syria's government**. President Bashar al-Assad fled to Russia. Half a **century** of rule by his family ended overnight. No-one knows what will happen next.

5. New heights. The final big story is yet to come. 2024 is "almost certain" to be the first year on record where average temperatures are more than 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

Did the world change forever in 2024?

Some say

Yes! The world changes forever all the time. Yet 2024 was major. From Trump's win to Assad's fall, the world has set on a different course.

Others think

No! We think we live in interesting times — but that is just because we have forgotten the past. What seems like big news today will probably be forgotten in 100 years time.

Six steps to discovery

Some people say

"Things come and go in the news cycle like waves of fever."

Adam Curtis (1955 –), British documentary maker

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - How do the events of 2024 make you feel?

2. Wonder

What do you think?

What questions do you have? - For example: How does the British election system work?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - What do you think is the most important thing on this list?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Which of these news stories do you remember the best? Which surprised you the most?

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Draw a picture of a 2024 event that you think will go down in history.

Glossary

Ukraine - A country in Eastern Europe. It was invaded by Russia in February 2022.

AI - A computer programme that has been designed to think.

Prime minister - A prime minister is the head of government in a country with a parliamentary system.

General election - In the UK, when an election is held for all 650 members of the House of Commons. One must take place every five years.

Conservatives - A traditionally right-wing or centre right political party in the UK. Members are sometimes called Tories.

Labour - Britain's main left-of-centre political party.

Israel - A country in the Middle East, and the only Jewish nation in the modern period. It is seen by Jews, Christians and Muslims as the Holy Land.

Hamas - A militant Palestinian organisation, which has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007. It is listed as a terrorist organisation in the UK.

Gaza - The smaller of two Palestinian territories, home to two million people. It is located on the Mediterranean coast, bordered by Israel and Egypt.

Lebanon - A small country on the eastern Mediterranean coast that has been in the grip of an economic crisis for over a year. It has a native population of just 4.7 million, but migrants and refugees have brought its total population up to almost 7 million.

Donald Trump - An American television personality who became US president from 2016 to 2020, and will become president again in January 2025.

Joe Biden - The president of the USA, elected in 2020.

Kamala Harris - US Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's running mate. If elected, she will be the first female vice president of the USA.

Syria - A Middle Eastern country that was the site of much of the fighting during the Crusades.

Government - The group of people who govern - or lead - the country.

Century - 100 years.