Free history stories for kids

Peabody · checked 2026-10-19

Peabody has 36 free history stories for kids, true stories and retold tales from the past. They run from levels 5 to 18 and each opens at once with no sign-up. The table shows every story's level and length, so a grown-up can pick one that fits the reader. Free through the end of 2026.

- Story: Ruby Goes to School · Level: Level 5 · Kind: True story · Words: 131
- Story: The First Flight · Level: Level 7 · Kind: True story · Words: 261
- Story: The Four Big Pages · Level: Level 7 · Kind: True story · Words: 451
- Story: The Thread That Glowed · Level: Level 7 · Kind: True story · Words: 297
- Story: The Run to Nome · Level: Level 8 · Kind: True story · Words: 572
- Story: Twelve Seconds at Kitty Hawk · Level: Level 8 · Kind: True story · Words: 720
- Story: Unicorns and Real Horses · Level: Level 8 · Kind: True story · Words: 859
- Story: The First Steps · Level: Level 9 · Kind: True story · Words: 755
- Story: Vikings Did Not Wear Horns · Level: Level 9 · Kind: True story · Words: 540
- Story: The Bus Boycott · Level: Level 10 · Kind: True story · Words: 924
- Story: The Great Fire of London · Level: Level 10 · Kind: True story · Words: 821
- Story: How Did a Patent Examiner Change Physics? · Level: Level 10 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,101
- Story: How Did Two Bicycle Makers Learn to Fly? · Level: Level 10 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,088
- Story: Who Invented the Light Bulb? · Level: Level 11 · Kind: True story · Words: 844
- Story: Trouble on Apollo 13 · Level: Level 11 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,064
- Story: How Are Horses and Ponies Different? · Level: Level 11 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,551
- Story: Why Is Pluto Not a Planet? · Level: Level 11 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,021
- Story: Alone on Harrow Rock · Level: Level 12 · Kind: Peabody story · Words: 1,723
- Story: A Word of Welsh · Level: Level 12 · Kind: Peabody story · Words: 1,931
- Story: The Debt of Ambrose Tilley · Level: Level 12 · Kind: Peabody story · Words: 1,713
- Story: The Thirty-Three Miners · Level: Level 12 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,025
- Story: Smeaton's Number and the Wrights' Wind Tunnel · Level: Level 13 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,754
- Story: The Ice-Crushed Endurance · Level: Level 13 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,278
- Story: Four Hooves Off the Ground · Level: Level 13 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,591
- Story: How the Federal Tax System Is Built · Level: Level 13 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,527

- Story: Testing Einstein: Eclipses, Airplanes, Satellites · Level: Level 13 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,570
- Story: The Year After the Fire · Level: Level 13 · Kind: Peabody story · Words: 1,840
- Story: Debugging Since 1843 · Level: Level 13 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,449
- Story: A Practical Lamp, Not a First One · Level: Level 14 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,267
- Story: Ratified on a Promise · Level: Level 14 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,239
- Story: Marie Curie's Shed · Level: Level 14 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,517
- Story: Ceres Was a Planet Once · Level: Level 14 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,269
- Story: The Hudson Landing · Level: Level 15 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,228
- Story: The Top of Everest · Level: Level 16 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,262
- Story: The Broad Street Pump · Level: Level 17 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,410
- Story: The Storm of 1859 · Level: Level 18 · Kind: True story · Words: 1,391

Picking one for your child

Every story here is sorted by Peabody's reading level, which is worked out from the text and never from the child. A lower level means shorter sentences and easier words, so start where your child can read about half of a story alone and read the rest together. If it is too hard, go down a level. If they race through it, go up.

For growing readers

9 are at levels 5 to 9: Ruby Goes to School, The First Flight, The Four Big Pages, The Thread That Glowed, The Run to Nome, Twelve Seconds at Kitty Hawk and more. Longer stories, with more going on in each one.

For confident readers

27 are at levels 10 to 18: The Bus Boycott, The Great Fire of London, How Did a Patent Examiner Change Physics?, How Did Two Bicycle Makers Learn to Fly?, Who Invented the Light Bulb?, Trouble on Apollo 13 and more. These are for children who read chapters and longer passages on their own.

Reading them together

A grown-up can read any of these aloud from a phone or tablet, one page at a time, and a child who reads can take over. Where a device can speak, the story page has a Read to me button that reads each page aloud in the device's own voice. Every story page has a Print link too, if you would rather read on paper.

More free stories

- The whole library: free stories by reading level, no account needed.
- Classic stories retold short: fables, fairy tales, myths and legends.
- Free nonfiction books for kids, one topic at three levels
- Free Greek myths for kids
- Free folk tales, tall tales and legends for kids
- Free short stories for 4th graders
- By level: Level 5 · Level 7 · Level 8 · Level 9 · Level 10 · Level 11 · Level 12 · Level 13 · Level 14 · Level 15 · Level 16 · Level 17 · Level 18

Questions parents ask

What reading level are these history stories?

They run across levels 5 to 18. Peabody works each level out from the story's text: how long the sentences are, how many words fit on a screen and how common the words are. The table shows the level of every story, so you can pick a lower or a higher one.

Are any of these stories scary?

None carries a mark above gentle, and none is on the scary stories shelf. The short description on each story's page says what it covers, so read it first if your child is sensitive.

Do the stories cost anything?

No. Every story on this page is free to read through the end of 2026, with no account and no card.

Free at peabody.kids/history-stories-for-kids