**The influential figures in history.**

We have a lot of influential figures that changed the course of events in the history. If I was to mention all the influential figures in history, I could never hear the end of it that’s why I’m specifically going to talk about two people that personally have me in awe every time.

Nelson Mandela and Elon Musk are two of the most important figures who have left permanent marks on history, though their contributions and fields of influence differ significantly. Mandela's legacy is deep rooted in his fight for justice and equality in South Africa, while Musk's influence is fixed across technology and space exploration, pushing the boundaries of innovation. Their stories highlight different facets of leadership, resilience, and vision, showcasing how individuals can shape the course of history in diverse ways all through passion and motivation to do what is right.

* **Nelson Mandela**

I am going to share a small background of how Nelson Mandela led his life:

Rolihlahla Mandela was born into the Madiba clan in the village of [Mvezo](https://www.google.co.za/maps/place/Mvezo/@-31.9426277,28.5317853,14z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x1e6084c2b478f1af:0xb4ef62f7baab9fff!8m2!3d-31.9407269!4d28.5491565" \t "_blank), in the Eastern Cape, on 18 July 1918. His mother was Nonqaphi Nosekeni and his father was Nkosi Mphakanyiswa Gadla Mandela, principal counsellor to the Acting King of the Thembu people, Jongintaba Dalindyebo. In 1930, when he was 12 years old, his father died and the young Rolihlahla became a ward of Jongintaba at the Great Place in Mqhekezweni1.

Hearing the elders’ stories of his ancestors’ valor during the wars of resistance, he dreamed also of making his own contribution to the freedom struggle of his people.

Mandela began his studies for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University College of Fort Hare but did not complete the degree there as he was expelled for joining in a student protest.

He entered politics in 1942, Mandela, while increasingly politically involved from 1942, only joined the African National Congress in 1944 when he helped to form the ANC Youth League (ANCYL).

Mandela rose through the ranks of the ANCYL and through its efforts, the ANC adopted a more radical mass-based policy, the Programme of Action, in 1949.

Because of his sense of justice and his love to do what’s right In 1952 he was chosen as the National Volunteer-in-Chief of the Defiance Campaign with Maulvi Cachalia as his deputy. This campaign of civil disobedience against six unjust laws was a joint programme between the ANC and the South African Indian Congress. He and 19 others were charged under the Suppression of Communism Act for their part in the campaign and sentenced to nine months of hard labor, suspended for two years.

A two-year diploma in law on top of his BA allowed Mandela to practice law, and in August 1952 he and Oliver Tambo established South Africa’s first black-owned law firm in the 1950s, Mandela & Tambo.

At the end of 1952 he was banned for the first time. As a restricted person he was only permitted to watch in secret as the Freedom Charter was adopted in Kliptown on 26 June 1955.

Mandela was arrested in a countrywide police swoop on 5 December 1956, which led to the 1956 Treason Trial.

Days before the end of the Treason Trial, Mandela travelled to Pietermaritzburg to speak at the All-in Africa Conference, which resolved that he should write to Prime Minister Verwoerd requesting a national convention on a non-racial constitution, and to warn that should he not agree there would be a national strike against South Africa becoming a republic. After he and his colleagues were acquitted in the Treason Trial, Mandela went underground and began planning a national strike for 29, 30 and 31 March.

Mandela in total spent 27 years in prison and was released on Sunday 11, February 1990. Throughout his imprisonment he had rejected three conditional offers of release.

In 1991, he was elected ANC President to replace his friend, Oliver Tambo.

on 10 May 1994 he was inaugurated as South Africa’s first democratically elected President. True to his promise, Mandela stepped down in 1999 after one term as President. He continued to work with the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund he set up in 1995 and established the Nelson Mandela Foundation and The Mandela Rhodes Foundation.

To put it in simple words what makes people consider Nelson Mandela as an influential figure and what strikes and talks to me most is that Nelson Mandela never wavered in his devotion to democracy, equality and learning. Despite terrible provocation, he never answered racism with racism. His life is an inspiration to all who are oppressed and deprived; and to all who are opposed to oppression and deprivation. He led an exemplary life filled with principles and fought for what he believed is right and even though he suffered during his journey he never gave up and this teaches us young people and everyone who looks up on him to always fight till you reach your goal. Mandela's influence extends beyond South Africa. He inspired global movements for civil rights and justice, emphasizing the power of forgiveness and the importance of inclusive governance. His legacy is celebrated worldwide, epitomizing the struggle for human dignity and equality.

#### To wrap up about Nelson Mandela I’ll quote one of my favorite quotes saying “**What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others”**

Which proves that everyone has a purpose, and it’s important to find one’s path to help make this world better for all who live in it.

* **Elon Musk**

Elon Musk was born in Canada to a Canadian mother and a South African father. As a child, he found solace in books and computers, often immersing himself in their worlds. However, his early years were marked by struggles with bullying, enduring mistreatment from classmates until he underwent a growth spurt in his teens and gained the strength to defend himself. Despite the challenges, Musk demonstrated his entrepreneurial spirit from a young age, creating a video game at just 12 years old and successfully selling it to a computer magazine. In 1988, he left South Africa for Canada, obtaining Canadian citizenship to avoid mandatory military service and seeking better economic opportunities in the United States.

Elon Musk was pretty brilliant since he pursued economics and went ahead to acquire a second degree in physics after that he enrolled in Stanford University for his p.h.d in energy physics. However his entrepreneurial ambitions took over and he dropped his doctoral studies to embark his entrepreneurial journey.

We are going to dive deeper into his entrepreneurial journey and companies.

* Starlink

 Initiated the Starlink project to provide satellite internet access. Launched thousands of satellites into low-Earth orbit. Providing internet services in various regions, including Ukraine.

* Twitter

 In a surprising turn of events, Elon Musk made headlines with his involvement in X, formerly known as Twitter.  Elon Musk became the largest shareholder of Twitter in 2016 and offered $44 billion for its takeover. When Elon Musk finally became the CEO of Twitter after facing legal action, he took a big decision like taking money for Blue Tick. Today, after all kinds of problems and news, when Musk has handed over the command of Twitter to Linda Yaccarino, the news related to him through Twitter has also reduced. Musk’s journey with the social media platform began in 2009 when he joined as a user. His significant stake in X, disclosed in 2022, prompted the company to offer him a board seat, which he initially accepted but later declined. Musk’s subsequent attempt to acquire X at a premium price sparked controversy and legal battles. Ultimately, Musk successfully acquired X in 2022, rebranding it to X the following year.

* Neuralink

As the co-founder of Neuralink, Elon Musk is moving towards creating the first chip to be installed in the human brain as a brain machine interface.

* SolarCity

Tesla bought Solar City in the year 2016 for an amount of $ 2.6 billion.

* Tesla

Elon Musk’s involvement with Tesla began in 2004 when he became an early investor, contributing approximately $6.3 million to kickstart the company. Initially known as Tesla Motors, the company aimed to revolutionize the automotive industry with its electric vehicles. Following a series of strategic maneuvers, including the ousting of former CEO Martin Eberhard, Musk assumed leadership as CEO and product architect. Under his guidance, Tesla soared to become the world’s most valuable automaker, with a strong focus on electric vehicles and solar energy solutions.

These are among companies that Elon Musk owns and his major investments are : Tesla, The boring company, SpaceX, Neuralink and Paypal.

In summary, Elon Musk’s notable accomplishments span across multiple industries, from technology and finance to space exploration and social media. His entrepreneurial journey is characterized by bold visions, groundbreaking ventures, and occasional controversies, underscoring his status as one of the most influential figures of the modern era.

Elon Musk’s trajectory from humble beginnings to becoming a titan of industry is a testament to his visionary leadership and relentless pursuit of innovation. His wide-ranging interests in fields such as renewable energy, space exploration, and artificial intelligence reflect his commitment to advancing humanity’s future. Despite facing criticism and encountering challenges along the way, Musk’s impact on industries like PayPal, Tesla Motors, SolarCity, and SpaceX has been transformative, cementing his legacy as one of the most influential figures of the 21st century.

Musk's ventures are characterized by ambitious goals and a relentless pursuit of innovation. While his methods and management style have sparked controversy, his impact on technology and industry is undeniable. He has inspired a new generation of entrepreneurs and engineers to dream big and tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Musk's impact, while still unfolding, is seen in his ability to drive technological advancements and his unrelenting focus on solving complex global problems. His work has not only redefined industries but also set new standards for innovation and sustainability. Musk's vision extends beyond Earth, potentially shaping the future of human civilization.

Due to all the achievements that Elon Musk accomplished and the current era we are in his impact is really life changing and affect the whole world and is an inspiration to us young people through showing us that when you have the drive to accomplish something nothing can stop. As they say your biggest enemy is yourself, therefore if you say that you can’t achieve something you won’t but if you also put your mind on something you will work to achieve it.

The bottom line is that Nelson Mandela and Elon Musk exemplify how individuals can influence history through different paths—one through social justice and political leadership, the other through technological innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. Their legacies highlight the diverse ways in which visionary leaders can leave an enduring impact on the world.