



Megalithic tombs The first farmers Nobody knows how they did it, but some five thousand years ago, early farmers managed to move huge, heavy boulders in order to build graves. These megalithic tombs are the tangible monuments of a peasant people that left their hunter-gatherer existence behind to settle in permanent locations.

3000 BC



Willibrord The spread of Christianity Around the year 700, Christians regard the Frisian inhabitants of the coastal region as pagans. These people resist conversion, until the arrival of the English monk Willibrord. He manages to win over many Frisians to the Christian faith, although a proportion of them still continue to hang on to their old faith.

658-739



47 ad - 400 ad

The Roman Limes On the frontiers of the Roman world Two thousand years ago, the northern frontier of the immense Roman Empire runs straight across the current territory of the Netherlands. In Latin, this frontier is referred to as "limes". The limes extends for thousands of kilometres in total. It runs from the north of England up to the edge of the Sahara Desert in Africa. In the Low Countries, the frontier is formed by the River Rhine.



Charlemagne Emperor of the West
Charlemagne is one of the greatest rulers of the early Middle Ages. By continuously waging war, he manages to subjugate a large part of western Europe by 800, encompassing what is now the Netherlands. Named Charles, he is dubbed Charles le Magne [Charles the Great] because of his vast empire. Moreover, at a height of 1.84 m (6 ft), he was impressively tall for his time.

742-814



Erasmus A critical mind in Europe
Desiderius Erasmus is both a critical philosopher and a conciliator. This influential humanist's best-known work by far is In Praise of Folly, a satirical attack on the Roman Catholic Church. Yet when the Protestants secede, Erasmus continues to advocate religious reform from within the church.

1469-1536



1356-1450

The Hanseatic League Collaboration pays off
In the late Middle Ages, the cities of Zwolle, Kampen, Zutphen, and Deventer develop into leading trade hubs. They are members of the Hanseatic League: initially, a merchant confederation and from 1356, also a trade network of cities. The League fosters the expansion and protection of the cities' own trade activities. In the sixteenth century, the Hanseatic League is dissolved.





The Revolt From the Iconoclastic Fury to the Act of Abjuration During the Dutch Revolt, better known as the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648), the Dutch territories rise up against King Philip II of Spain. Eventually, in 1588 the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands is established.

1566



1533-1584

William of Orange From rebel to "Father of the Fatherland" William of Orange is an ambitious nobleman who develops into the leader of the Dutch Revolt and later on is revered as "Father of the Fatherland". He is regarded as the founder of a new Dutch state. He himself, however, has never pursued such an independent state.



The trading Companies VOC & WIC Sailing and fighting for trade

Seventeenth-century Europe sees a growing demand for luxury products from overseas: spices, sugar, coffee, tea, and china. Merchants jostle to meet this demand. For small businesses, however, long-distance journeys to Asia, Africa or the Americas are costly and dangerous. New corporations are established to organise this overseas trade.

1602-1799



Rembrandt A country full of painters
According to the calculations, in the
seventeenth century, more than five
million paintings were made in the
Republic: a country full of painters.
Paintings adorn the walls of not only the
rich, but also those of commoners. The
most famous painter of all is
Rembrandt, and his best-known painting
is The Night Watch, dating from 1642.



The patriots Democratising the Republic
The Republic doesn't amount to
anything anymore and the Stadtholder
is to blame. At least, according to the
Patriots, who can identify with the
ideals of the Enlightenment. In 1787,
they launch an unsuccessful attempt to
assume power. However, in 1795,
France comes to their aid. The
Stadtholder is driven away for good.

1606 - 1669



1607 - 1676



1700 - 1795



Michiel de Ruyter The Republic in
choppy seas Within the Republic, sea
captains are considered major heroes.
This also goes for Michiel de Ruyter. In
1667, he is commissioned to lead a
smart politico-military action: the naval
raid on Chatham via the River Thames,
intended to destroy British shipyards
and ships. The plan succeeds, and across
the globe De Ruyter is acclaimed as a
naval hero.



The Constitution The most important law of the Netherlands In 1848, William II signs a Constitution that contains considerable curtailment of his royal powers. Less power to the King, more power to the Cabinet and Parliament: the Constitution of 1848 is referred to as the beginnings of the Dutch democracy. However, the history of our Constitution dates back even further.



World War II The Netherlands occupied and liberated On 10 May 1940, the German army invades the Netherlands. During the occupation, more than a hundred thousand Dutch Jews are killed in concentration camps. Some Dutch citizens protest, but most of them are passively anti-German.



1848

1940-1945

1854-1929

1929-1945



Aletta Jacobs Standing up for equal rights Aletta Jacobs is the first woman in Dutch history officially to be admitted to university. Furthermore, she is the first woman to become a physician and the first woman to earn a PhD. In the Netherlands, she is renowned as the leader of the first wave of feminism and on account of her crusade for female suffrage.

Anne Frank The persecution of the Jews During the German occupation, Anne Frank goes into hiding in the secret annex of an Amsterdam canalside house, along with her family and four others. In 1944, they are discovered, and eventually Anne dies in a concentration camp. After the war, her diary is published. It becomes one of the most widely read books in the world. Thus, Anne Frank puts a face to the victims of the Holocaust.

Maaiké & Mette