

# Answers | The Decade That Was: 50 Fill-Ins

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/the-decade-that-was-50-fill-ins/>

1. By the time midnight struck in Maui, even the Internet's most dedicated harbingers of millennium doom had to concede that things had turned out better than they had expected. "Does anyone still think TEOTWAWKI will happen??" typed one presumably sleep-deprived Y2K watcher, using the favorite chat room shorthand for "the end of the world as we know it." <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/02/us/the-year-2000-the-internet-with-no-doom-and-gloom-web-users-must-celebrate.html>

2. A day after New Orleans thought it had narrowly escaped the worst of Hurricane Katrina's wrath, water broke through two levees and virtually submerged and isolated the city, causing incalculable destruction and rendering it uninhabitable for weeks to come. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/31/national/nationalspecial/31storm.html>

3. Apple Computer introduced a portable music player and declared that the new gadget, called the iPod, was so much easier to use that it would broaden a nascent market in the way the Macintosh once helped make the personal computer accessible to a more general audience. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/24/business/technology-apple-introduces-what-it-calls-an-easier-to-use-portable-music-player.html>

4. As a senator, Joseph Biden experienced personal tragedy, near-fatal illness, and multiple failed attempts to advance to the other side of Pennsylvania Avenue. Though neither of his campaigns for the Democratic nomination ever really took off, he was tapped as Senator Barack Obama's running mate. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/b/joseph\\_r\\_jr\\_biden/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/b/joseph_r_jr_biden/index.html)

5. In the last decade reality television has changed both the economics of prime-time programming and the aspirations of those looking to break into the industry. Since the debut of "Survivor" on CBS in 2000 [it] has grown to account for more than one-quarter of prime time on the five broadcast networks. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/26/arts/television/26wyat.html>

6. It was the day when the unreal became the unimaginable. Sept. 11, 2001, the crystalline morning when planes dropped from the skies and toppled the World Trade Center and punctured a hole in the Pentagon, was a demarcation point that shattered the security of the country and introduced a nebulous and virulent enemy previously unfamiliar to most citizens. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/s/sept\\_11\\_2001/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/s/sept_11_2001/index.html)

7. A muscleman, a movie star, a mogul and perhaps the nation's most prominent moderate Republican, Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected governor of California in a recall election that ousted the Democratic incumbent, Gray Davis. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/arnold\\_schwarzenegger/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/arnold_schwarzenegger/index.html)

8. The triumphal "Mission Accomplished" banner was the pride of the White House advance team, the image makers who set the stage for the president's close-ups. On a golden Pacific evening aboard the carrier Abraham Lincoln, they made sure that the banner was perfectly captured in the camera shots of President Bush's speech declaring major combat in Iraq at an end. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/29/world/bush-steps-away-from-victory-banner.html>

## Answers cont. | The Decade That Was: 50 Fill-Ins

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/the-decade-that-was-50-fill-ins/>

9. A surge of electricity to western New York and Canada touched off a series of power failures and enforced blackouts that left parts of at least eight states in the Northeast and the Midwest without electricity. The widespread failures provoked the evacuation of office buildings, stranded thousands of commuters and flooded some hospitals with patients suffering in the stifling heat.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/15/nyregion/15POWE.html>

10. The book series Harry Potter, which had 121.5 million copies in print in the United States and 325 million worldwide prior to the release of the seventh book, has also spawned a whole industry of audio books, collectibles and

costumes. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/complete\\_coverage/harry\\_potter/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/complete_coverage/harry_potter/index.html)

11. Ten bombs ripped through four commuter trains in Madrid during the morning rush hour, killing at least 192 people and wounding more than 1,400 in the deadliest terrorist attack on a European target since World War II.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/11/international/europe/11CND-TRAI.html>

12. Before the fall of Saddam Hussein, Abu Ghraib, a sprawling penal compound west of Baghdad, was notorious within Iraq as a place where torture and executions were commonplace. It became notorious throughout the world in 2004 after photographs were made public of American soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners

there. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/abu\\_ghraib/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/abu_ghraib/index.html)

13. The Red Sox won the World Series for the first time since 1918, overcoming, at last, the sale of Ruth to the Yankees.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/28/sports/baseball/28series.html>

14. After losing his bid for the White House to President Bush, John Kerry, Democrat of Massachusetts, struggled to find his footing in the Senate.

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/k/john\\_kerry/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/k/john_kerry/index.html)

15. For over a decade, the issue of same-sex marriage has been a flashpoint political issue in the United States, setting off waves of competing legislation and ballot initiatives attempting either to legalize or ban the practice. Rifts have also opened among religious groups over the decision to recognize [it] or condemn it.

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/s/same\\_sex\\_marriage/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/s/same_sex_marriage/index.html)

16. The world's most powerful earthquake in 40 years erupted underwater off the Indonesian island of Sumatra and sent walls of water barreling thousands of miles, killing more than 19,000 people in half a dozen countries across South and Southeast Asia, with thousands more missing or

unreachable. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/27/international/asia/27quake.html>

17. A nation still reeling from the Sept. 11th attacks was shaken again by a series of letters containing anthrax.

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/a/anthrax/index.html>

18. George Walker Bush, 54, comes into office as only the fourth man in history – and the first in more than a century – to assume the presidency without winning the popular vote. Like the only other son of a president to win the office himself, John Quincy Adams in 1824 (who had fewer popular votes than Andrew Jackson), Mr. Bush lost the popular vote in a disputed election to a Tennessean, Albert Arnold Gore.

Jr. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/14/us/the-43rd-president-man-in-the-news-the-43rd-president-george-walker-bush.html>

## Answers cont. | The Decade That Was: 50 Fill-Ins

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/the-decade-that-was-50-fill-ins/>

19. The International Astronomical Union passed a new definition of planet that excludes Pluto and puts it in a new category of "dwarf planet." [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/science/topics/pluto\\_planet/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/science/topics/pluto_planet/index.html)

20. The United States has been involved militarily in Afghanistan since it led an invasion after the Sept. 11 attacks by Al Qaeda, which had been given a safe haven in the country by the Taliban, the extremist Islamic group that had seized control in 1996 after years of civil war. <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/afghanistan/index.html>

21. By the end of the Beijing Olympics, Michael Phelps had put to rest the argument over who is the greatest American Olympian and perhaps the greatest from any country. By winning eight gold medals in eight swimming events in Beijing, shattering seven world records in the process, he raised his haul of career Olympic medals to 16. Fourteen of them are gold.

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/p/michael\\_phelps/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/p/michael_phelps/index.html)

22. As stock markets plunged and credit markets around the globe seized up, Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson and the chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben S. Bernanke, came up with a proposal for a sweeping \$700 billion bailout of the nation's financial institutions. They acted after a series of ad-hoc bailouts and government-brokered sale of investment banks like Bear Stearns and Merrill Lynch and of giant lenders like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac earlier that year had failed to stem growing fears on Wall Street. Those fears had turned to near-panic after the failure of Lehman Brothers and the government rescue of the American International Group within days of each other.

Mr. Paulson's proposal, labeled the Troubled Asset Relief Program, was backed by President George W. Bush, both presidential candidates and the Democratic leadership in Congress, but opposed by most Republicans. Passed on a second attempt, it led to a series of enormous loans to banks that inflamed widespread public anger but were later widely credited as being one of the crucial factors in helping to avert a global depression. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/c/credit\\_crisis/bailout\\_plan/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/c/credit_crisis/bailout_plan/index.html)

23. YouTube is far and away the most popular destination on the Internet for viewing video, most of which has been posted by users. Nearly two-thirds of all video views in the United States occur on [the site], according to the measurement firm Nielsen. <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/business/companies/youtube/index.html>

24. Baseball first tested for steroids in 2003. If more than 5 percent of players failed the tests, penalties would be imposed starting in 2004, which is what happened. <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/health/diseasesconditionsandhealthtopics/steroids/index.html>

25. The space shuttle Columbia broke up on re-entry into the earth's atmosphere, killing all seven astronauts on board and sending fiery debris over Texas in the second loss of a space shuttle in 17 years. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/02/us/loss-of-the-shuttle-the-overview-shuttle-breaks-up-7-dead.html>

26. Terri Schiavo, the profoundly incapacitated woman whose family split over whether she would have preferred to live or die, forced Americans into a national conversation about the end of life. Her case raised questions about the role of government in private family decisions. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/01/politics/01legacy.html>

## Answers cont. | The Decade That Was: 50 Fill-Ins

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/the-decade-that-was-50-fill-ins/>

27. After the death of the popular and long-serving Pope John Paul II, the German cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected Pope Benedict XVI. Since the [former Pope's] visit to the United States in 1999, the Catholic Church here has been devastated by the clergy sex-abuse scandal.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/20/international/worldspecial2/20pope.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/15/opinion/15iht-edpope.1.12004218.html>

28. The American invasion of Iraq began when President George W. Bush ordered missiles fired at a bunker in Baghdad where he believed that Saddam Hussein was hiding. On June 30, 2009, America pulled its forces out of Iraqi cities as part of a phased withdrawal from the country. <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/index.html>

29. A student, Seung-Hui Cho, opened fire in a dormitory and classroom building on the Virginia Tech campus, killing 32 people before committing suicide.

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/v/virginia\\_polytechnic\\_institute\\_and\\_state\\_university/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/v/virginia_polytechnic_institute_and_state_university/index.html)

30. Some of the video game industry's smartest minds thought that couch potatoes wanted richer graphics and more challenging virtual worlds. It turns out that a lot of potatoes simply wanted to get off the couch. That may be the best explanation for the growing popularity of the Nintendo Wii, the new video game system that has players jumping, punching and swinging, giving them an aerobic workout right in front of their television sets. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/31/technology/31game.html>

31. Down to the last hours of his doomed bid for the White House, Senator John McCain repeated to himself a familiar admonition. It was the same mantra he had called upon to steel himself for moments of conflict as a collegiate boxer at the Naval Academy, a prisoner of war bracing for interrogation, a legislator twisting arms for votes or a candidate exhorting crowds in the final rallies of his failed Republican presidential primary campaign eight years ago. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/m/john\\_mccain/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/m/john_mccain/index.html)

32. Global warming has become perhaps the most complicated issue facing world leaders. On the one hand, warnings from the scientific community are becoming louder, as an increasing body of science points to rising dangers from the ongoing buildup of human-related greenhouse gasses — produced mainly by the burning of fossil fuels and forests. On the other, the technological, economic and political issues that have to be resolved before a concerted worldwide effort to reduce emissions can begin have gotten no simpler, particularly in the face of a global economic slowdown. <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/science/topics/globalwarming/index.html>

33. The hanging of Saddam Hussein ended the life of one of the most brutal tyrants in recent history and negated the fiction that he himself maintained even as the gallows loomed — that he remained president of Iraq despite being toppled by the United States military and that his power and his palaces would be restored to him in time. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/30/world/middleeast/30saddam.html>

34. Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) is a serious form of pneumonia. Infection results in acute respiratory distress (severe breathing difficulty) and sometimes death. It is a dramatic example of how quickly world travel can spread a disease. It is also an example of how quickly a networked health system can respond to an emerging threat. <http://health.nytimes.com/health/guides/disease/severe-acute-respiratory-syndrome-sars/overview.html>

## Answers cont. | The Decade That Was: 50 Fill-Ins

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/the-decade-that-was-50-fill-ins/>

35. Michael Jackson, whose quintessentially American tale of celebrity and excess took him from musical boy wonder to global pop superstar to sad figure haunted by lawsuits, paparazzi and failed plastic surgery, was pronounced dead at U.C.L.A. Medical Center after arriving in a coma, a city official said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/26/arts/music/26jackson.html>

36. Sarah Palin emerged on the political scene in Alaska, a self-described "hockey mom" and small-town mayor who ousted the incumbent governor to become the youngest person and first woman to hold the post in a state whose government had been dominated by many of the same faces since its inception. She burst onto the national scene two years later, when Senator John McCain, the Republican presidential candidate, drafted her as his running mate. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/p/sarah\\_palin/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/p/sarah_palin/index.html)

37. A 7.9-magnitude earthquake hit a mountainous region in Western China, killing about 70,000 people and leaving over 18,000 missing. Over 15 million people lived in the affected area, including almost 4 million in the city of Chengdu.

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/science/topics/earthquakes/sichuan\\_province\\_china/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/science/topics/earthquakes/sichuan_province_china/index.html)

38. Tiger Woods, one of the most dominant golfers ever, is taking an "indefinite break" from the sport to try to rebuild his personal life after a flood of reports of marital infidelities linking him to multiple women.

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/w/tiger\\_woods/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/w/tiger_woods/index.html)

39. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Barack Obama's former bitter rival for the Democratic presidential nomination, is his secretary of state.

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/hillary\\_rodham\\_clinton/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/hillary_rodham_clinton/index.html)

40. The Supreme Court effectively handed the presidential election to George W. Bush, overturning the Florida Supreme Court and ruling by a vote of 5 to 4 that there could be no further counting of [its] disputed presidential votes. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/13/us/bush-prevails-single-vote-justices-end-recount-blocking-gore-after-5-week.html>

41. H1N1 (Swine Flu) causes moderate symptoms in most patients but poses greater risks to pregnant woman, young people and patients with underlying health problems, according to the WHO. The United Nations agency declared a full-blown pandemic – at six on its six-point scale – under

way. <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2009/12/03/world/international-uk-flu-who.html>

42. President Bush signed into law antiterrorism measures that he said would "help law enforcement to identify, to dismantle, to disrupt and to punish terrorists before they strike." In a White House ceremony, Mr. Bush praised several provisions of the bill, including its efforts to attack money-laundering and to allow information sharing between law enforcement and intelligence authorities. He also cited new powers for roving wiretaps across the country and for the surveillance of computers and electronic mail. [This law is also known as the U.S.A. Patriot Act.]

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/27/us/nation-challenged-legislation-bush-quickly-signs-measure-aiding-antiterrorism.html>

## Answers cont. | The Decade That Was: 50 Fill-Ins

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/the-decade-that-was-50-fill-ins/>

43. Capt. Chesley B. Sullenberger III is the US Airways pilot who landed an Airbus A320 in the Hudson River when the plane lost power after taking off from LaGuardia Airport, possibly because of a collision with a flock of birds. Mr. Sullenberger, the captain on the flight, was hailed for his quick thinking and piloting skills that led to a smooth landing on the water, and for taking charge of an evacuation that ended with all 155 people on board brought to safety. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/chesley\\_b\\_sullenberger\\_iii/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/chesley_b_sullenberger_iii/index.html)

44. Barack Hussein Obama had been selected to give the keynote speech at the Democratic convention and he managed to set the place on fire with his youthful energy and lilting rhetoric...by the time he was sworn into the U.S. Senate, he was already a megawatt celebrity...He was sworn in as the 44th president of the United States on Jan. 20, 2009. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/b/barack\\_obama\\_the\\_road\\_to\\_the\\_white\\_house/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/b/barack_obama_the_road_to_the_white_house/index.html)

45. President Bush named Samuel A. Alito Jr., an Ivy League-educated federal appeals court judge with a conservative record on abortion and a history of prosecuting organized crime in New Jersey, to succeed Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the Supreme Court.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/01/politics/politicsspecial1/01court.html>

46. The publication of the first interpretations of the human genome sequence overturns some long-held beliefs about human biology. The analyses, by two rival groups, are the first step in what many biologists say will be a new era of medicine, one in which [this] knowledge will enable physicians to recognize and treat disease at its genetic roots. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/12/science/13CND-GENOME.html>

47. Facebook, by some measurements the most popular social network with more than 200 million active users worldwide, is one of the fastest-growing and best-known sites on the Internet today. The company, founded by a Harvard sophomore, Mark Zuckerberg, began life catering first to Harvard students and then to all high school and college students. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/business/companies/facebook\\_inc/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/business/companies/facebook_inc/index.html)

48. Colin Powell had a tumultuous tenure as President Bush's first-term secretary of state, when he was frequently undercut by Vice President Dick Cheney and Donald H. Rumsfeld, the secretary of defense, in the period before the Iraq war. Although Mr. Powell had major misgivings about the war and what he considered the inadequate number of troops, he not only agreed to the invasion but also made the administration's case for war in a presentation to the United Nations Security Council. Much of what he said is now known to be based on false information provided by the Central Intelligence Agency. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/p/colin\\_i\\_powell/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/p/colin_i_powell/index.html)

49. In an extraordinary sweep of the 76th Academy Awards, "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," the last in a trilogy based on the epic fantasy by J. R. R. Tolkien, won all 11 Oscars for which it was nominated, including best picture. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/01/arts/lord-rings-dominates-oscars-final-film-trilogy-sweeps-11-categories-sean-penn.html>

50. Sonia Sotomayor is an associate justice for the Supreme Court, the first Hispanic justice in the court's history, and only its third woman. Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. administered a pair of oaths to her in two private ceremonies at the Supreme Court building, completing her ascent to a life-tenured position as the nation's 111th justice. [She] was a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit when President Obama nominated her in May 2009 to replace the retiring Justice David H. Souter. [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/sonia\\_sotomayor/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/sonia_sotomayor/index.html)