Mohandadas K. Gandhi

A Life in Pictures
1876
as a child

This is the earliest picture of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

He is aged 7
Gandhi’s mother
Putlibai

Putlibai had a strong spiritual influence on Gandhi

She was a devout Hindu, who used to fast regularly

She also took advice from a Jain priest
Gandhi’s father
Karamchand

Gandhi’s father was a politician.

He was Prime Minister of Porbandar, a small princely state in Western India.
1883

as a teenager

Gandhi played sports such as tennis and cricket

When he lied to his parents or stole from his brother he felt very guilty!
1886
with brother

Gandhi had two brothers and one sister

He was the youngest child

Here he is shown with his elder brother Laxmidas
1890 in England

This the first picture of Gandhi in England.

Gandhi was a lifelong vegetarian

He is shown on a visit of the Vegetarian Society to the Isle of Wight
1891

law student

Gandhi trained to be a barrister at the Inner Temple in London

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1895
as a barrister

After a brief period back in India, Gandhi went to South Africa to practice law.

He was retained by a firm of Muslim merchants, headed by Dada Abdullah Sheth.
1895
Natal Congress

In South Africa he soon became involved in protecting the rights of Indian migrants

Here he is shown with other members of the Natal Indian Congress
During the Boer War, Gandhi formed the Indian Ambulance Corps. “Their unassuming dauntlessness cost them many lives and eventually an order was published forbidding them to go into the firing line.”

(Mr. Vere Kent
Johannesburg Illustrated Star)
1902
with Kasturbhai

Mohandas and Kasturbai were married when they were both aged 13

Later Gandhi became a campaigner against child marriage
1902 family

Kasturbai (Ba) is shown with their four children (all boys):

Harilal, born in 1888
Manilal, born in 1892
Ramdas, born in 1897
Devdas, born in 1900
1908
recuperating

Gandhi was sometimes subject to physical beatings because of his activism.

When this photo was taken he was recovering from a beating at the hands of other Indians, who objected to the compromise Gandhi made with General Smuts regarding the Pass Laws.

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1910: letter to Tolstoy

Tolstoy:
“I want to tell others what I feel particularly clearly and what to my mind is of great importance – namely that which is called nonviolent resistance – but which is really nothing else but the teaching of love”
1910
Tolstoy Farm

21 miles from Johannesburg

Gandhi’s second venture into communal living

The first had been Phoenix Farm near Durban

Later Gandhi founded ashrams in India
1912
with Gokhale

Many important Indians had become aware of Gandhi’s campaigning in South Africa.

Here he is shown with Gokhale, a senior leader of the Indian Nationalist movement, who became Gandhi’s political ‘guru’.
1913 Transvaal march

A protest against the ban on Indian immigration, and the ruling that only Christian marriages were legal

Gandhi hoped the marchers would be sent to jail when they entered the Transvaal

Eventually there was a compromise with the government of General Smuts
1913
Satyagraha

Gandhi called his method ‘Satyagraha’, meaning ‘struggle for truth’

He was prepared to sacrifice his own well-being in order to change the hearts of his opponents
1913
the Satyagrahi

Gandhi ceased to wear European clothes

He believed that simple dress was appropriate for defending the rights of ordinary Indians
1915
a hero in India

Gandhi’s successes in South Africa were well known throughout India.

In this picture he is welcomed in Karachi, now in modern-day Pakistan.
1929
Gandhi

This picture shows the ‘iconic’ Gandhi, who had developed by the age of 60

By this time Gandhi had established himself on the Indian political scene, and achieved many notable victories
Gandhi was very clever at picking his campaign issues.

Although the British tax on salt did not raise much money, it was symbolic of the lack of freedom for Indians in their own country.
1930
making salt

Gandhi is shown picking up salt from the beach – ‘making’ salt – which was illegal for Indians.

Even today foreign companies try to prevent Indians using their own natural resources, such as drugs companies which try to patent Indian medicinal plants.

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1931
round the table

It seemed that the British government was taking Indian demands for independence seriously.

A conference was organised in London, but nothing changed.
1931
St James Palace

While in England, Gandhi met the King and the Prime Minister.

He told a reporter: “You people wear plus-fours, mine are minus-fours!”
1931
Kingsley Hall

“I find that my work lies outside the conference”

While in London, Gandhi stayed in the poor East End

The Gandhi Foundation maintains its HQ at Kingsley Hall to this day
In India, Gandhi had campaigned against the import of cotton cloth from England.

This caused many textile workers in England to lose their jobs.

Gandhi visited them to show his solidarity – and they showed theirs!
Gandhi went to jail many times in both South Africa and India.

He used his time in jail to read and study.

‘whoever has a taste for reading good books is able to bear loneliness in any place with great ease’
Gandhi had good relations with Nehru, who became Prime Minister of India in 1947.

However their visions for India were different.

Nehru wanted industrialisation.

Gandhi had traditional village life at the heart of his vision.
1939
letter to Hitler

Hitler never saw the letter because British officials intervened to stop it.

Would Hitler have replied?

Gandhi later published his letter in his journal ‘Harijan’

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As at Wardha
C.P.
India.
22.7.39.

Dear friend,

Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request, because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.

It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success? Any way I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you.

Herr Hitler
Berlin
Germany.

I remain,
Your sincere friend

M.K. Gandhi
1940
‘frontier Gandhi’

Gandhi had good relations with many Muslims

Here he is shown with Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was known as the ‘frontier Gandhi’, for his work promoting peace on the border with Afghanistan
1940
tending a leper

Gandhi had wanted to be a doctor rather than a lawyer, and he nursed many people throughout his life.
1940
‘the scientist’

Here he is shown researching leprosy

Gandhi’s autobiography is called ‘My Experiments with Truth’

He wanted to bring ‘scientific’ methods to the exploration of human morality
1942 spinning

Gandhi was inspired by Ruskin’s ideal of self-reliance.

He taught Indians to provide for themselves and not depend on the British.

The spinning wheel became the symbol of independence, and was used on the flag of the Indian National Congress.
Indian Flags

INC flag with spinning wheel  
Indian flag with Dharma wheel
1944
with Jinnah

The Partition of Pakistan from India in 1947 broke Gandhi’s heart.

Gandhi believed that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians should all live together in India.
1947 fasting

Gandhi fasted so that people would stop fighting.

Without his fasting, it is probable that more people would have died in the riots of 1947.

www.gandhifoundation.org
1947
the Mountbattens

Gandhi continued to work at the highest political level until the end of his life
1948

When he was assassinated by a Hindu extremist his last words were

‘Hey Rama’
(O God)