## **Op-Art**

## LEONARD STERN, HOLLY GRESSLEY AND ANNEMIEKE BEEMSTER LEVERENZ

## 50 Years of Filling in the Blanks

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Mad Libs, the \_\_\_\_\_ word game that the late Roger Price and 7-year-olds to retirees) tells me that the game remains remarkably relevant today and leads me to wonder if there are other special events and \_\_\_\_\_happenings from the last century that remain relevant, too. After a/an\_ amount of research, I found an abundance of them, too many to include in this relatively \_\_\_\_\_ article. I chose those that, to my way of thinking, reflect the upbeat and Mad Lib point of view. (You may disagree, but remember, one's freedom of \_\_\_\_\_\_ is severely limited by one's

ADJECTIVE NOUN NOUN is my\_\_\_\_\_ list in chronological order.



The year after Mad Libs was born, the Guggenheim \_\_\_\_\_ in New York City, designed by the \_\_\_\_\_ architect Frank Lloyd Wright, opened its to the public. Van Cliburn became the first American to win the ADJECTIVE

The early '60s brought \_\_\_\_\_ women the birth control \_\_\_\_\_, which was approved by the Food and \_\_\_\_\_ Administration. Alan Shepard became the first American in space. (For minutiae lovers, Shepard was also to\_ descendant of the Mayflower passenger a/an\_\_\_ Richard Warren.)



In the mature '60s, Pop artists Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns exhibited their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at the Guggenheim. This \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ collection featured Campbell's Soup

comic-strip-style silk-screens, inflatable and attracted record \_\_\_\_\_. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech inspired millions of \_\_\_\_\_\_ and brought \_\_\_\_\_\_ to their eyes. The Beatles became one of the most \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ successful and \_\_\_\_\_\_ acclaimed bands in the history of popular \_\_\_\_\_\_.



The '70s started on a/an \_\_\_\_\_ note. The personal computer made its \_\_\_\_\_\_ debut and ultimately changed the way we at home. "Saturday Night Live," a/an\_\_\_\_\_ comedy/variety\_\_\_\_\_\_ was introduced on late-night

The show revolved around a/an \_\_\_\_\_\_ cast of typically up-and-coming comic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ joined by a/an \_\_\_\_\_\_ guest host and a/an\_\_\_\_\_\_musical act. (It will run forever.) "Star

Wars," a /an \_\_\_\_\_\_ science-fiction \_\_\_\_\_\_ conceived by George Lucas, opened to rave \_\_\_\_\_\_. With its \_\_\_\_\_\_. sequels, it has become a worldwide pop culture \_\_\_\_\_



Video games \_\_\_\_\_ dominated the '80s. In Super Mario Brothers, Mario, an Italian \_\_\_\_\_, must save a/an ADJECTIVE \_. (Don't knock it. It still works-80 million \_\_\_\_\_ have been sold

to date.) The Statue of Liberty celebrated its 100th lift in the process. anniversary and received a /an "A.M. Chicago" changed its name to "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and aired coast-to-\_\_\_\_\_, becoming a /an \_ success. And the autumn of 1989 saw the fall

of the Berlin\_ 00

The '90s brought big bucks to literature, movie-making and technology, especially computer \_\_\_\_\_. Windows 95 NOUN. The became an instant \_\_\_\_ film "Titanic" grossed approximately \$1.8 billion and became the biggest

\_\_\_\_\_ to date. (The ship sank — the movie money-making \_\_\_\_ didn't.) J.K. Rowling's first \_\_\_\_\_ novel, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's \_\_\_\_\_," achieved \_\_\_\_\_ acclaim, \_ popularity and became the best-selling children's ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_ever published.

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The 21st century has had tremendous technical triumphs. The iPod, for a/an \_ example has sold 150 million worldwide, making it the best-ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_ digital music \_\_\_\_\_

in history. Today (thanks to the iPod), you can carry more than 1,000 \_\_\_\_\_\_ in your pocket. With the \_\_\_\_\_ cost of gasoline and the depletion of \_\_\_\_\_\_ efficiency became the No. 1 concern reserves, \_\_\_\_ URAL NOUN in the United States of \_\_\_\_\_\_, Sales of rid \_\_\_\_\_\_went through the \_\_\_\_\_\_. Patricia N \_. Patricia Neal hybrid \_\_\_\_ and Donald Duck received stars on the Hollywood Walk of \_\_\_\_. (Admittedly, this is a personal selection. Patricia is a good friend, and for many \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ I've had an ongoing correspondence with Donald Duck.) The iPhone is another truly \_\_\_\_\_\_ triumph. It can be used as a / an \_\_\_\_ camera and a portable \_\_\_\_\_ player and can handle voicemail. It was named \_\_\_\_\_ messaging and \_\_\_\_\_ NOUN Time magazine's \_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Year in 2007. More I cannot say – without running over this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

paper's word limit!

Leonard Stern is the co-creator of Mad Libs. Holly Gressley and Annemieke Beemster Leverenz are graphic designers.