2020

Vaccines in under a year, and Americans fly to orbit on an American rocket again.

A pandemic year. The West answered with mRNA vaccines built and tested in eleven months, and with the first private crewed spacecraft.

What rose

May. SpaceX's Crew Dragon Demo-2 carries Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley to the Space Station: the first crewed orbital launch from the U.S. since 2011. Source: Crew Dragon Demo-2

November. DeepMind's AlphaFold 2 effectively solves protein structure prediction at the CASP14 assessment. Source: AlphaFold

December. Britain, then the U.S., authorize the Pfizer–BioNTech mRNA vaccine against COVID-19. Source: Pfizer–BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

What fell or stalled

Life expectancy fell across most of the West, and output fell by the most since the Second World War. Source: COVID-19 pandemic

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ascentofthewest.com/years/2020/