

A short history of the book

1 What happened to the book?

The book has been around for many hundred years. It is something which we use naturally every day. Some people prefer printed books, others love their eBooks. But do you actually know how it all began? Let's have a look at the development of this brilliant invention and visit the most important events in the history of the book.

a) Look at the years below and guess which material was used then to produce books or writings.

paper parchment clay tablets ePaper papyrus

BC (before Christ)	AD (anno Domini = after Christ)
about 3000 BC • about 500 BC	about 105 • about 200 • about 600 • about 700 • about 900 • 1276 • 1450 • 1810 • 1904 • 1980ies • from 2000 onwards



b) Now study the events below and write years from above next to them. Use internet resources to find the correct solution!

The German Friedrich König invents a steam-powered press. Soon, faster presses are produced and printing races further ahead.	Paper is made in Europe for the first time. In the beginning, it is not popular because it has a lower quality than parchment, especially for pictures.
Paper production has reached a high standard and is spreading to Japan and then to the Arab World.	Paper is invented in China.
Papyrus is no longer used in rolls, but in an early type of books called the codex. It has multiple pages, bound between protective covers.	The electronic book or eBook emerges. Gradually it becomes easily readable on a wide variety of devices, and its vast potential is more widely understood.
Writing with words is invented by the Sumerians. The Sumerians develop clay tablets, which can be seen as the first books.	Printing is invented in China. People engrave pages of text into wooden blocks and print the image on paper.
The first offset press appears. In offset printing the method of "relief" printing from cast metal type, traditional since Gutenberg, is replaced by a photographic plate and a rubberised cylinder.	Johann Gutenberg invents a hand-powered metal movable-type printing system. There are small metal pieces for each letter of the alphabet. These are arranged in lines, which make up a page.
The Egyptians make papyrus rolls from a plant which can be found in the Nile Valley. The papyrus roll becomes dominant, although clay tablets will survive for another five hundred years.	Laser-beams are used to transfer digital information. Gradually, printing becomes a digital and computerised process, and mechanical printing begins to disappear.
In Europe, parchment has almost replaced papyrus as the writing surface in codex books. Parchment, made from animal skin, is regarded as more suitable for the new format.	

2 Creating a timeline

A timeline is a beautiful way to show the development of historic events. In the following exercise, you will create a timeline showing the history of the book.

- a) Arrange the events from exercise 1 in a chronological order, that means order them according to what happened first and what happened last.
- b) Now make a timeline showing the history of the book using the following step-by-step instructions.

1. Collect photos or URLs of video clips that illustrate some of the events described in exercise 1.
2. Go to <https://www.tiki-toki.com/> and register a user account or log on.
3. Click on "Create new timeline".
4. Fill in the details like title, start date (the earliest date in your timeline), the end date (when your timeline finishes), a short introduction, etc.
5. To add a new event to the timeline, first click on a year in the timeline and then click on "Create new story".
6. Fill in the details of the event. When you are finished, click on "save".
7. If you want to, you can add a photo or a video clip in the "story media" tab. There is always help available to show you what you can do.
8. Click on the next year and add a new story. Continue until your timeline is finished and all events are visible in the timeline.
9. Use the time slider at the bottom of the page to navigate from end to end. Watch the videos, have a look at the pictures and reconstruct the history of the book.
10. If you want to share your timeline with your teacher or your friends, simply copy the URL from your browser's address bar and send it around.



TIP

Only use photos you are allowed to use because they are "Creative Commons" photos. Use the search engine:

<https://search.creativecommons.org/?lang=en>

TIP

You can open an account anonymously if you use a throw-away eMail address instead of your real one:

<https://www.mailinator.com/>

3 Video: The future of the book is in your hands

And what does the future of the book look like? Will there be a difference in the way we read eBooks or in the way eBooks are written? We don't know yet, but we can let our minds wander and guess what the future might look like for the book.

- a) Watch the following YouTube video to find out what the future of the book could look like.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OK009HmOESg>

- b) Watch the video again from 3 min. 24 sec. and complete the sentences below with suitable words.

successful extinct digitisation alternative specific curiosities

1. The idea behind eBooks is the _____ of formerly printed work.
2. One of the most _____ global organisations digitising books is Google.
3. An advantage of eBooks is that you don't need to travel far distances in order to find a _____ edition.
4. Books could become _____, objects of art.
5. Books will not become _____ because many people are used to them and they remain a sustainable, long-lasting _____ to more expensive methods around today.

Key:**1** What happened to the book?

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paper: about 105, **parchment:** about 700, **clay tablets:** about 3000 BC, **ePaper:** 1980ies, **papyrus:** about 500 BC

b) Now study the events below and write years from above next to them. Use internet resources to find the correct solution!

1810	1276
The German Friedrich König invents a steam-powered press. Soon, faster presses are produced and printing races further ahead.	Paper is made in Europe for the first time. In the beginning, it is not popular because it has a lower quality than parchment, especially for pictures.
about 600	about 105
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about 200	from 2000 onwards
Papyrus is no longer used in rolls, but in an early type of books called the codex. It has multiple pages, bound between protective covers.	The electronic book or eBook emerges. Gradually it becomes easily readable on a wide variety of devices, and its vast potential is more widely understood.
about 3000 BC	about 900
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1904	1450
The first offset press appears. In offset printing the method of "relief" printing from cast metal type, traditional since Gutenberg, is replaced by a photographic plate and a rubberised cylinder.	Johann Gutenberg invents a hand-powered metal movable-type printing system. There are small metal pieces for each letter of the alphabet. These are arranged in lines, which make up a page.
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In Europe, parchment has almost replaced papyrus as the writing surface in codex books. Parchment, made from animal skin, is regarded as more suitable for the new format.	

3 Video: The future of the book is in your hands

b) Watch the video again and complete the sentences below with suitable words.

1. digitisation, 2. successful, 3. specific, 4. curiosities, 5. extinct, alternative