

New Ways of Spreading Information (1300s – 1600s)

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the summary below to answer questions on the next page.

During the Renaissance, several factors contributed to the growth in the number of people who had access to—and could read—books.

Paper Manufacturing

- Paper was first made in China in the second century (100's C.E.) from old rags, fishing nets, and fibers of mulberry and hemp. Before that, people wrote on parchment made from animals skins.
- China kept the secret of making paper for several centuries. Japan and Korea eventually learned the process. Then, in the 8th century (700's C.E.), the technology spread to Baghdad and other places.
- Arabs improved papermaking techniques, using waste paper and old ropes. Paper manufacturing became a big business in the Islam empire.
- Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula established the first paper mill in 1056. From there, paper manufacturing spread to Italy and the rest of Europe.
- By the end of the 14th century (1300's C.E.), the price of paper had dropped 400%.

Printing Press

- The Chinese invented block printing. A block was carved with words or letters, inked, and then used to stamp paper. In 1045, China developed movable type, in which individual letters or characters are carved onto separate pieces of type. Because the Chinese writing system uses thousands of characters, this method was not practical for them.
- By the 1200s, block printing had reached Europe. European printers began to print whole pages with this process, but it was slow.
- In the 1450s, Johann Gutenberg of Germany invented a printing press with movable type. Now 500 books could be produced in 5 months, the same amount of time needed for one book to be copied by hand.
- In 1455, Gutenberg printed the Bible, the first full-sized book produced with movable type.
- By the 1500s, books were being printed quickly and in such quantity that many more people could afford them.

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DIRECTIONS: Copy and answer the following questions into your composition book. Do not write on this handout. If you need additional details, refer to pg. 449 of your textbook.

- 1 List (from earliest to latest) the cultures that learned how to make paper.
- 2 Why was papermaking important to people in Renaissance Europe?
- 3 Why was movable type more useful in Europe than in China?
- 4 What were some effects of the printing press in Europe?
- 5 How did the printing press contribute to the Renaissance?
- 6 What could more people do once Bibles were printed in the vernacular?
- 7 Copy & complete the timeline below. Once you are done, write down additional details or make some illustrations about papermaking & printing.

