INTRODUCTION TO PRINTING

Printing is a process for mass reproducing text and [images](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printmaking) using a master form or template. The earliest non-paper products involving printing include [cylinder seals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cylinder_seal) and objects such as the [Cyrus Cylinder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_Cylinder) and the [Cylinders of Nabonidus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cylinders_of_Nabonidus). The earliest known form of printing as applied to paper was [woodblock printing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodblock_printing), which appeared in China before 220 AD.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing#cite_note-cave-1) Later developments in printing technology include the [movable type](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movable_type) invented by [Bi Sheng](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bi_Sheng) around 1040 AD[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing#cite_note-Great_Chinese_Inventions-2) and the [printing press](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing_press) invented by [Johannes Gutenberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Gutenberg) in the 15th century. The technology of printing played a key role in the development of the [Renaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance) and the [scientific revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_revolution), and laid the material basis for the modern knowledge-based economy and the spread of learning to the masses.

The history of printing starts as early as 3500 BC, when the Persian and Mesopotamian civilizations used [cylinder seals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cylinder_seal) to certify documents written in clay. Other early forms include block seals, pottery imprints and cloth printing. [Woodblock printing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodblock_printing) on paper originated in China around 200 AD. It led to the development of [movable type](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movable_type) in the eleventh century and the spread of book production in East Asia. Woodblock printing was also used in Europe, but it was in the fifteenth century that European printers developed a process for mass-producing metal type to support an economical book publishing industry. This industry enabled the communication of ideas and sharing of knowledge on an unprecedented scale. Alongside the development of text printing, new and lower-cost methods of image reproduction were developed, including [lithography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lithography), [screen printing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen_printing) and [photocopying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photocopying).