

WORLD HISTORY READERS

Level 2 - ②

The History of Printing

James Chenery

Series Editor Rob Waring

Seed
Learning



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Before Books

Before there were books, we told stories. Stories were the way we passed on knowledge to our children and their children. Storytellers were an important part of life. We still do this today.



Learning from each other

Older people shared information through stories and acting. They talked about plants, hunting, weather, seasons, history, and many other things.



Telling stories



Talking about hunting



Knowledge to be passed on

At some point, we realized we needed to record our stories and knowledge. People have great memories, but sometimes there is too much to remember.



Things for sale in Kenya



People needed a way to record their sales.

People needed a way to record things. They needed to write things down. It's impossible to remember everything!

Early Writing Systems

At first, we drew pictures or used our handprints to record information.

But people could not share this knowledge widely as

the information was

only in one place. People needed a way to make copies of things and share them.



Cave art



Handprints

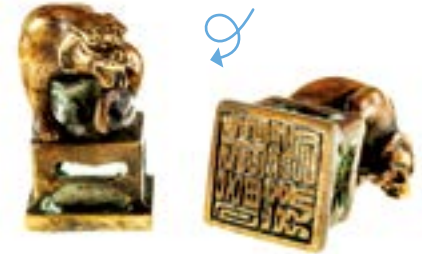
A story on the wall of a cave in Algeria



The First Stamps

The oldest way was to use stamps. People cut marks and lines on soft materials in the shapes they wanted. Then they put it in a liquid and pressed it on things.

A name stamp from China, about 1600 BC



The stamps were used for art, to write messages, and to put names on things. These stamps could put patterns on clothes and print pictures and designs.



Indian stamp designs



Wooden stamps for clothes, about 220 BC

Ink and Wood Blocks

Wooden print blocks

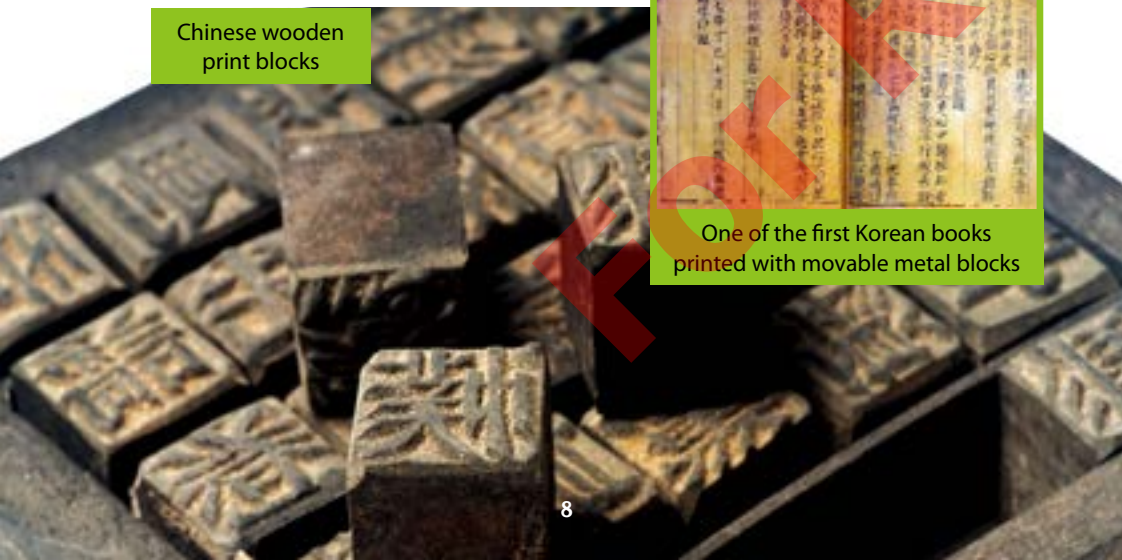


Some people made a few really big stamps to print books. They were called “block books.”

Later, the Chinese made many small wooden blocks to print Chinese writing. By using one block for each character, they could use the same blocks again and again.

In 1234, the Koreans began to make many small metal blocks for printing. This was the beginning of modern printing.

Chinese wooden print blocks



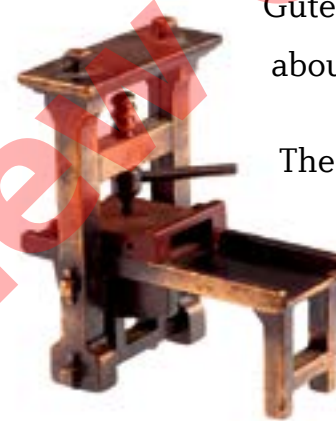
One of the first Korean books printed with movable metal blocks

The First Printing Press

Movable metal blocks led to the idea of the first printing machine. It was made by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany about 1450.



Johannes Gutenberg



Gutenberg's press

The printing machine was very large with metal blocks for letters. It was called a “press” because it pushed the paper very hard onto the letter blocks.

It made a very good print and was much faster than writing or printing by hand.



Printing pages



Comprehension Questions

1. How did ancient people remember their culture?
 - (a) By telling stories
 - (b) By writing books
 - (c) By using computers
 - (d) All of these
2. What was a problem with handprints and cave drawings?
 - (a) They were dirty.
 - (b) They were slow.
 - (c) They would wash away in the rain.
 - (d) They were only in one place.
3. What was the first way to print books?
 - (a) With a printer
 - (b) With "block book" stamps
 - (c) With metal block type
 - (d) With steam power
4. What was NOT part of the printer's job?
 - (a) To arrange the words
 - (b) To put the ink on the blocks
 - (c) To press the paper onto the blocks
 - (d) To make the ink
5. Who invented the steam press?
 - (a) The *London Times*
 - (b) Johannes Gutenberg
 - (c) Friedrich Koenig
 - (d) The Chinese
6. What do most people have at home these days?
 - (a) A dot matrix printer
 - (b) An "on-demand" printer
 - (c) A printing press
 - (d) A laser printer
7. The first small printer that printed many copies was called a...
 - (a) printing press.
 - (b) photocopier.
 - (c) dot matrix printer.
 - (d) mimeograph.
8. Which technology came first?
 - (a) Dot matrix
 - (b) Laser
 - (c) "On-demand" printing
 - (d) Photocopier
9. 3D printing is different because it...
 - (a) is fast.
 - (b) can print objects.
 - (c) can print on paper.
 - (d) prints small dots.
10. In the future, we might be able to print...
 - (a) digital books.
 - (b) space stations.
 - (c) people.
 - (d) stamps.

Glossary

- **base** the main place where a person lives or works
- **cave** a large hole in the side of a mountain
- **cylinder** a shape with circular ends and long, straight sides
- **dot matrix printer** a computer printer that forms letters, numbers, and symbols from small dots
- **laser** a high power light that can be used for printing
- **liquid** a substance, like water, that is not solid and you can pour easily
- **mass-produce** to make a lot of goods cheaply using machines in a factory
- **mimeograph** an early personal printing machine
- **movable** able to put in another place or position
- **on-demand** available when needed or wanted
- **pattern** a design of lines, shapes, colors, etc.
- **photocopier** a machine that makes copies of papers with writing on them by photographing them
- **stamp** a tool, often a carved block, for putting a special ink mark on something
- **steam** the gas that comes from heating water

Key 1. (a) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (c) 6. (d) 7. (d) 8. (d) 9. (b) 10. (b)