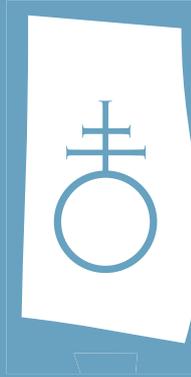


PRINTING  
PRESS

books

letterpress

GUTENBERG



NATIONAL  
PRINT MUSEUM  
Músaem Náisiúnta Cló

Primary School  
Curriculum Links

tablet  
illuminate  
PAPYRUS  
TYPE  
scribe

Printing  
and Bookmaking

Factsheet 2

Fact and  
Activity Pack

bookbinding  
MANUSCRIPT  
books  
Interactive  
Classroom  
Activities

Did you know that without the printing press, books like the ones we read today would not exist?

This Primary School Teacher's Fact and Activity Pack will take your pupils on a journey of discovery through the history of books, where they will learn how the invention of the printing press changed the way books were made so that everyone can enjoy them today!

FUN

suitable for 4th - 6th Class

Factsheets

## The arrival of the book as we know it

### The Codex and Medieval Manuscripts

## Factsheet 2:

### The Codex

In the 1st century AD (nearly 2000 years ago), the Romans developed a style of book that looked much like the books we use today. It was called the **codex**. Codices were made by folding and sewing pages together on one side and placing a protective cover on top. The codex was much easier to use than the scroll because it was sturdy, easy to carry and easy to read. By the 4th century AD, codices made from papyrus or parchment had completely replaced the use of scrolls. The development of the codex was the most important development in the history of the book before the printing press was invented nearly 1000 years later.



Early codex with a leather and wooden cover

#### Interesting fact...

Historians have found notes written by scribes in the margins of very old manuscripts. Scribes scribbled complaints like 'I'm too cold', 'My back is sore' and 'This parchment is too hairy!'



Codices

#### Did you know?

It was an illuminator's job to add decorative letters and pictures to pages to make the medieval manuscripts more beautiful. By the 7th century AD, the illumination of manuscripts had become a very respected art. The most beautiful and famous manuscripts were created in Ireland!

### Medieval Manuscripts and Scribes

During the Middle Ages in Europe (5th – 15th centuries AD), every book had to be written out by hand. These books were called **manuscripts**. The majority of manuscripts were copies of religious texts like the Bible. If you wanted a copy of the same book, you had to write it out by hand and if you wanted another copy, you had to write it out again and again and again... (It was a bit like doing lines if you have been naughty in school!). Medieval scribes carried out this difficult work. Most scribes were monks living in monasteries all over Europe and they carried out their work in a room called a **scriptorium**. A scribe's pen was called a **quill** and it was made from a bird's feather. The ink they used was made from ashes, plants and egg white. Scribes wrote on parchment, but they also began to write on paper during the 10th century AD. Paper was invented in China and it made its way to Europe during this time.

It took months and sometimes years to complete just one manuscript. Because of the time and skill needed to create just one copy, this meant that books were very rare and very expensive. Books were owned mainly by religious orders, universities and the very rich. With very little or no access to books, most people in the Middle Ages did not learn to read and because of this, they knew very little about the world around them.



Medieval Manuscript and goose feather quill



Medieval scribe at his work station with manuscript and quill

#### History:

Working as a Historian: Time and chronology, Change and continuity, Cause and effect, Using evidence.  
Strands: Story, Early people and ancient societies, Continuity and change over time, Life, society, work and culture in the past

#### English:

Strands: Competence and confidence in using language (Units: Reading: Reading for pleasure and information; Developing interests, attitudes, information retrieval skills and the ability to think; Responding to text)

Curriculum Links