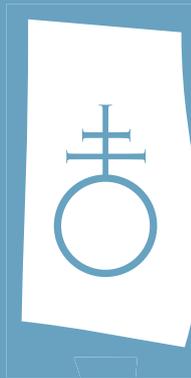


PRINTING  
PRESS

books

letterpress

GUTENBERG



NATIONAL  
PRINT MUSEUM  
Músaem Náisiúnta Cló

Primary School  
Curriculum Links

tablet  
illuminate  
PAPYRUS  
TYPE  
scribe

Printing  
and Bookmaking

Factsheet 6

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



Decorative Book Cover

We have learned all about how words were printed onto a page in order to create a book during Gutenberg's time up until the middle of the 20th century. However, making a book did not stop once the ink had dried on the page. To create a finished book, craftspeople, known as **bookbinders**, bound the printed pages together by hand.

### Traditional Bookbinding

To bind a book, the printed sheets were first folded into sections that were multiples of 4, 8, 16, 32 and upwards. (Fold a piece of paper in half, then in half again. This will show you how it works). Next, the sections, which were called **signatures**, were gathered by hand and sewn together on the folded side using a special **sewing frame**. The gathering of the signatures had to be done very carefully to make sure that they were in the correct order. Once all the signatures were sewn together, the bookbinder trimmed the pages of the book to make sure that they were all the same size. A machine called a **guillotine** was used to make even, smooth pages.

Before the cover was attached to the book, sheets of paper known as '**end papers**' were attached to the first and last sections of the book. End papers could be works of art in themselves, especially in expensive books. A design called marbling was often used. The next stage was to attach the cover to the book. The cover was sewn on with a thicker thread. Early book covers were usually made from wood covered with leather. In later years, this changed to cardboard covered with leather.

### Adding Decorations

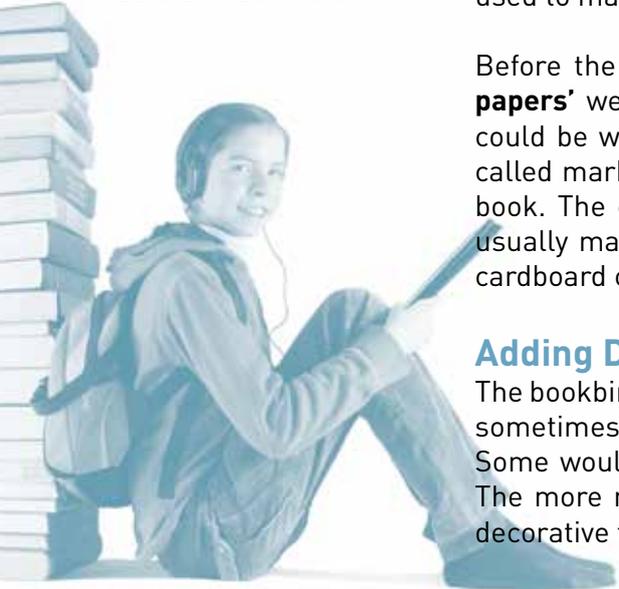
The bookbinder would also decorate the cover of the book. Very expensive books sometimes had gold leaf attached to the front cover and spine of the book. Some would have decorative headbands, ribbons and dried flowers attached. The more money the person who gave the book to the binder had, the more decorative their book would be once it was finished!

### Bookbinding Today

Today, books are bound in a very similar way to how they were bound in the past, however much of the work is now carried out by machines. Pages are still sewn together however; a stitching machine now does this work. Most books today are paperbacks. **Paperbacks** cost much less to make than hardbacks because the pages are held together by glue instead of being stitched.

### The Future of Books

Thanks to computers, books can now be read on a computer screen or by using **electronic books** such as a Kindle. Many people love this way of reading; however, many still prefer to read books printed with ink on paper - which do you prefer? Can you imagine a world without printed and bound books? These are topics which can be explored with your pupils in class.



E-book versus the printed book - which do you prefer?

### Did you know?

Many believe that today the Bible is the most printed and read book of all time, however in the 16th century the world's bestselling book was not the Bible but a handbook on good manners for children!

Curriculum Links

#### History:

Working as a Historian: Time and chronology, Change and continuity, Cause and effect, Using evidence.  
Strands: Story, 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)