

PAPYRUS

Papyrus, the earliest form of paper, dates back to 400 BC when it was used in ancient Egypt. Ancient Egyptians would peel strips from marsh reeds and lay them flat beside each other. They would then add a second layer in the opposite direction and press the layers together, allowing natural plant fluids to fuse the layers together. This “paper” could then be polished with pumice stones or shells. A wooden stick (**navel**) would be added to the last sheet to make longer scrolls easier to handle.



The Singer of Amun Nany's Funerary Papyrus, 1050 BC, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)



The Book of What is in the Underworld, 11th cent. BC, Egyptian Museum (Berlin)

ROSETTA STONE

Discovered in 1799 by a French soldier, the Rosetta Stone remains one of the most important aids in helping modern day researchers translate Egyptian hieroglyphics. The granite stone depicts a decree issued by King Ptolemy V in 196 BC in three separate languages: Demotic (later Egyptian script), ancient Greek, and hieroglyphics:



WRITE LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

Hieroglyphics were an alphabetical format used by the Egyptians. Use this link to find out what YOUR name is in ancient hieroglyphics:

<http://penn.museum/cgi/hieroglyphsreal.php>



LONTAR

Palm leaves (*lontar*) were a common type of medium used for writing throughout Ancient Southeast Asia and India. The palmyra and talipot palms were the most commonly used due to the thickness and sturdiness of their leaves. 'Books' were bundled leaves tied together with braided cords. The palm leaves were cut apart at the seams and then sanded down smooth for writing preparation. Using a needle-like stylus, people would write into the leaf which forced natural plant oils to come out. When covered with soot, the writing would become visible.





One of the earliest sutras, *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita*, on palm leaves, 100-150 AD.
A later “portable edition” of this included the *Diamond Sutra* (868 AD) on parchment.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Possibly the most famous papyrus scrolls of all time, the *Dead Sea Scrolls* were discovered in Israel, east of Jerusalem in 1947 by a Bedouin shepherd. The *Dead Sea Scrolls* are historically valuable not only for their depiction of previously unknown books of the Hebrew Bible, but also because they contain ancient scripts which historians have used to decipher these languages. Some of the texts are written on parchment, papyrus, and even a copper sheet.



Bedouin shepherds (Muhammed edh-Dhib, Jum'a Muhammed, and Khalil Musa) discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls when one of them threw a rock into a cave while looking for a lost sheep. They heard the sound of a shattering pot, and went to check it out. The rest is history.



▶ **FUN FACT:** The longest Egyptian scroll ever found measures over 133 feet, which is only 18 feet shorter than the Statue of Liberty.

LEARN HOW TO MAKE PAPYRUS:
www.crayola.com/crafts/egyptian-papyrus-paper-craft/

FUN FACT: Ancient Greeks used pieces of leather, snakeskin, and pottery shards -- this was their “scrap paper.” ▶





LIBRARY OF CELSUS

The Library of Celsus was built in 135 AD in Ephesus, Anatolia (current day Selçuk, Turkey). It was built in honour of the Roman Senator Tiberius Julius Celsus Polemaeanus by Celsus' son, Gaius Julius Aquila. At it's maximum capacity, it stored 12,000 papyrus scrolls.

LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA

Third century Egypt saw the construction of the Library of Alexandria, considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Established between 322-246 BC, it included a museum, gardens, a common dining room, lecture halls, and meeting rooms. During the building of the library, scholars collected books from all over the Greek Empire, with no expense spared. The original copy of plays by the three Tragedians was borrowed with a deposit of 15 talents (estimated \$9.9 million in today's money); the scholars decided to forfeit the deposit in order to keep the book! The Serapeum, which was similar to a modern day public library, eventually was housed in the Library as well. At it's peak, the library is estimated to have included nearly half a million scrolls. Sadly, the library was destroyed over time during the third century.



19th century German artist's rendition of the ancient Library of Alexandria.

▶ The Bibliotheca Alexandrina was established in 2002 near the site of this ancient library in Egypt.