

DID YOU KNOW..... PAPER



Paper is an integral part of everyday life. Americans use an average of 750 pounds of paper products per individual per year. That's about 187,250,000,000 (187 billion) pounds of paper for the United States alone. But it hasn't always been this way.

Did you know before the invention of paper, various cultures used many different materials to record written information? Stone, metal, wood, papyrus, clay, parchment, vellum, cloth, tree leaves, bark, and rice-pith "paper" have all filled this role at one time or another.



Did you know ancient Egyptians invented the first paper like material, called papyrus? Papyrus was a woven mat of reeds, pounded together into a hard, thin sheet. The oldest written papyrus rolls date back 5000 years and the word "paper" itself is derived from the Greek and Latin words for papyrus.

To make a sheet suitable for writing, the smooth, triangular stalks of the plant were harvested and peeled. The pith was then sliced and pounded together in strips. A second layer of pith was then applied perpendicular to the first and pounded to make a flat sheet. The sheet was then polished smooth with a stone, bone, or shell.

Did you know that the Chinese were the first to invent and use paper? Lun Tsai, an official at the Chinese Imperial Court about 1800 years ago, was the inventor of paper. In or about the year 105 A.D., he presented Emperor Han Ho Ti with samples of paper. He mixed mulberry bark, hemp, and rags with water, mashed it into a pulp, pressed out the liquid and hung the thin mat to dry in the sun. From this mixture paper was born.



The Chinese secret of papermaking spread when Buddhist monks carried the art first to Korea, then Japan. Papermaking further spread to the Arab world when captured Chinese soldiers were forced to make paper for their captors. It was not until the year 1009 AD that the art of papermaking reached Europe. It did not reach Spain and Italy until the 12th century.

When Did It Happen??

4000 B.C.

Papyrus is used

105 A.D.

Paper invented by
Ts'ai Lun

700 A.D.

Muslims learn the art
of papermaking

1009 A.D.

Papermaking reaches
Europe

1250 A.D.

Italy becomes major
paper producer

1588 A.D.

England makes its own
paper

1680 A.D.

Papermaking reaches
New World

1690 A.D.

First paper mill
established in North
America

In 1588, the people of England began to make their own paper and in 1680 papermaking finally reached the new world. The Spanish established the first paper mill in the new world near the capitol of Mexico. In 1688, William Rittenhouse left Holland, where he had been an apprentice papermaker, and settled in Philadelphia, near the print shop of William Bradford. Rittenhouse established the first paper mill in America in 1690 near Germantown, Pennsylvania. The Rittenhouse mill remained the only mill in America until 1710.

Did you know that recycling has always been a part of papermaking? At first old rags and clothes were shredded into individual fibers to make paper. In 1719, Rene Antoine Ferchault de Reaumur, a French naturalist, suggested that paper could be made from wood. Observing wasps building their nest inspired Reaumur. In response to a critical shortage of rags to supply the ever-increasing demand for paper fiber from trees was substituted. Much of the paper we use today is made from recycled paper as well as sawdust and wood chips left over from lumber operations.

Did you know that you could make your own recycled paper?