Community at ton



Literacy is reserved for the clergy and a few students. Monks and scribes laboriously copy books by hand using goose-quill pens. Books are such rare treasures that in some libraries they are chained to the shelf.

Sign language is a means of communication for some early cultures. It bridges language differences between societies and eventually evolves into a formal alphabet for communication by the hearing impaired.

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Johann Gutenberg invents a way to massproduce the written word. He devises the first Western movabletype system and a new kind of printing press. Gutenberg's inventions speed the spread of knowledge and literacy.



William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" is first performed. London's Globe Theater opens in 1599, where many of his plays are staged. By 1600, the great playwright pens at least 20 plays.



000 Most Europeans 1034 Chinese are illiterate.

invent first movable type.

1202 Europe expands use of Arabic numerals.

1465 Printed music appears. Leonardo da Vinci naints Mona Lisa.

Clockmaker 1670 designs first minute hand. 1776 Declaration of Independence creates U.S.

Japanese woman writes the first novel. Some societies use smoke signals.

Chaucer pens Canterbury Tales. Lead nencils make writing easier.

British Navy originates signal flag messages.

Mozart composes symphony at 1764) age eight.

Braille develops reading system for the blind.

The first regularly printed newspaper is a four-page weekly publication, the Relation, printed in Germany. It is 1702 before the first daily newspaper appears, The Daily Courant of London.



One if by land, two if by sea. Lanterns signal 1775 the advance of British troops, and Paul Revere rides to warn American colonists of the attack. His famous ride also signals the beginning of the American Revolution.



Frenchman Nicéphore Niépce creates the first permanent photograph. His partner, Louis Daguerre, carries Niépce's work further by inventing a process of capturing images on metal plates.

Instant long-distance communication is possible. Samuel Morse invents the telegraph and a dot-dash code to carry messages over a wire. In 1851, Hiram Sibley founds Western Union Telegraph Company.



American Christopher Sholes invents the typewriter. To keep rapid typists from jamming the keys, Sholes designs the keyboard so that frequently combined letters are located far apart. This layout lasts into the computer age.

