

# Book

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A **book** is a medium for recording information in the form of writing or images. Books are typically composed of many pages, bound together and protected by a cover.<sup>[1]</sup> Modern bound books were preceded by many other written mediums, such as the codex and the scroll. The book publishing process is the series of steps involved in their creation and dissemination.



The Gutenberg Bible, one of the first books to be printed using the printing press

As a conceptual object, a book typically refers to a written work of substantial length, which may be distributed either physically or in digital forms like ebooks. These works are broadly classified into fiction (containing imaginary content) and non-fiction (containing content representing truths). Many smaller categories exist within these, such as children's literature meant to match the reading level and interests of children, or reference works that gather collections of non-fiction. Books are traded at both regular stores and specialized bookstores, and people can borrow them from libraries. The reception of books has led to a number of social consequences, including censorship.

A physical book does not need to contain written works: for example, it may contain only drawings, engravings, photographs, puzzles, or removable content like paper dolls. Physical

books may be left empty to be used for writing or drawing, such as account books, appointment books, autograph books, notebooks, diaries and sketchbooks.

The contemporary book industry has seen several major changes due to new technologies. In some markets, the sale of printed books has decreased due to the increased use of eBooks.<sup>[2]</sup> However, printed books still largely outsell eBooks, and many people have a preference for print.<sup>[3][4][5][6]</sup> The 21st century has also seen a rapid rise in the popularity of audiobooks, which are recordings of books being read aloud.<sup>[7]</sup> Additionally, awareness of the needs of people who can't access print media due to limitations like visual impairment has led to a rise in formats designed for greater accessibility, such as braille printing or formats supporting text-to-voice. Google Books estimated that as of 2010, approximately 130,000,000 unique books had been published.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Etymology

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The word book comes from Old English *bōc*, which in turn comes from the Germanic root *\*bōk-*, cognate to 'beech'.<sup>[9]</sup> In Slavic languages like Russian, Bulgarian, Macedonian *буква* *bukva*—'letter' is cognate with 'beech'. In Russian, Serbian and Macedonian, the word *букварь* (*bukvar'*) or *буквар* (*bukvar*) refers to a primary school textbook that helps young children master the techniques of reading and writing. It is thus conjectured that the earliest Indo-European writings may have been carved on beech wood.<sup>[10]</sup> The Latin word *codex*, meaning a book in the modern sense (bound and with separate leaves), originally meant 'block of wood'.<sup>[11]</sup>

An avid reader or collector of books is a bibliophile, or colloquially a "bookworm".<sup>[12]</sup>

## Definitions

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In its modern incarnation, a physical book is typically a collection of pages (most commonly of paper, parchment, or vellum) that are bound together and protected by a cover. By extension, 'book' may refer to a physical book's written, printed, or graphic contents.<sup>[1]</sup>

A single part or division of a longer written work may also be called a book, especially for some works composed in antiquity: each part of Aristotle's *Physics*, for example, is a book.<sup>[13]</sup>

It is difficult to create an exact definition of books that clearly delineates them from other kinds of written material across time and culture. Many physical mediums for communication have existed throughout history, and the question of whether a particular object is a book may be subjective and contentious (as in the case of eBooks). Historian of books James Raven has suggested that when studying how books have been used to communicate, they should be defined in a broadly inclusive way as "portable, durable, replicable and legible" means of recording and disseminating information, rather than by physical or contextual features. This would include, for example, eBooks, newspapers, and quipus (a form of knot-based recording historically used by cultures in Andean South America), but not objects fixed in place such as inscribed monuments.<sup>[14][15]</sup>

Stricter definitions appear in other specialized contexts. For the purpose of recording national statistics on book production, UNESCO recommended that a book be defined as "a non-periodical printed publication of at least 49 pages, exclusive of the cover pages, published in the country and made available to the public", distinguishing them from other written material such as pamphlets.<sup>[1][16]</sup>

Although in academic language a monograph is understood to be a specialist work on a single subject, in library and information science the term is sometimes used more broadly to mean any non-serial publication complete in one volume (a physical book) or a definite number of volumes (such as a multi-volume novel), in contrast to serial or periodical publications.<sup>[1][13]</sup>

# History of books

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12-metre-high (40 ft) stack of books sculpture at the Berlin Walk of Ideas, commemorating the invention of modern book printing

The history of books became an acknowledged academic discipline in the 1980s. Contributions to the field have come from textual scholarship, codicology, bibliography, philology, palaeography, art history, social history and cultural history. Its key purpose is to demonstrate that the book as an object, not just the text contained within it, is a conduit of interaction between readers and words. Analysis of each component part of the book reveals its purpose, where and how it was kept, who read it, ideological and religious beliefs of the period, and whether readers interacted with the text within. Even a lack of evidence of this nature leaves valuable clues about the nature of that particular book.

The earliest forms of writing were etched on stone slabs, transitioning to palm leaves and papyrus in ancient times.<sup>[17]</sup> Parchment and paper later emerged as important substrates for bookmaking, introducing greater durability and accessibility.<sup>[18]</sup> Across regions like China, the Middle East, Europe, and South Asia, diverse methods of book production evolved. The Middle Ages saw the rise of illuminated manuscripts, intricately blending text and imagery, particularly during the Mughal era in South Asia under the patronage of rulers like Akbar and Shah Jahan.<sup>[19][20]</sup> Prior to the invention of the printing press, made famous by the Gutenberg Bible, each text was a unique handcrafted valuable article, personalized through the design features incorporated by the scribe, owner, bookbinder, and illustrator.<sup>[21]</sup>

The invention of the printing press in the 15th century marked a pivotal moment, revolutionizing book production.<sup>[22]</sup> Innovations like movable type and steam-powered presses accelerated manufacturing processes and contributed to increased literacy rates. Copyright protection also emerged, securing authors' rights and shaping the publishing landscape.<sup>[23]</sup> The Late Modern Period introduced chapbooks, catering to a wider range of readers, and mechanization of the printing process further enhanced efficiency.

The 20th century witnessed the advent of typewriters, computers, and desktop publishing, transforming document creation and printing. Digital advancements in the 21st century led to the rise of e-books, propelled by the popularity of e-readers and accessibility features. While discussions about the potential decline of physical books have surfaced, print media has proven remarkably resilient, continuing to thrive as a multi-billion dollar industry.<sup>[24]</sup> Additionally, efforts to make literature more inclusive emerged, with the development of Braille for the visually impaired and the creation of spoken books, providing alternative ways for individuals to access and enjoy literature.<sup>[25][26]</sup>

# Notable advances



Fragments of the  
**Instructions of Shuruppak:**  
"Shuruppak gave instructions  
to his son: Do not buy an  
ass which brays too much.  
Do not commit rape upon a  
man's daughter, do not  
announce it to the courtyard.  
Do not answer back against  
your father, do not raise a  
'heavy eye.'". From Adab, c.  
2600–2500 BCE<sup>[27]</sup>

## Tablet

Some of the earliest written records were made on tablets. Clay tablets (flattened pieces of clay impressed with a stylus) were used in the Ancient Near East throughout the Bronze Age and well into the Iron Age, especially for writing in cuneiform. Wax tablets (pieces of wood covered in a layer of wax) were used in classical antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages.

The custom of binding several wax tablets together (Roman *pugillares*) is a possible precursor of modern bound books.<sup>[28]</sup> The etymology of the word *codex* (block of wood) suggests that it may have developed from wooden wax tablets.<sup>[29]</sup>

# Scroll



Book of the Dead of Hunefer; c. 1275 BC;  
ink and pigments on papyrus; 45 × 90.5 cm;  
British Museum (London)

Scrolls made from papyrus were first used for writing in Ancient Egypt, perhaps as early as the First Dynasty, although the earliest evidence is from the account books of King Neferirkare Kakai of the Fifth Dynasty (about 2400 BC). According to Herodotus (History 5:58), the Phoenicians brought writing and papyrus to Greece around the 10th or 9th century BC. Whether made from papyrus, parchment, or paper, scrolls were the dominant writing medium in the Hellenistic, Roman, Chinese, Hebrew, and Macedonian cultures. The codex dominated in the Roman world by late antiquity, but scrolls persisted much longer in Asia.

# Codex



A Chinese bamboo book  
meets the modern definition  
of *codex*.

The codex is the ancestor of the modern book, consisting of sheets of uniform size bound along one edge and typically held between two covers made of some more robust material. Isidore of Seville (died 636) explained the then-current relation between a codex, book, and scroll in his Etymologiae (VI.13): "A codex is composed of many books; a book is of one scroll. It is called codex by way of metaphor from the trunks (*codex*) of trees or vines, as if it



were a wooden stock, because it contains in itself a multitude of books, as it were of branches".

The first written mention of the codex as a form of book is from Martial, in his *Apophoreta* CLXXXIV at the end of the first century, where he praises its compactness. However, the codex never gained much popularity in the pagan Hellenistic world, and only within the Christian community did it gain widespread use.<sup>[30]</sup> This change happened gradually during the 3rd and 4th centuries, and the reasons for adopting the codex form of the book were several: the format was more economical than the scroll, as both sides of the writing material can be used; and it was portable, searchable, and easier to conceal. The Christian authors may also have wanted to distinguish their writings from the pagan and Judaic texts written on scrolls.

The codices of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica had the same form as the European codex, but were instead made with long folded strips of either fig bark (amatl) or plant fibers, often with a layer of whitewash applied before writing. New World codices were written as late as the 16th century (see Maya codices and Aztec codices). Those written before the Spanish conquests seem all to have been single long sheets folded concertina-style, sometimes written on both sides of the local amatl paper.

## Manuscript



Folio 14 recto of the 5th-century Vergilius Romanus contains an author portrait of Virgil. Note the bookcase (*capsa*), reading stand and the text written without word spacing in rustic capitals.

Manuscripts, handwritten and hand-copied documents, were the only form of writing before the invention and widespread adoption of print. Advances were made in the techniques used to create them.



In the early Western Roman Empire, monasteries continued Latin writing traditions related to Christianity, and the clergy were the predominant readers and copyists. The bookmaking process was long and laborious. They were usually written on parchment or vellum, writing surfaces made from processed animal skin. The parchment had to be prepared, then the unbound pages were planned and ruled with a blunt tool or lead, after which the text was written by a scribe, who usually left blank areas for illustration and rubrication. Finally, it was bound by a bookbinder.<sup>[31]</sup>

Because of the difficulties involved in making and copying books, they were expensive and rare. Smaller monasteries usually had only a few dozen books. By the 9th century, larger collections held around 500 volumes and even at the end of the Middle Ages, the papal library in Avignon and Paris library of the Sorbonne held only around 2,000 volumes.<sup>[32]</sup>

The rise of universities in the 13th century led to an increased demand for books, and a new system for copying appeared. The books were divided into unbound leaves (*pecia*), which were lent out to different copyists, so the speed of book production was considerably increased. The system was maintained by secular stationers guilds, which produced both religious and non-religious material.<sup>[33]</sup>



The Codex Amiatinus anachronistically depicts the Biblical Ezra with the kind of books used in the 8th century AD.



Burgundian author and scribe Jean Miélot, from his *Miracles de Notre Dame*, 15th century

In India bound manuscripts made of birch bark or palm leaf had existed since antiquity.<sup>[34]</sup> The text in palm leaf manuscripts was inscribed with a knife pen on rectangular cut and cured palm leaf sheets; coloring was then applied to the surface and wiped off, leaving the ink in the incised grooves. Each sheet typically had a hole through which a string could pass, and with these the sheets were tied together with a string to bind like a book.

## Woodblock printing



Bagh print, a traditional woodblock printing technique that originated in Bagh, Madhya Pradesh, India

In woodblock printing, a relief image of an entire page is carved into blocks of wood, inked, and used to print copies of that page. It originated in the Han dynasty before 220 AD, used to print textiles and later paper, and was widely used throughout East Asia. The oldest dated book printed by this method is The Diamond Sutra (868 AD). The method (called woodcut when used in art) arrived in Europe in the early 14th century. Books (known as block-books),

as well as playing-cards and religious pictures, began to be produced by this method. Creating an entire book was a painstaking process, requiring a hand-carved block for each page, and the wooden blocks could crack if stored for too long.

## Movable type and incunabula



*Selected Teachings of Buddhist Sages and Son Masters*, the earliest known book printed with movable metal type, printed in Korea, in 1377, Bibliothèque nationale de France

The Chinese inventor Bi Sheng made movable type of earthenware c. 1045, but there are no known surviving examples of his printing. Around 1450, Johannes Gutenberg independently invented movable type in Europe, along with innovations in casting the type based on a matrix and hand mould. This invention gradually made books less expensive to produce and more widely available. Early printed books, single sheets and images which were created before 1501 in Europe are known as incunables or *incunabula*.<sup>[35]</sup>



A 15th-century Incunable

# 19th century to 21st century

Steam-powered printing presses became popular in the early 19th century. These machines could print 1,100 sheets per hour,<sup>[36]</sup> but workers could only set 2,000 letters per hour.

Monotype and linotype typesetting machines were introduced in the late 19th century. They could set more than 6,000 letters per hour and an entire line of type at once. There have been numerous improvements in the printing press. In mid-20th century, European book production had risen to over 200,000 titles per year.

Throughout the 20th century, libraries have faced an ever-increasing rate of publishing, sometimes called an information explosion. The advent of electronic publishing and the internet means that much new information is published online rather than in printed books, for example through a digital library. Though many books are produced digitally, most digital versions are not available to the public, and there is no decline in the rate of paper publishing.<sup>[37]</sup> There have also been new developments in the process of publishing books. Technologies such as POD or "print on demand", which make it possible to print as few as one book at a time, have made self-publishing (and vanity publishing) much easier and more affordable. On-demand publishing has allowed publishers, by avoiding the high costs of warehousing, to keep low-selling books in print rather than declaring them out of print.

## Contemporary publishing

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Presently, books are often produced by a publishing company for the sake of being put on the market by distributors and bookstores. The company negotiates with authors in order to reach a formal legal agreement to obtain the copyright to works, then arranges for them to be produced and sold. The major steps of the publishing process are: editing and proofreading the work to be published; designing the printed book; manufacturing the books; and selling the book, including marketing and promotion. Each of these steps is usually taken on by third-party companies paid by the publisher.<sup>[1]</sup> This is in contrast to self-publishing, where an author arranges to publish their work without the involvement of a publishing company.<sup>[38]</sup>

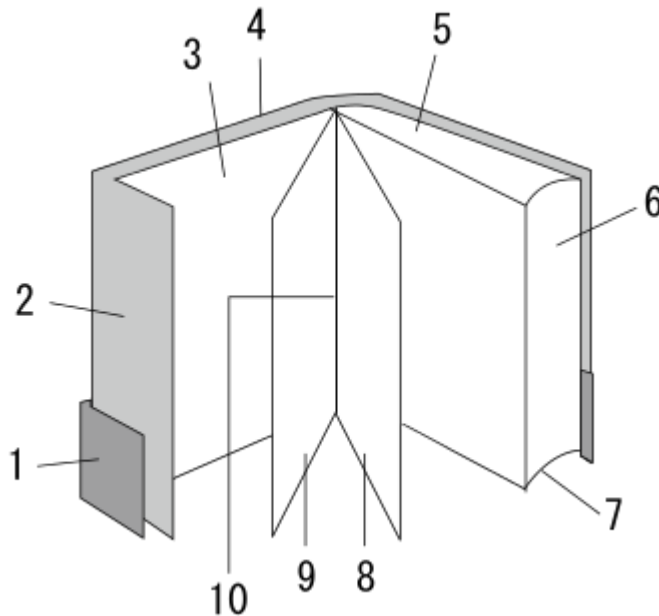
English-language publishing is currently dominated by the so-called "Big Five" publishers: Penguin Random House, Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, Simon and Schuster, and

Macmillan Publishers. They were estimated to make up almost 60 percent of the market for general-readership books in 2021.<sup>[39]</sup>

# Design

Book design is the art of incorporating the content, style, format, design, and sequence of the various components and elements of a book into a coherent unit.<sup>[40]</sup> In the words of renowned typographer Jan Tschichold (1902–1974), book design, "though largely forgotten today, [relies upon] methods and rules upon which it is impossible to improve, [and which] have been developed over centuries. To produce perfect books, these rules have to be brought back to life and applied".<sup>[41]</sup> Richard Hendel describes book design as "an arcane subject", and refers to the need for a context to understand what that means.<sup>[42]</sup>

# Layout



Scheme of common book design

1. Belly band
2. Flap
3. Endpaper
4. Cover
5. Head
6. Fore edge
7. Tail
8. Right page (recto if printing is left to right, verso if right to left)
9. Left page (verso if printing is left to right, recto if right to left)
10. Gutter

Modern books are organized according to a particular format called the book's *layout*. Although there is great variation in layout, modern books tend to adhere to a set of rules with regard to what the parts of the layout are and what their content usually includes. A basic layout will include a *front cover*, a *back cover* and the book's content which is called its *body copy* or *content pages*. The front cover often bears the book's title (and subtitle, if any) and the name of its author or editor(s). The *inside front cover* page is usually left blank in both hardcover and paperback books. The next section, if present, is the book's *front matter*, which includes all textual material after the front cover but not part of the book's content such as a foreword, a dedication, a table of contents and publisher data such as the book's edition or printing number and place of publication. Between the body copy and the back cover goes the *end matter* which would include any indices, sets of tables, diagrams, glossaries or lists of cited works (though an edited book with several authors usually places cited works at the end

of each authored chapter). The *inside back cover* page, like that inside the front cover, is usually blank. The *back cover* is the usual place for the book's ISBN and maybe a photograph of the author(s)/ editor(s), perhaps with a short introduction to them. Also here often appear plot summaries, barcodes and excerpted reviews of the book.<sup>[43]</sup>

The body of the books is usually divided into parts, chapters, sections and sometimes subsections that are composed of at least a paragraph or more.

## Illustration

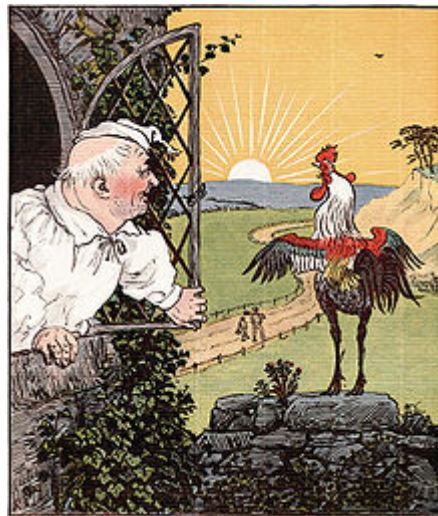


Illustration from "The House that Jack Built" in *The Complete Collection of Pictures & Songs*; engraving and printing by Edmund Evans, illustration by Randolph Caldecott (1887)





One of 12 illustrations in the 4th edition of *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, by John Baptist Medina, 1688

The illustration of handwritten manuscript books was well established in ancient times, and the tradition of the illuminated manuscript thrived in the West until the invention of printing.<sup>[44][45]</sup> Other parts of the world had comparable traditions, such as the Persian miniature.<sup>[46]</sup> Woodblock printing emerged in China, spread to Japan by the 9th century,<sup>[47]</sup> and spread across Europe in the 13th century.<sup>[48]</sup> Modern book illustration comes from the 15th-century woodcut illustrations that were fairly rapidly included in early printed books, and later block books.<sup>[47]</sup> Other techniques such as engraving, etching, and lithography expanded the possibilities and were notably used by the French artists Daumier, Doré, and Gavarni.<sup>[47]</sup>

# Manufacturing



The spine of the book is an important aspect in book design, especially in the cover design. When books are stacked up or stored on a shelf, the spine is often the only visible surface that contains information about the book. In stores, it is the details on the spine that attract a prospective buyer's attention first.



A small bookshelf

The methods used for the printing and binding of books continued fundamentally unchanged from the 15th century into the early 20th century. While there was more mechanization, a book printer in 1900 still used movable metal type assembled into words, lines, and pages to create copies. Modern paper books are printed on paper designed specifically for printing.

Traditionally, book papers are off-white or low-white papers (easier to read), are opaque to minimize the show-through of text from one side of the page to the other and are (usually) made to tighter caliper or thickness specifications, particularly for case-bound books. Different paper qualities are used depending on the type of book: Machine finished coated papers, woodfree uncoated papers, coated fine papers and special fine papers are common paper grades.

Today, the majority of books are printed by offset lithography.<sup>[49]</sup> When a book is printed, the pages are laid out on the plate so that after the printed sheet is folded the pages will be in the

correct sequence. Books tend to be manufactured nowadays in a few standard sizes. The sizes of books are usually specified as "trim size": the size of the page after the sheet has been folded and trimmed. The standard sizes result from sheet sizes (therefore machine sizes) which became popular 200 or 300 years ago, and have come to dominate the industry. British conventions in this regard prevail throughout the English-speaking world, except for the US. The European book manufacturing industry works to a completely different set of standards.

## Printing

Some books, particularly those with shorter runs (i.e. with fewer copies) will be printed on sheet-fed offset presses, but most books are now printed on web presses, which are fed by a continuous roll of paper, and can consequently print more copies in a shorter time. As the production line circulates, a complete "book" is collected together in one stack of pages, and another machine carries out the folding, pleating, and stitching of the pages into bundles of signatures (sections of pages) ready to go into the gathering line. The pages of a book are printed two at a time, not as one complete book. Excess numbers are printed to make up for any spoilage due to make-readies or test pages to assure final print quality.

A *make-ready* is the preparatory work carried out by the pressmen to get the printing press up to the required quality of impression. Included in make-ready is the time taken to mount the plate onto the machine, clean up any mess from the previous job, and get the press up to speed. As soon as the pressman decides that the printing is correct, all the make-ready sheets will be discarded, and the press will start making books. Similar make readies take place in the folding and binding areas, each involving spoilage of paper.

## Digital printing

Recent developments in book manufacturing include the development of digital printing. Book pages are printed, in much the same way as an office copier works, using toner rather than ink. Each book is printed in one pass, not as separate signatures. Digital printing has permitted the manufacture of much smaller quantities than offset, in part because of the absence of make readies and of spoilage. Digital printing has opened up the possibility of print-on-demand, where no books are printed until after an order is received from a customer.

# Binding

After the signatures are folded and gathered, they move into the bindery. In the middle of last century there were still many trade binders—stand-alone binding companies which did no printing, specializing in binding alone. At that time, because of the dominance of letterpress printing, typesetting and printing took place in one location, and binding in a different factory. When type was all metal, a typical book's worth of type would be bulky, fragile and heavy. The less it was moved in this condition the better: so printing would be carried out in the same location as the typesetting. Printed sheets on the other hand could easily be moved. Now, because of increasing computerization of preparing a book for the printer, the typesetting part of the job has flowed upstream, where it is done either by separately contracting companies working for the publisher, by the publishers themselves, or even by the authors. Mergers in the book manufacturing industry mean that it is now unusual to find a bindery which is not also involved in book printing (and vice versa).

If the book is a hardback its path through the bindery will involve more points of activity than if it is a paperback. Unsewn binding is now increasingly common. The signatures of a book can also be held together by "Smyth sewing" using needles, "McCain sewing", using drilled holes often used in schoolbook binding, or "notch binding", where gashes about an inch long are made at intervals through the fold in the spine of each signature. The rest of the binding process is similar in all instances. Sewn and notch bound books can be bound as either hardbacks or paperbacks.

# Finishing

"Making cases" happens off-line and prior to the book's arrival at the binding line. In the most basic case-making, two pieces of cardboard are placed onto a glued piece of cloth with a space between them into which is glued a thinner board cut to the width of the spine of the book. The overlapping edges of the cloth (about 5/8" all round) are folded over the boards, and pressed down to adhere. After case-making the stack of cases will go to the foil stamping area for adding decorations and type.

# Formats

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Hardcover books



Paperback books

For most of the history of book making, books have been shared as physical books. However, with changes of technologies and growing awareness of the needs of people who have reading disabilities, other formats such as audiobooks and digital books have gained traction in the book market place.

## Physical books

Hardcover books have a stiff binding. Paperback books have cheaper, flexible covers which tend to be less durable. An alternative to paperback is the glossy cover, otherwise known as a dust cover, found on magazines, and comic books. Spiral-bound books are bound by spirals made of metal or plastic. Examples of spiral-bound books include teachers' manuals and puzzle books (crosswords, sudoku).

Publishers may produce low-cost, pre-publication copies known as galleys or 'bound proofs' for promotional purposes, such as generating reviews in advance of publication. Galleys are usually made as cheaply as possible, since they are not intended for sale.

## Size

The size of a book is generally measured by the height against the width of a leaf, or sometimes the height and width of its cover.<sup>[50]</sup> A series of terms is commonly used by libraries and publishers for the general sizes of modern books, ranging from folio (the largest), to quarto (smaller) and octavo (still smaller).

Historically, these terms referred to the format of the book, a technical term used by printers and bibliographers to indicate the size of a leaf in terms of the size of the original sheet. For example, a quarto (from Latin *quartō*, ablative form of

*quartus*, fourth<sup>[51]</sup>) historically was a book printed on sheets of paper folded in half twice, with the first fold at right angles to the second, to produce 4 leaves (or 8 pages), each leaf one fourth the size of the original sheet printed – note that a *leaf* refers to the single piece of paper, whereas a *page* is one side of a leaf. Because the actual format of many modern books cannot be determined from examination of the books, bibliographers may not use these terms in scholarly descriptions.



# Ebook



A Kindle e-reader

An ebook (short for electronic book), also known as an e-book or eBook, is a book publication made available in electronic form, consisting of text, images, or both, readable on the flat-panel display of computers or other electronic devices.<sup>[52]</sup> Although sometimes defined as "an electronic version of a printed book",<sup>[53]</sup> some e-books exist without a printed equivalent. E-books can be read on

dedicated e-reader devices, also on any computer device that features a controllable viewing screen, including desktop computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones.

## Audiobook

An audiobook (or a talking book) is a recording of a book or other work being read out loud. A reading of the complete text is described as "unabridged", while readings of shorter versions are abridgements.

Spoken audio has been available in schools and public libraries and to a lesser extent in music shops since the 1930s. Many spoken word albums were made prior to the age of cassettes, compact discs, and downloadable audio, often of poetry and plays rather than books. It was not until the 1980s that the

medium began to attract book retailers, and then book retailers started displaying audiobooks on bookshelves rather than in separate displays.

## Accessibility formats



An example of someone using a screen reader showing documents that are inaccessible, readable and accessible

Accessible publishing is an approach to publishing and book design whereby books and other texts are made available in alternative formats designed to aid or replace the reading process. It is particularly relevant for people who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled.

Alternative formats that have been developed to aid different people to read include varieties of larger fonts, specialised fonts for certain kinds of reading disabilities, braille, e-books, and automated audiobooks and DAISY digital talking books.

Accessible publishing has been made easier through developments in technology such as print on demand

(POD), e-book readers, the XML structured data format, the EPUB3 format and the Internet.

## Content

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Novels in a bookstore

Libraries, bookstores, and collections commonly divide books into fiction and non-fiction, though other types exist beyond this. Other books, which remain unpublished or are primarily published as part of different business functions (such as phone directories) may not be sold by bookstores or collected by libraries. Manuscripts, logbooks and other records may be classified and stored differently by special collections or archives.

## Fiction

Many of the books published today are "fiction", meaning that they contain invented material, and are creative literature. Other literary forms such as poetry are included in the broad category. Most fiction is additionally categorized by literary form and genre.

The novel is the most common form of fiction book. Novels are stories that typically feature a plot, setting, themes and characters. Stories and narrative are not restricted to any topic; a novel can be whimsical, serious or controversial. The novel has had a tremendous impact on entertainment and publishing markets.<sup>[54]</sup> A novella is a term sometimes used for fiction prose typically between 17,500 and 40,000 words, and a novelle between 7,500 and 17,500. A short story may be any length up to 10,000 words, but these word lengths vary.

Comic books or graphic novels are books in which the story is illustrated. The characters and narrators use speech or thought bubbles to express verbal language.

# Non-fiction



A page from a dictionary.

Non-fiction books are in principle based on fact, on subjects such as history, politics, social and cultural issues, as well as autobiographies and memoirs. Nearly all academic literature is non-fiction. A reference book is a general type of non-fiction book which provides information as opposed to telling a story, essay, commentary, or otherwise supporting a point of view.

# References

An almanac is a very general reference book, usually one-volume, with lists of data and information on many topics. An encyclopedia is a book or set of books designed to have more in-depth articles on many topics. A book listing words, their etymology, meanings, and other information is called a dictionary. A book which is a collection of maps is an atlas. A more specific reference book with tables or lists of data and information about a certain topic, often

intended for professional use, is often called a handbook. Books which try to list references and abstracts in a certain broad area may be called an index, such as *Engineering Index*, or abstracts such as chemical abstracts and biological abstracts.

## Technical



An atlas

Books with technical information on how to do something or how to use some equipment are called instruction manuals. Other popular how-to books include cookbooks and home improvement books.

## Educational

Students typically store and carry textbooks and schoolbooks for study purposes. Lap books are a learning tool created by students. Elementary school pupils often use workbooks, which are published with spaces or blanks to be filled by them for study or homework. In US higher education, it is common for a student to take an exam using a blue book.

## Religious

Hymnals are books with collections of musical hymns that can typically be found in churches. Prayerbooks or missals are books that contain written prayers and are commonly carried by monks, nuns, and other devoted followers or clergy.

# Children's books



A mother reads to her children, depicted by Jessie Willcox Smith in a cover illustration of a volume of fairy tales written in the mid to late 19th century.

Children's literature or juvenile literature includes stories, books, magazines, and poems that are created for children. Modern children's literature is classified in two different ways: genre or the intended age of the reader, from picture books for the very young to young adult fiction.

Children's literature can be traced to traditional stories like fairy tales, that have only been identified as children's literature in the eighteenth century, and songs, part of a wider oral tradition, that adults shared with children before



publishing existed. The development of early children's literature, before printing was invented, is difficult to trace. Even after printing became widespread, many classic "children's" tales were originally created for adults and later adapted for a younger audience. Since the fifteenth century much literature has been aimed specifically at children, often with a moral or religious message. Children's literature has been shaped by religious sources, like Puritan traditions, or by more philosophical and scientific standpoints with the influences of Charles Darwin and John Locke.<sup>[55]</sup> The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are known as the "Golden Age of Children's

Literature" because many classic children's books were published then.

## Unpublished



A page from a notebook used as hand written diary

There is a large set of books that are made only to write private ideas, notes, and accounts. These books are rarely published and are typically destroyed or remain private. Notebooks are blank papers to be written in by the user. Students and writers commonly use them for taking notes. Scientists and other researchers use lab notebooks to record their notes. They often feature spiral coil bindings at the edge so that pages may easily be torn out.

## Directories and record keeping



A telephone directory, with business and residence listings

Address books, phone books, and calendar/appointment books are commonly used on a daily basis for recording appointments, meetings and personal contact information.

Books for recording periodic entries by the user, such as daily information about a journey, are called logbooks or logs. A similar book for writing the owner's daily private personal events, information, and ideas is called a diary or personal journal. Businesses use accounting books such as journals and ledgers to record financial data in a practice called bookkeeping (now usually held on computers rather than in hand-written form).

# Collection and classification

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Since the beginning of creation of books, there has been need to create strategies for organizing, collecting and creating access to the books. Personal and public libraries, archives and other forms of collecting has led to different strategies for organizing, and subsequently making access to the books easier for different use cases.

In the 19th and 20th century, libraries and library professionals systematized book collecting and classification systems to respond to the growing literacy and print industries around the world. The most widely used system is ISBN, which has provided unique identifiers for books since 1970.

## Libraries



The Library of Celsus in Ephesus, Turkey, was built in 135 AD, and could house around 12,000 scrolls.

Private or personal libraries made up of non-fiction and fiction books, as opposed to state or institutional archives, first appeared in classical Greece. In the ancient world, the maintaining of a library was usually (but not exclusively) the privilege of a wealthy individual. These libraries could have been either private or public, i.e. for people who were interested in using them. The difference from a modern public library lies in that they were usually not funded from public sources. It is estimated that in the city of Rome at the end of the 3rd century there were around 30 public libraries. Public libraries also existed in other cities of the ancient Mediterranean region (for example, Library of Alexandria).<sup>[56]</sup> Later, in the Middle Ages, monasteries and universities also had libraries that could be accessible to the general public. Typically not the whole collection was available to the public; the books could not be borrowed and often were chained to reading stands to prevent theft.

The beginning of the modern public library begins around 15th century when individuals started to donate books to towns.<sup>[57]</sup> The growth of a public library system in the United States started in the late 19th century and was much helped by donations from Andrew Carnegie. This reflected classes in a society: the poor or the middle class had to access most books through a public library or by other means, while the rich could afford to have a private library built in their homes. In the United States the Boston Public Library 1852 *Report of the Trustees* established the justification for the public library as a tax-supported institution intended to extend educational opportunity and provide for general culture.<sup>[58]</sup>

The advent of paperback books in the 20th century led to an explosion of popular publishing. Paperback books made owning books affordable for many people. Paperback books often included works from genres that had previously been published mostly in pulp magazines. As a result of the low cost of such books and the spread of bookstores filled with them (in addition to the creation of a smaller market of extremely cheap used paperbacks), owning a private library ceased to be a status symbol for the rich.

The development of libraries has prompted innovations to help store and organize books on shelves. In library and booksellers' catalogues, it is common to include an abbreviation such as "Crown 8vo" to indicate the paper size from which the book is made. When rows of books are lined on a book holder, bookends are sometimes needed to keep them from slanting.

# Identification and classification



ISBN with barcode

During the 20th century, librarians were concerned about keeping track of the many books being added yearly to the Gutenberg Galaxy. Through a global society called the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), they devised a series of tools including the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD). Each book is specified by an International Standard Book Number, or ISBN, which is meant to be unique to every edition of every book produced by participating publishers, worldwide. It is managed by the ISBN Society. An ISBN has four parts: the first part is the country code, the second the publisher code, and the third the title code. The last part is a check digit, and can take values from 0–9 and X (10). The EAN Barcodes numbers for books are derived from the ISBN by prefixing 978, for Bookland, and calculating a new check digit.

Commercial publishers in industrialized countries generally assign ISBNs to their books, so buyers may presume that the ISBN is part of a total international system, with no exceptions. However, many government publishers, in industrial as well as developing countries, do not participate fully in the ISBN system, and publish books which do not have ISBNs. A large or public collection requires a catalogue. Codes called "call numbers" relate the books to the catalogue, and determine their locations on the shelves. Call numbers are based on a Library classification system. The call number is placed on the spine of the book, normally a short distance before the bottom, and inside. Institutional or national standards, such as ANSI/NISO Z39.41 – 1997, establish the correct way to place information (such as the title, or the name of the author) on book spines, and on "shelvable" book-like objects, such as containers for DVDs, video tapes and software.



Books on library shelves and call numbers visible on the spines

One of the earliest and most widely known systems of cataloguing books is the Dewey Decimal System. Another widely known system is the Library of Congress Classification system. Both systems are biased towards subjects which were well represented in US libraries when they were developed, and hence have problems handling new subjects, such as computing, or subjects relating to other cultures.<sup>[59]</sup> Information about books and authors can be stored in databases like online general-interest book databases. Metadata, which means "data about data" is information about a book. Metadata about a book may include its title, ISBN or other classification number (see above), the names of contributors (author, editor, illustrator) and publisher, its date and size, the language of the text, its subject matter, etc.

## Classification systems

- Bliss bibliographic classification (BC)
- Chinese Library Classification (CLC)
- Colon Classification
- Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)
- Harvard-Yenching Classification

- Library of Congress Classification (LCC)
- New Classification Scheme for Chinese Libraries
- Universal Decimal Classification (UDC)

## Conservation



A conservation technician examining an artwork under a microscope at the Indianapolis Museum of Art

The conservation and restoration of books, manuscripts, documents, and ephemera is an activity dedicated to extending the life of items of historical and personal value made primarily from paper, parchment, and leather. When applied to cultural heritage, conservation activities are generally undertaken by a conservator. The primary goal of conservation is to extend the lifespan of the object as well as maintaining its integrity by keeping all additions reversible.



Conservation of books and paper involves techniques of bookbinding, restoration, paper chemistry, and other material technologies including preservation and archival techniques.<sup>[60]</sup>

Book and paper conservation seeks to prevent and, in some cases, reverse damage due to handling, inherent vice, and the environment. Conservators determine proper methods of storage for books and documents, including boxes and shelving to prevent further damage and promote long term storage. Carefully chosen methods and techniques of active conservation can both reverse damage and prevent further damage in batches or single-item treatments based on the value of the book or document.

Historically, book restoration techniques were less formalized and carried out by various roles and training backgrounds. Nowadays, the conservation of paper documents and books is often performed by a professional conservator.<sup>[61][62]</sup>

Many paper or book conservators are members of a professional body, such as the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) or the Guild of Bookworkers (both in the United States), the Archives and Records Association (in the United Kingdom and Ireland), or the Institute of

# Conservation (ICON) (in the United Kingdom).<sup>[63]</sup>

## Social and cultural issues

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### Reception

The impact of books can be various, and record of that reception comes in several formats: starting with initial public reception in contemporary newspapers, pop culture and correspondence, and then developing over time with different forms of literary criticism by professional and academic critics. For the publishing industry the "book review" is an important part of increasing awareness and reception of a book: able to make or break the public opinion about a newly published book.

### Book reviews

A book review is a form of literary criticism in which a book is merely described (summary review) or analyzed based on content, style, and merit.<sup>[64]</sup>

A book review may be a primary source, an opinion piece, a summary review, or a scholarly view.<sup>[65]</sup> Books can be reviewed for printed periodicals, magazines, and newspapers, as school work, or for book websites on the Internet. A book review's length may vary from a single paragraph to a substantial essay. Such a review may evaluate the book based on personal taste. Reviewers may use the occasion of a book review for an extended essay that can be closely or loosely related to the subject of the book, or to promulgate their ideas on the topic of a fiction or non-fiction work.

Some journals are devoted to book reviews, and reviews are indexed in

databases such as the *Book Review Index* and *Kirkus Reviews*; but many more book reviews can be found in newspaper and scholarly databases such as Arts and Humanities Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index , and discipline-specific databases.

## **Book censorship and bans**

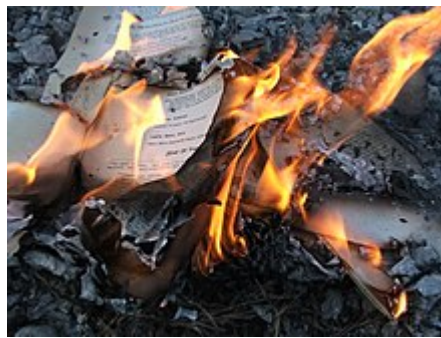
Book censorship is the act of some authority taking measures to suppress ideas and information within a book.

Censorship is "the regulation of free speech and other forms of entrenched authority".<sup>[66]</sup> Censors typically identify as either a concerned parent, community members who react to a text without

reading, or local or national organizations.<sup>[67]</sup> Books have been censored by authoritarian dictatorships to silence dissent, such as the People's Republic of China, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Books are most often censored for age appropriateness, offensive language, sexual content, amongst other reasons.<sup>[68]</sup> Similarly, religions may issue lists of banned books, such as the historical example of the Roman Catholic Church's *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* and bans of such books as Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* by Ayatollah Khomeini,<sup>[69]</sup> which do not always carry legal force. Censorship can be enacted at the

national or subnational level as well, and can carry legal penalties. In many cases, the authors of these books could face harsh sentences, exile from the country, or even execution.

## Book burning



Contemporary book burning

Book burning is the deliberate destruction by fire of books or other written materials, usually carried out in a public context. The burning of books represents an element of  censorship and usually proceeds from a cultural, religious, or political opposition to the materials in question.<sup>[70]</sup> Book burning can be an act of contempt for the book's contents or author, intended to draw wider public attention to this opinion, or conceal the information contained in the text from being made public, such as diaries or ledgers.

In some cases, the destroyed works are irreplaceable and their burning constitutes a severe loss to cultural heritage. Examples include the burning of books and burying of scholars under China's Qin Dynasty (213–210 BCE), the destruction of the House of Wisdom during the Mongol siege of Baghdad (1258), the destruction of Aztec codices by Itzcoatl (1430s), the burning of Maya codices on the order of bishop Diego de Landa (1562),<sup>[71]</sup> and the burning of Jaffna Public Library in Sri Lanka (1981).<sup>[72]</sup>

In other cases, such as the Nazi book burnings, copies of the destroyed books survive, but the instance of book burning becomes emblematic of a harsh and oppressive regime which is seeking to censor or silence some aspect of prevailing culture.

See also

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The logo for the Books portal, featuring a small icon of an open book with a red bookmark, followed by the text "Books" in a bold, italicized serif font, and "portal" in a bold, italicized sans-serif font, both underlined.

- Bibliodiversity
- Open access book

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