



The History Of Paper & Recycling



The history of paper dates back almost 2,000 years to when inventors in China first crafted cloth sheets to record their drawings and writings. Before then, people communicated through pictures and symbols etched on stone, bones, cave walls or clay tablets.

Paper as we know it today was first made in Lei-Yang, China. About 300 years later, during the 8th century, Muslims (from the region that is now Syria, Saudi Arabia and Iraq) learned the Chinese secret of paper making when they captured

a Chinese paper mill. Later, when the Muslims invaded Europe, they brought this secret with them. The first paper mill was built in Spain, and soon, paper was being made at mills all across Europe. Over the next 800 years, paper was used for printing important books, bibles and legal documents.

England began making large supplies of paper in the late 15th century and supplied the colonies with paper for many years. Finally, in 1690, the first U.S. paper mill was built in Pennsylvania.

At first, American paper mills used the Chinese method of shredding old rags and clothes into individual fibers to make paper. As the demand for paper grew, the mills changed to using the fiber from trees instead (wood was less expensive and more abundant than cloth). Today,

most of the trees that are used to make paper are grown on working forests and

harvested like a crop—specifically for making paper.

Paper mills also use recycled paper, as well as wood chips and sawdust left over from lumber operations (whose products are used to make houses, furniture and other things) to make new paper. Today, much of the paper we use is made with

fiber from recycled paper. Recycling has always been a part of papermaking. When you recycle your used paper, paper mills will use it to make new newspapers, notebook paper, paper grocery bags, corrugated boxes, envelopes, magazines, cartons and other paper products.

When Did It All Happen?

- 2400 B.C.
Papyrus (a tall reed used before paper)
- 200 B.C.
First paper made from fishing nets in China
- 105 A.D.
First paper made from plants in Lei-Yang, China
- 700 A.D.
Muslims learned the Chinese art of paper making
- 1150 A.D.
First European paper mill built in Spain
- 1494 A.D.
England supplied colonies with paper
- 1690 A.D.
First U.S. paper mill built in Pennsylvania
- 1883 A.D.
Paper grocery bag invented



Recycling Gives New Life to Old Paper

Did you ever wonder what happens to the used paper you recycle at curbside or a local recycling center? It's wrapped in tight bales and transported to a paper mill where it is recycled. At the paper mill, the used paper is SHREDDED, WASHED and MASHED into a watery mixture called pulp. Unwanted materials are screened out, then the pulp is spread evenly over a wire screen and PRESSED to remove excess water. The paper is then DRIED and ROLLED into a smooth, flat sheet. The sheet is wound onto a large roll and eventually split into smaller rolls or cut into sheets to make new paper products.

Directions:

Put a number from 1-6 under each picture to show which recycling steps come first. Look at the capitalized words above for help.

