

The book : the memory of mankind

From the earliest days the written word was traced onto clay or wooden tablets, papyrus or parchment scrolls, bamboo or palm sticks. The **book** existed since the beginning of our era. Its prestigious history is told here from its invention to the age of digital books. Milestones in the course of the book's history are the arrival in Europe of **paper** and the rapid development of **printing**. All of which is closely linked to the presence and action of those involved in writing, from the medieval scribe to the I.T. specialist of the 21st century.

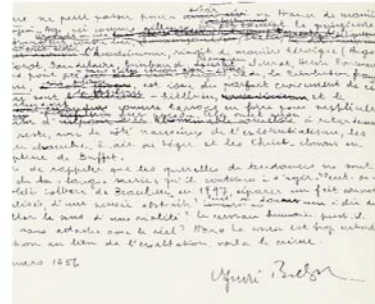
Saint Paul writing,
detail from an
illuminated bible,
Paris, 1230 A.D.



Book written in Batak,
Sumatra, undated

Writing, government and the citizen

How have **civilizations** made use of the written word? How, over the course of the centuries, have governments and the man of the street alike taken possession of the written word? As can be seen from decrees, administrative documents, newspapers, lists of grievances (the French revolution's "cahiers de doléances") and private diaries, writing can be a means of control as well as a means of obtaining information, **expressing** one's opinion, protesting, creating...



Manuscript,
André Breton,
« Sus au
misérabilisme »,
1956 A.D.



Matrix, town seal, Figeac, 13th century A.D.

Reading room

A multimedia selection of documents enables you freely to explore Champollion's adventure, the scripts and cultures of the world. Do not miss the exceptional three dimensional reconstitution of an Egyptian mummy.



Reconstitution of the mummy

Glossary

Script: the representation of the spoken word and thought using lasting conventional graphic signs.

Language: a system of communication and vocal expression common to a social group.

Pictogram: a stylised figurative drawing which acts as a writing sign representing a state or action.

Ideogram: a sign representing an idea.

Logogram: a sign representing an entire word.

Cuneiform: wedge shaped script used in Mesopotamia traced by means of an oblique stylus.

Boustrophedon: system of writing from left to right then right to left in alternate lines, as ox turns in ploughing a field.

Cursive: rapidly written script using words formed with joined letters.

Activities for visitors:

Guided tours: on request throughout the year. July and August : 10 am every Tuesday and on request.

Children's workshops and visits ages 6 -12. A fun way to discover the adventure of the written word throughout the world, in the shoes of a scribe : Maya, Egyptian Chinese...

Lectures, talks and workshops: throughout the year. Programme on request at the information desk.

Education Service:

Visits and workshops are set up specially for school groups.

Educational resource material is available for teachers wishing to prepare the class before visiting the museum.

Information and booking

at the museum information desk or contact us on **05 65 50 31 08** (from abroad: 00 33 5 65 50 31 08)

MUSÉE
Champollion
FIGEAC Les Écritures du Monde

Opening hours:

July - August : from 10.30 am to 6 pm (daily)
April - June and September : from 10.30 to 12.30 am and 2 - 6 pm (closed Mondays)
October - March : from 2 - 5.30 pm (closed Mondays).

Open on Easter and Whit Mondays
Closed 1st January, 1st May, 25th December.

Concessions for children aged 13-18, schools, students and the unemployed.
Free entry for children under 12
Free entry 1st Wednesday each month (except July and August).



- 1 Musée Champollion
- 2 L'annexe (expositions temporaires, conférences)
- 3 L'atelier
- 4 Espace patrimoine

Musée Champollion
Place Champollion - 46100 Figeac
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The visit covers four floors



Room 0

Champollion and Egypt

How did Champollion manage to **decipher** the hieroglyphs? Presented here, around the facsimile of the Rosetta stone, extracts from a selection of the letters he regularly wrote to his brother and the many notes he made during his research tell us of his progress, the difficulties he encountered and his genial intuition. His letters enable us to follow the scholar on his **expedition** along the banks of the Nile and in his company discover **ancient Egypt**, the gods in their many manifestations, the mummies and the objects that accompanied them in the after-world.



The god Horus shown with a falcon's head, Egypt, 7th - 6th century B.C.



Sarcophagus of the ritual singer of the god Amun Re, Egypt, 11th - 10th century B.C. - Cahors museum deposit

Room 1

Mankind, the world and the writing

The museum's collections recount the fabulous adventure of the written word. How did man come to trace the **first signs**? What are **the issues** of this fabulous invention? Are there any scripts left in the world yet to be deciphered? How do scripts evolve and can they travel round the world? The visitor is invited to reflect on what it means to write.



Manuscript on palm strips, Myanmar, undated



Seal inscribed in Brahmi script, India, 3rd - 1st century B.C.

Room 2

The first scripts

Follow the **first scripts** from Mexico to China by way of Egypt and Mesopotamia as they arose between 4000 and 1000 B.C.



Tablet inscribed in cuneiform script, Iraq, around 2000 B.C.



Thoth, god of writing, shown as an ibis, Egypt, 7th - 6th century B.C.

Room 3

The first scripts (suite)

The collections introduce you to ancient **civilizations** and recount the **myths** concerning the appearance of scripts. Thanks to the objects present you can have at your fingertips the **different signs**: Mesopotamian cuneiform script, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Chinese characters, even the mysterious glyphs of the Mayas.



Stamp of the « Classical Inscription », China, early 20th century A.D.



Maya scribe, Mexico, fac-simile

Room 4

The invention of the alphabet around the Mediterranean

The first **alphabets**, were invented by the civilizations of the Middle East. They used between 22 and 30 characters. In a period of less than a thousand years dozens of different alphabets were invented around the shores of the Mediterranean. Learning to write is henceforth easier and quicker. Follow the **adventure trail** of the letters A to Z and explore the different alphabets : Phoenician, Hebrew, Arabic, Greek...



Bowl inscribed in Kufic Arabic, Iran, 9th - 10th century A.D.



Dedication by Nebuza to the god Abgal, Palmyre, 263 B.C.

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