



Some writing tools, like stamps and seals, produced complete, identical texts when pushed into soft materials like wax or mud, making them ideal for signing or labelling multiple objects.

CARVING

In ancient Athens, members of the assembly roughly scratched the names of unpopular politicians on sherds of pottery ('ostraka'). Whoever's name appeared on the most sherds was sent away from Athens for 10 years, literally 'ostracised'.



Stone, carved with a hammer and chisel, was ideal for texts that were made to last, such as decrees or public honours.

INKING

In pre-dynastic Egypt, reed pens were used to write on sheets of dried papyrus. Similar pens were used by Romans at Hadrian's Wall in northern England, to write on thin wooden tablets. In East Asia, to this day, there remains a strong tradition of calligraphy using brushes.



In the fifteenth century, Western Europe