

Reading 6

Around the first century CE, Chinese artisans developed one of the most transformative technologies in human history: papermaking. Early paper was produced from mulberry bark, hemp, and rags—materials that were abundant and inexpensive. The process gradually spread beyond China, although its transmission took several centuries. In the seventh century, papermaking reached Korea and Japan, where local craftspeople adapted the techniques to incorporate native plants, such as *kozo* and *gampi*. These variations resulted in papers valued for their durability and flexibility.

A significant turning point occurred in the eighth century when the technology spread westward to the Islamic world. Paper quickly became essential for administrative record-keeping, scholarship, and commerce. Scholars in cities such as Baghdad established some of the earliest known paper mills, improving the quality and production rate of manuscripts. This innovation **facilitated** the translation movement, during which Greek, Persian, and Indian texts were preserved and expanded upon.

By the twelfth century, papermaking reached Europe through trade routes and cultural exchanges in Spain and Italy. Although parchment continued to be used, paper eventually became the primary medium for books and official documents. This shift supported rising literacy rates and ultimately contributed to the success of the printing press centuries later.

Questions

1. **What is the main purpose of the passage?**
 - A. To compare Asian and European writing traditions
 - B. To describe the historical development and spread of papermaking
 - C. To explain how printing technology replaced parchment
 - D. To evaluate different ancient materials used for writing
2. **According to the passage, why did paper spread quickly in the Islamic world?**
 - A. It was more decorative than parchment
 - B. It improved administrative and scholarly activities
 - C. It was required by new trade laws
 - D. It replaced silk as a primary export

3. The word “facilitated” in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to:
- A. hindered
 - B. questioned
 - C. made possible
 - D. delayed
4. What can be inferred about early European adoption of paper?
- A. Europeans immediately abandoned parchment.
 - B. Europeans relied on Asian imports for several centuries.
 - C. European literacy increased partly because paper became widely available.
 - D. European scholars resisted new materials for writing.
5. How does the final paragraph relate to the rest of the passage?
- A. It contrasts Asian and European techniques.
 - B. It introduces a new unrelated topic.
 - C. It provides the consequences of the technological spread described earlier.
 - D. It repeats information from the introduction.

ANSWERS: BBCCC