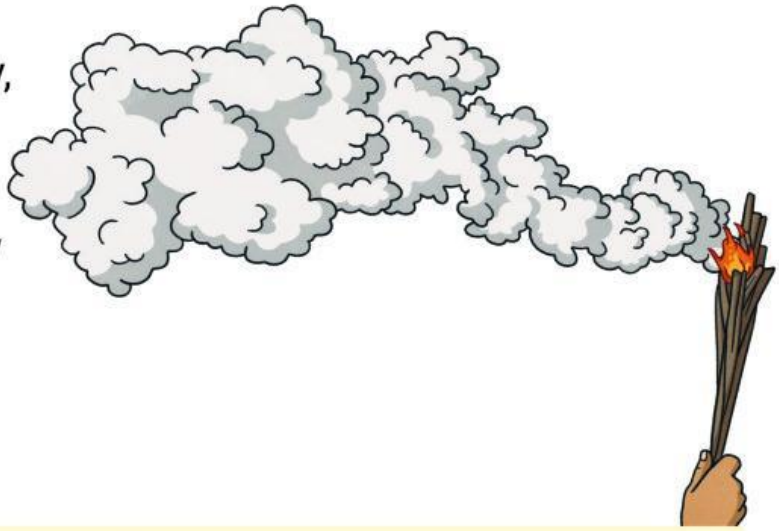




History of Communication

Since the beginning of history, humans have been trying to find ways to communicate better and faster. Here is how communication has evolved since the beginning of civilisation.



pre-historic
Smoke Signals

One of the earliest forms of long-distance communication was using smoke patterns to make messages. This has been used all over the world, from Native American tribes to Chinese soldiers. This method can **transmit** simple messages across vast distances. Usually smoke signals would warn of an enemy attack, or to signal that all was well.

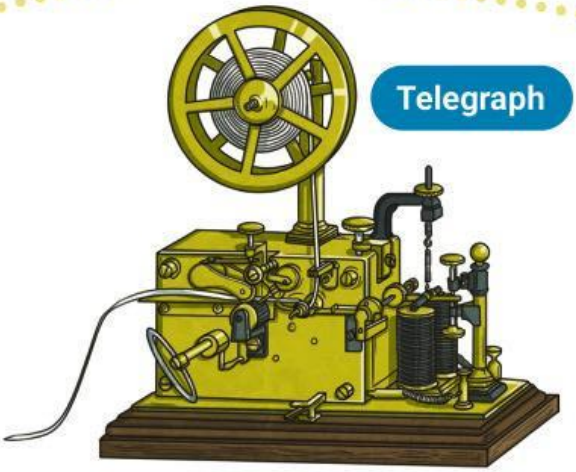
200s
Paper

The invention of paper in China completely revolutionised communication. Before paper, people used materials like clay tablets or animal skins to record information. However, paper allowed for more portability, helping knowledge to spread between people. Messages could now be sent as quickly as a messenger bird could fly, or carried on horseback.

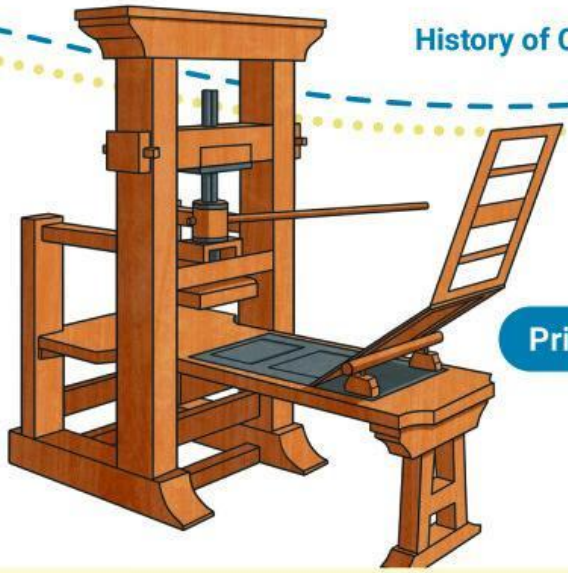


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Telegraph



Printing Press

1450s
Printing Press

Although the printing press didn't speed up communication, it enabled **mass** communication for the first time. Before the printing press, each copy of a book had to be hand-written, which was expensive and **time-consuming**. After the printing press, ideas and knowledge could spread across a culture, leading to eras like the Renaissance, improving global literacy.

1830s
The Telegraph

Telegraphs could send a message from Point A to Point B, if those two places were connected with wires. In 1858, the first telegraph cable was placed at the bottom of the Atlantic ocean, spanning Canada to Ireland. Before the telegraph cable, people could only send letters that were carried on ships. The **slogan**, "Two weeks to two minutes!" became popular as rapid one-way communication was possible for the first time.

1870s
Telephone

Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone marked a significant leap in two-way communication. Via the telephone, individuals could speak directly to one another, almost instantly. This invention impacted personal and business communication, allowing for long-distance conversations for the first time.

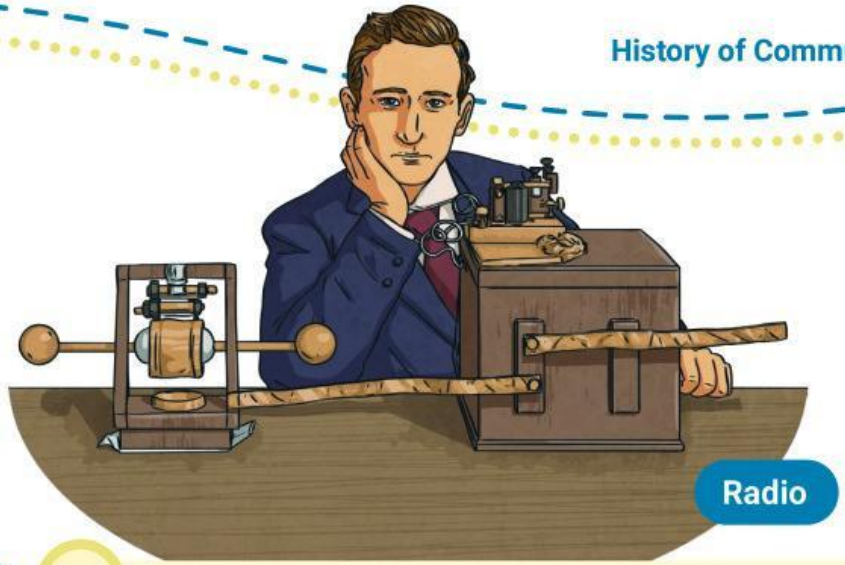


Telephone

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Radio

1890s
Radio

The telegraph and telephone were designed as point-to-point communication **devices**, meaning that they were limited to direct communication. Radio waves, however, could be heard by anyone who had a radio. Radio broadcasts brought news, entertainment, and information right into people's homes – to thousands of people at one time.

1960s
The Internet

The internet was invented in America, where two computers transmitted a message for the first time – but it was much slower than a telephone! As the technology developed, things like emails and websites became more common. By the early 2000s, chatrooms and social media started to gain popularity. This was the start of the hyperconnected era: instant, high-quality communication, anywhere in the world.

2010s
Smartphone

The introduction of the smartphone, particularly with the **launch** of the first iPhone in 2007, ushered in a new era. The smartphone combined the telephone with technology like touchscreens and cameras. Smartphones have since become a cornerstone of modern society. We can now share photos, make video-calls, go shopping, do banking, and learn new languages all on one device.



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Questions

Vocabulary Questions

Find synonyms in the text for the following words. The first has been done for you.

send	**transmit**
group	
machine	
release	
slow	
motto	

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What was the motto of the new telegraph line?

2. How fast could paper messages travel?

3. Which technology enabled instant two-way communication for the first time?

4. Which technology enabled instant mass communication for the first time?

5. Which technology improved literacy all around the world?

6. Based on the context in the article, what is the difference between one-way and two-way communication? What are examples of each?

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Writing Questions

1. Which of these technologies do you think made the single greatest impact? Why?

2. In your opinion, which century had the fastest technological development?

3. Can you imagine your life without a smartphone? How would it be different?

4. Do you ever wished you lived in a different time period? Which one would you choose? Why?

5. What are some of the negative impacts caused by increased connectivity?

This resource has been made for the purpose of teaching English language learners. We know that students can be learning English in many different places, in many different ways and at age, so we try to keep these resources as general as possible. There are many acronyms associated with English language teaching. These include (but are not limited to) ELT, TEFL, EFL, ELL, EAL and ESOL. While the term ESL may not fully represent the linguistic backgrounds of all students, it is the most widely recognised term for English language teaching globally. Therefore, we use the term 'ESL' in the names of our resources to make them easy to find but they are suitable for any student learning to speak English.

Disclaimer for Adult Resources: This resource is designed to support teaching of English as a second language to working-age adults. Please be aware that the content includes some references to working life and business English and may not be applicable to all learners.

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