# Class 10 History Chapter 5: Print Culture and the Modern World - Notes, Important Questions and MCQs (2026-27)

Free PDF notes from Nextoper.in | Session 2026-27 | Read online:
https://nextoper.in/class-10-history-chapter-5-pdf-notes/

These Print Culture and the Modern World Class 10 notes cover Class 10 History Chapter 5 completely: the first printed books in China, Japan and Korea, how print came to Europe, Gutenberg and the printing press, the print revolution and its impact, the reading mania, print and the French Revolution, the nineteenth century, India and the world of print, religious reform and public debates, new forms of publication, women and print, print and the poor, and print and censorship.

You also get a timeline of print history, a comparison table, a press laws table, NCERT-style questions with answers, 10 MCQs and a free PDF with no signup.

Use the table of contents below to jump to the part you need, or read top to bottom for a complete revision of the chapter.

## Table of Contents

- Chapter Overview
- Important Topics and Concepts
- Important Dates and Timeline
- Print in East Asia, Europe and India
- Give Reasons: NCERT Questions
- Colonial Press Laws and Controls
- Important Definitions and Terms
- Short Answer Questions
- Long Answer Questions
- MCQs with Answers
- Quick Revision Points
- Chapter Summary
- Exam Tips and PYQ Pattern
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Conclusion

Want notes for every chapter? Explore the full Class 10 Social Science notes on Nextoper, arranged book-wise and chapter-wise.

## Chapter Overview

Print surrounds us in books, newspapers, calendars, posters and advertisements, but print itself has a history that shaped the modern world. The chapter traces the development of print from its beginnings in East Asia to its spread in Europe and India.

It shows how print changed people’s relationship with knowledge, created new readers among children, women and workers, encouraged debate and dissent, and helped the growth of

# Important Topics and Concepts

## The first printed books: China

- The earliest print technology, hand printing, developed in China, Japan and Korea.
- From AD 594, Chinese books were printed by rubbing paper against inked woodblocks; the thin paper was printed on one side and folded into an ‘accordion book’, stitched at the side.
- The imperial state was the major producer of print, printing textbooks in large numbers for civil service examinations.
- By the seventeenth century, urban culture spread print use: merchants used it for trade information, reading became a leisure activity, and rich women read and published poetry and plays.
- Western mechanical presses were imported in the late nineteenth century; Shanghai became the hub of the new print culture.

## Print in Japan and Korea

- Buddhist missionaries from China brought hand printing to Japan around AD 768–770.
- The oldest Japanese book, printed in AD 868, is the Buddhist Diamond Sutra, with six sheets of text and woodcut illustrations.
- In Edo (later Tokyo), illustrated books and libraries flourished; Kitagawa Utamaro, born in 1753, was known for ukiyo (‘pictures of the floating world’), which influenced Manet, Monet and Van Gogh.
- The Tripitaka Koreana (mid-13th century) was engraved on about 80,000 woodblocks; the Jikji of Korea (late 14th century) is among the oldest books printed with movable metal type. Both are on UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register.

## Print comes to Europe

- Chinese paper reached Europe via the silk route in the eleventh century, enabling handwritten manuscripts by scribes.
- In 1295, Marco Polo returned to Italy from China with knowledge of woodblock printing, and Italians began producing woodblock books.
- Luxury editions were still handwritten on vellum for aristocrats and monasteries, while merchants and students bought cheaper printed copies.
- Booksellers employed more than 50 scribes each, but manuscripts were costly, fragile and slow to produce, so there was need for faster printing.

## Gutenberg and the printing press

- Johann Gutenberg developed the first-known printing press in the 1430s at Strasbourg, Germany.
- The son of a merchant, he had seen wine and olive presses, and as a master goldsmith knew how to make lead moulds. The olive press became the model for his press, and moulds were used to cast metal type.
- By 1448 he perfected the system. His first book was the Bible: about 180 copies, taking three years.

- He made metal types for the 26 letters of the Roman alphabet that could be moved around to compose text: the movable type printing machine, the basic print technology for the next 300 years. It printed 250 sheets on one side per hour.
- Early printed books still looked like manuscripts, with hand-painted borders and illustrations.
- Between 1450 and 1550 presses spread across Europe; 20 million books were printed in the second half of the fifteenth century and about 200 million in the sixteenth century. This was the print revolution.

### A new reading public

- Printing reduced the cost, time and labour of book production, and books reached an ever-growing readership.
- Earlier, common people lived in an oral culture: they heard texts read out and stories narrated. Now a hearing public became a reading public.
- As literacy was low, printers published illustrated ballads and folk tales, which were sung and recited in villages and taverns. Oral culture entered print and printed material was transmitted orally, blurring the line between them.

### Religious debates and the fear of print

- Print allowed wide circulation of ideas, including those who disagreed with authorities.
- Religious authorities, monarchs and some writers feared that uncontrolled printing would spread rebellious and irreligious ideas.
- In 1517, Martin Luther wrote the Ninety Five Theses criticising practices of the Roman Catholic Church; printed copies were widely read, leading to the Protestant Reformation.
- Luther’s translation of the New Testament sold 5,000 copies in a few weeks. He said: ‘Printing is the ultimate gift of God and the greatest one.’
- Erasmus, a Catholic reformer, feared that swarms of books, many irreligious and seditious, would harm scholarship.

### Print and dissent

- Menocchio, a sixteenth-century Italian miller, read books and reinterpreted the Bible in a way that enraged the Church; he was tried by the Inquisition twice and executed.
- Troubled by such questioning, the Roman Church imposed severe controls on publishers and booksellers and maintained an Index of Prohibited Books from 1558.

### The reading mania

- Literacy rose in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as churches set up village schools; by the end of the eighteenth century, literacy in some parts of Europe was 60–80 per cent.
- Pedlars carried almanacs, ballads and folk tales to villages.
- In England, penny chapbooks were sold by chapmen; in France, the ‘Bibliotheque Bleue’ were cheap books bound in blue covers. Romances and ‘histories’ also became popular.
- The periodical press developed from the early eighteenth century, combining news and entertainment.
- Ideas of scientists like Isaac Newton and thinkers like Thomas Paine, Voltaire and Rousseau reached ordinary readers.

### ‘Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world!’

By the mid-eighteenth century many believed books could spread progress and enlightenment and end despotism. The French novelist Louise-Sebastien Mercier declared that the printing press was ‘the most powerful engine of progress’ and that public opinion would sweep despotism away. In his novels heroes are transformed by reading, and he proclaimed: ‘Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world! Tremble before the virtual writer!’

### Print culture and the French Revolution

- First: print popularised the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Rousseau, who criticised tradition, superstition and despotism and argued for the rule of reason.
- Second: print created a new culture of dialogue and debate, in which values, norms and institutions were questioned and ideas of social revolution emerged.
- Third: by the 1780s, literature and cartoons mocking the royalty and their morality circulated underground, building hostility to the monarchy.
- However, people also read monarchical and Church propaganda and interpreted ideas in their own way. Print did not directly shape minds, but it opened up the possibility of thinking differently.

### The nineteenth century: children, women and workers

- Primary education became compulsory from the late nineteenth century, so children became important readers and school textbooks became vital to publishing.
- A children’s press was set up in France in 1857. The Grimm Brothers in Germany compiled folk tales from peasants and published them in 1812 after removing material considered unsuitable or vulgar; print recorded old tales but also changed them.
- Women became important readers and writers; penny magazines and manuals on proper behaviour targeted them. Novelists Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters and George Eliot defined a new type of woman with will and the power to think.
- Lending libraries in England educated white-collar workers, artisans and the lower middle class. As working days shortened, workers wrote political tracts and autobiographies; Thomas Wood, a Yorkshire mechanic, read rented newspapers by firelight.

### Further innovations in printing

- By the late eighteenth century, presses were made of metal.
- By the mid-nineteenth century, Richard M. Hoe of New York perfected the power-driven cylindrical press, printing 8,000 sheets per hour, useful for newspapers.
- In the late nineteenth century, the offset press could print up to six colours at a time; electric presses came in the early twentieth century.
- Periodicals serialised novels; in the 1920s, England had the cheap Shilling Series; the dust cover was a twentieth-century innovation; during the Great Depression of the 1930s, publishers brought out cheap paperbacks.

### India: manuscripts before the age of print

- India had a rich tradition of handwritten manuscripts in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and vernacular languages, copied on palm leaves or handmade paper and often illustrated.

- Manuscripts were expensive and fragile, written in different styles and not widely used in everyday life.
- In pre-colonial Bengal's village schools, students learnt to write from teachers' dictation without reading texts.

### Print comes to India

- The printing press first came to Goa with Portuguese missionaries in the mid-sixteenth century; Jesuit priests printed Konkani tracts, and by 1674 about 50 books had been printed in Konkani and Kanara.
- Catholic priests printed the first Tamil book in 1579 at Cochin and the first Malayalam book in 1713. By 1710 Dutch Protestant missionaries had printed 32 Tamil texts.
- From 1780, James Augustus Hickey edited the Bengal Gazette, a weekly that published advertisements and gossip about senior Company officials; Governor-General Warren Hastings persecuted him and encouraged officially sanctioned newspapers.
- The first Indian newspaper was the weekly Bengal Gazette brought out by Gangadhar Bhattacharya, who was close to Rammohun Roy.

### Religious reform and public debates

- From the early nineteenth century, intense debates over widow immolation, monotheism, Brahmanical priesthood and idolatry were carried out in print, in the everyday language of ordinary people.
- Rammohun Roy published the Sambad Kaumudi from 1821, and the Hindu orthodoxy commissioned the Samachar Chandrika to oppose him.
- From 1822, Persian newspapers Jam-i-Jahan Nama and Shamsul Akhbar appeared; the Gujarati Bombay Samachar began the same year.
- The ulama used cheap lithographic presses to print Persian and Urdu translations of scriptures; the Deoband Seminary, founded in 1867, published thousands of fatwas.
- The first printed edition of Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas came out from Calcutta in 1810; from the 1880s, the Naval Kishore Press (Lucknow) and the Shri Venkateshwar Press (Bombay) printed religious texts in vernaculars.
- Newspapers connected people across India and helped create pan-Indian identities.

### New forms of publication

- The novel acquired distinctively Indian forms; lyrics, short stories and essays also emerged.
- By the end of the nineteenth century a new visual culture developed: Raja Ravi Varma produced images for mass circulation, and cheap prints and calendars decorated the homes of even the poor.
- By the 1870s, caricatures and cartoons commented on social and political issues, some mocking Western tastes and others criticising imperial rule.

### Women and print

- Women's reading increased in middle-class homes; liberal families educated women at home and later sent them to schools.
- Conservative Hindus believed a literate girl would be widowed; some Muslims feared Urdu romances would corrupt women.
- Rashsundari Debi learnt to read secretly in her kitchen; her autobiography Amar Jiban (1876) was the first full-length autobiography in Bengali.

- From the 1860s, Kailashbashini Debi wrote about women's experiences; in the 1880s, Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai wrote angrily about the lives of upper-caste Hindu women, especially widows.
- Hindi printing began seriously from the 1870s; women's journals discussed education, widowhood and the national movement.
- In Punjab, Ram Chaddha's Istri Dharm Vichar taught women to be obedient wives; in Calcutta, the Battala area printed cheap popular books carried by pedlars to women at home.

### Print and the poor people

- Cheap small books were sold at crossroads in Madras towns; public libraries were set up from the early twentieth century.
- Jyotiba Phule wrote about caste injustice in Gulamgiri (1871); later, B.R. Ambedkar and E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker (Periyar) wrote powerfully on caste.
- Kashibaba, a Kanpur millworker, published Chhote Aur Bade Ka Sawal (1938) linking caste and class exploitation; another millworker's poems were published as Sacchi Kavitayan.
- By the 1930s, Bangalore cotton millworkers set up libraries, following Bombay workers.

### Print and censorship

- The colonial state's early measures to control print were directed against Englishmen in India who criticised Company misrule, as the Company feared these criticisms would be used against its trade monopoly.
- By the 1820s the Calcutta Supreme Court passed regulations to control press freedom; in 1835 Governor-General Bentinck agreed to revise press laws, and Thomas Macaulay framed rules restoring earlier freedoms.
- After the revolt of 1857, the attitude changed. In 1878 the Vernacular Press Act, modelled on the Irish Press Laws, gave the government extensive rights to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press; seditious papers were warned and their presses could be seized.
- Nationalist newspapers still grew. When Punjab revolutionaries were deported in 1907, Bal Gangadhar Tilak wrote sympathetically about them in his Kesari, leading to his imprisonment in 1908 and protests across India.
- During the First World War, under the Defence of India Rules, 22 newspapers had to furnish securities and 18 shut down; in August 1942, about 90 newspapers were suppressed during the Quit India movement.

## Important Dates and Timeline

Revise the history of print in order.

| Year | Event |
|---|---|
| AD 594 | Woodblock printing of books in China |
| AD 768–770 | Hand printing reaches Japan |
| AD 868 | Diamond Sutra printed |
| 11th century | Chinese paper reaches Europe |
| 1295 | Marco Polo brings woodblock knowledge to Italy |
| 1430s | Gutenberg develops printing press at Strasbourg |

| Year | Event |
|---|---|
| 1448 | Gutenberg perfects the system; prints the Bible |
| 1517 | Martin Luther’s Ninety Five Theses |
| 1558 | Index of Prohibited Books begins |
| Mid-16th century | Printing press reaches Goa |
| 1579 | First Tamil book printed at Cochin |
| 1713 | First Malayalam book printed |
| 1780 | Hickey’s Bengal Gazette |
| 1810 | First printed Ramcharitmanas, Calcutta |
| 1812 | Grimm Brothers publish folk tales |
| 1821 | Rammohun Roy’s Sambad Kaumudi |
| 1857 | Children’s press set up in France |
| 1867 | Deoband Seminary founded |
| 1871 | Jyotiba Phule’s Gulamgiri |
| 1876 | Rashsundari Debi’s Amar Jiban |
| 1878 | Vernacular Press Act |
| 1908 | Tilak imprisoned for writing in Kesari |
| 1938 | Kashibaba’s Chhote Aur Bade Ka Sawal |
| August 1942 | About 90 newspapers suppressed |

## Print in East Asia, Europe and India

A quick comparison for long answers.

| Aspect | East Asia | Europe | India |
|---|---|---|---|
| Beginning | Woodblock printing in China from AD 594 | Woodblocks after 1295; Gutenberg press 1430s | Portuguese press in Goa, mid-16th century |
| Main early users | Imperial state, examination candidates, Buddhists | Merchants, students, Church reformers | Missionaries, later reformers and newspapers |
| Key impact | Leisure reading, women writers, ukiyo prints | Reformation, reading mania, French Revolution | Religious debates, women’s writing, caste protest, nationalism |
| Control | State as main producer | Index of Prohibited Books (1558) | Vernacular Press Act (1878), Defence of India Rules |

## Give Reasons: NCERT Questions

Short answers for the NCERT ‘give reasons’ question.

- Woodblock print came to Europe only after 1295 because Marco Polo returned from China to Italy that year with the knowledge of woodblock printing.
- Martin Luther praised print because his Ninety Five Theses and his translation of the New Testament were printed and read widely, spreading his ideas and starting the Reformation.

- The Roman Catholic Church kept an Index of Prohibited Books from 1558 because printed books encouraged people like Menocchio to question its teachings, which it saw as heretical.
- Gandhiji said the fight for swaraj was a fight for liberty of speech, press and association because these were powerful vehicles for expressing and cultivating public opinion, which the government was trying to crush.

## Colonial Press Laws and Controls

| Year / Law | What it did |
|---|---|
| 1820s regulations | Calcutta Supreme Court controlled press freedom; Company encouraged pro-British papers |
| 1835 (Bentinck, Macaulay) | Press laws revised; earlier freedoms restored |
| 1878 Vernacular Press Act | Modelled on Irish Press Laws; gave extensive rights to censor vernacular papers and seize presses |
| First World War – Defence of India Rules | 22 newspapers had to furnish securities; 18 shut down |
| 1919 Sedition Committee Report (Rowlatt) | Strengthened controls and penalties on newspapers |
| Second World War – Defence of India Act | Censored war-related reports; about 90 newspapers suppressed in August 1942 |

## Important Definitions and Terms

| Term | Meaning |
|---|---|
| Calligraphy | The art of beautiful and stylised writing |
| Vellum | A parchment made from the skin of animals |
| Platen | Board pressed onto paper to get the print; earlier wooden, later steel |
| Compositor | The person who composes the text for printing |
| Galley | Metal frame in which types are laid and the text composed |
| Ballad | A historical account or folk tale in verse, usually sung or recited |
| Protestant Reformation | Sixteenth-century movement, led by Martin Luther, to reform the Catholic Church |
| Inquisition | A former Roman Catholic court for identifying and punishing heretics |
| Heretical | Beliefs that do not follow accepted Church teaching |
| Seditious | Speech or writing seen as opposing the government |
| Almanac | Annual publication with astronomical data, tides, eclipses and useful information |
| Chapbook | Pocket-size book sold by travelling pedlars called chapmen |
| Despotism | Absolute power exercised by an individual without legal checks |
| Ulama | Legal scholars of Islam and the sharia |
| Fatwa | A legal pronouncement on Islamic law given by a mufti |

## Short Answer Questions

Q1. Why did some people in eighteenth-century Europe think that print culture would bring enlightenment and end despotism?

They believed books spread progress and reason and could liberate society from tyranny. Print popularised the ideas of thinkers like Voltaire and Rousseau and created a public that questioned tradition. Mercier called the press ‘the most powerful engine of progress’.

Q2. Why did some people fear the effect of easily available printed books? Give one example from Europe and one from India.

They feared rebellious and irreligious ideas would spread. In Europe, the Roman Catholic Church feared books like those read by Menocchio and kept an Index of Prohibited Books. In India, the colonial government feared nationalist newspapers and passed the Vernacular Press Act, 1878.

Q3. Explain the importance of Gutenberg’s printing press.

Gutenberg’s press (1430s, perfected by 1448) used movable metal type for the 26 Roman letters and could print 250 sheets per hour. It made books cheaper and faster to produce and led to the print revolution, remaining the basic technology for 300 years.

Q4. How did oral culture enter print?

Since literacy was low, printers published illustrated ballads and folk tales that were read out, sung and recited at village gatherings and taverns. Thus oral culture entered print and print was transmitted orally, blurring the line between hearing and reading publics.

Q5. What was the Vernacular Press Act?

Passed in 1878 and modelled on the Irish Press Laws, it gave the colonial government extensive rights to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press. Papers judged seditious were warned, and their presses could be seized and machinery confiscated.

Q6. What were the effects of print culture on poor people in nineteenth-century India?

Cheap books sold at crossroads and public libraries made reading accessible. Writers like Jyotiba Phule wrote against caste injustice, and workers like Kashibaba wrote about exploitation. Libraries set up by millworkers spread literacy.

Q7. How did print help women in India?

Women’s reading increased and women began to write about their own lives. Rashsundari Debi wrote Amar Jiban, Kailashbashini Debi described women’s confinement, and Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai wrote about the miserable lives of widows. Women’s journals discussed education and widow remarriage.

Q8. How did print shape the debates on religious reform in nineteenth-century India?

Reformers and orthodox groups printed tracts and newspapers in everyday language, such as Rammohun Roy’s Sambad Kaumudi and the Samachar Chandrika. The Deoband Seminary printed fatwas, and cheap editions of religious texts reached wide audiences, encouraging debate within and between religions.

## Long Answer Questions

Q1. Explain how print culture assisted the growth of nationalism in India.

Newspapers carried news across regions and helped create pan-Indian identities.

Nationalist newspapers reported colonial misrule and encouraged nationalist activities, growing in number despite repression.

Writers such as Tilak used papers like Kesari to criticise the government; his imprisonment in 1908 led to protests across India.

Print helped reformers, women and caste critics raise social questions, creating a public that debated issues openly.

Cartoons, caricatures and swadeshi advertisements spread nationalist messages.

Government repression through the Vernacular Press Act and Defence of India Rules itself provoked protest, strengthening nationalism.

Q2. Why do some historians think that print culture created the basis for the French Revolution?

Print popularised the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Rousseau, who attacked tradition, superstition, the Church and despotism and argued for reason.

It created a new culture of dialogue and debate in which existing values and institutions were questioned and ideas of social revolution emerged.

By the 1780s, literature and cartoons mocking the royalty circulated underground and built hostility to the monarchy.

However, people also read Church and royal propaganda and interpreted ideas in their own way.

So print did not directly cause the revolution, but it opened up the possibility of thinking differently.

Q3. Describe the print revolution in Europe and its impact.

Gutenberg’s press reduced the cost and time of producing books; printing presses spread across Europe between 1450 and 1550.

About 20 million books were printed in the late fifteenth century and 200 million in the sixteenth century.

A new reading public emerged, while oral and reading cultures mixed through ballads and folk tales.

Print enabled religious debate: Luther’s Ninety Five Theses led to the Protestant Reformation, and dissenters like Menocchio reinterpreted faith.

Authorities feared print, leading to the Index of Prohibited Books in 1558.

Later, the reading mania, periodicals and Enlightenment writings changed how people thought about science, reason and society.

## MCQs with Answers

1. The earliest print technology was developed in(a) Europe (b) India (c) China, Japan and Korea (d) ArabiaAnswer: (c) China, Japan and Korea

2. The oldest Japanese book, printed in AD 868, is the(a) Tripitaka Koreana (b) Diamond Sutra (c) Jikji (d) RamcharitmanasAnswer: (b) Diamond Sutra

3. Who brought the knowledge of woodblock printing from China to Italy in 1295?(a) Gutenberg (b) Marco Polo (c) Erasmus (d) Martin LutherAnswer: (b) Marco Polo

4. The first book printed by Gutenberg was the(a) Quran (b) Bible (c) Ninety Five Theses (d) Diamond SutraAnswer: (b) Bible

5. Martin Luther wrote the Ninety Five Theses in(a) 1448 (b) 1517 (c) 1558 (d) 1780Answer: (b) 1517

6. The Index of Prohibited Books was maintained by the Roman Church from(a) 1517 (b) 1558 (c) 1600 (d) 1780Answer: (b) 1558

7. Who said ‘Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world!’?(a) Voltaire (b) Rousseau (c) Louise-Sebastien Mercier (d) Thomas PaineAnswer: (c) Louise-Sebastien Mercier

8. The printing press first came to India at(a) Calcutta (b) Bombay (c) Goa (d) MadrasAnswer: (c) Goa

9. Amar Jiban, the first full-length autobiography in Bengali, was written by(a) Kailashbashini Debi (b) Rashsundari Debi (c) Pandita Ramabai (d) Tarabai ShindeAnswer: (b) Rashsundari Debi

10. The Vernacular Press Act was passed in(a) 1835 (b) 1857 (c) 1878 (d) 1908Answer: (c) 1878

## Quick Revision Points

- Woodblock printing in China from AD 594; accordion books; state printed exam textbooks.
- Japan: printing from AD 768–770; Diamond Sutra AD 868; Utamaro’s ukiyo prints.
- Korea: Tripitaka Koreana (80,000 woodblocks), Jikji (movable metal type).
- Marco Polo brought woodblock printing to Italy in 1295.
- Gutenberg: press in 1430s, perfected 1448; Bible, 180 copies; 250 sheets per hour.
- Books in Europe: 20 million (late 15th century), 200 million (16th century).
- Hearing public became reading public; oral culture entered print.
- Luther (1517) and the Reformation; Menocchio executed; Index of Prohibited Books (1558).
- Reading mania: literacy 60–80%, chapbooks, Bibliotheque Bleue, periodicals.
- Mercier: ‘Tremble, therefore, tyrants of the world!’
- Print and French Revolution: Enlightenment ideas, debate, satire of royalty.
- Children’s press 1857; Grimm Brothers 1812; women novelists; lending libraries.
- Richard M. Hoe’s cylindrical press: 8,000 sheets per hour; offset press; paperbacks.
- India: Goa press (mid-16th century), first Tamil book 1579, Hickey’s Bengal Gazette 1780.
- Sambad Kaumudi (1821) vs Samachar Chandrika; Deoband fatwas; Ramcharitmanas printed 1810.

- Women: Rashsundari Debi, Tarabai Shinde, Pandita Ramabai; Battala in Calcutta.
- Caste and print: Phule’s Gulamgiri (1871), Ambedkar, Periyar, Kashibaba.
- Vernacular Press Act 1878; Tilak jailed 1908; 90 papers suppressed in 1942.

## Chapter Summary

Print began in East Asia with woodblock printing in China, spreading to Japan and Korea. Marco Polo brought woodblock knowledge to Europe, and Gutenberg’s movable type press in the fifteenth century started the print revolution. Print created a new reading public, fuelled religious debate and the Reformation, provoked fears of dissent, encouraged a reading mania and helped spread Enlightenment ideas that shaped the French Revolution. In the nineteenth century, children, women and workers became new readers.

In India, print arrived with Portuguese missionaries in Goa. It transformed religious debates, gave voice to women and lower castes, created new literary and visual forms, and connected Indians across regions, helping nationalism grow. The colonial government tried to control it through the Vernacular Press Act and wartime laws, but nationalist newspapers continued to grow.

## Exam Tips and PYQ Pattern

- Common long questions: how print helped nationalism in India, print and the French Revolution, and the impact of the print revolution in Europe.
- Learn the NCERT ‘give reasons’ answers on 1295, Luther, the Index of Prohibited Books and Gandhiji’s 1922 statement.
- Revise the press laws table for case-based questions on censorship.
- One-mark facts: AD 594, Diamond Sutra, 1430s, 1517, 1558, 1579, 1780, 1876, 1878.
- Write answers point-wise and include examples from both Europe and India where asked.

## Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main idea of Print Culture and the Modern World?

It traces the history of print from East Asia to Europe and India and explains how print changed reading, religion, politics and society, and helped nationalism grow.

Who invented the printing press?

Johann Gutenberg developed the first-known printing press in the 1430s at Strasbourg, Germany, and perfected it by 1448.

What was the Vernacular Press Act of 1878?

A law modelled on the Irish Press Laws that allowed the colonial government to censor vernacular newspapers and seize presses of papers judged seditious.

Is Print Culture and the Modern World in the 2026-27 syllabus?

Yes. It is Chapter 5 of the Class 10 History book in the 2026-27 syllabus. Confirm the assessment scheme with your school.

Can I download these notes as a PDF?

Yes. Use the free PDF link at the top of this page. No signup is required.

## Conclusion

Print Culture and the Modern World shows how print transformed the way people read, thought, argued and organised, from Chinese woodblocks to Gutenberg’s press and Indian nationalist newspapers. Revise the timeline, the comparison and press laws tables, and the give-reasons answers, and you will be ready for every question on this chapter.

More Notes: Class 10 History Chapter 4: The Age of Industrialisation notes | Class 10 History Chapter 4: The Age of Industrialisation notes | Class 10 History Chapter 2: Nationalism in India notes | Class 10 History Chapter 1: The Rise of Nationalism in Europe notes | All Class 10 Social Science notes

Author Bio: Written and reviewed by the Nextoper Editorial Team, a group of CBSE social science educators who build chapter notes directly from the NCERT textbook and past board paper patterns.

Freshness Note: These notes follow the NCERT Class 10 History textbook, India and the Contemporary World – II (Reprint 2026-27), and the CBSE syllabus for the 2026-27 session. Last checked on 8 November 2026.