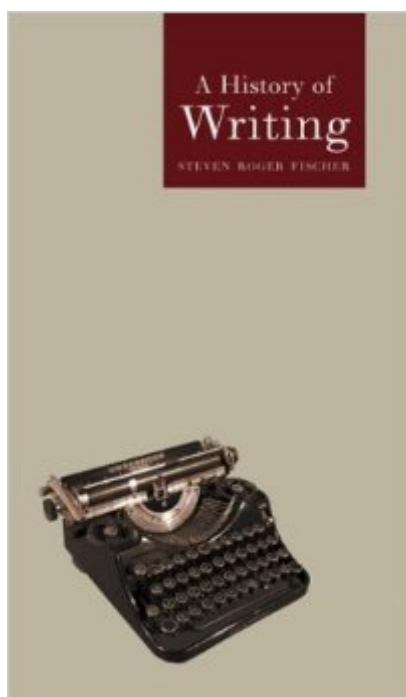


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# A History Of Writing (Reaktion Books - Globalities)



## Synopsis

From the earliest scratches on stone and bone to the languages of computers and the internet, *A History of Writing* offers a fascinating investigation into the origin and development of writing throughout the world. Commencing with the first stages of information storage, Fischer focuses on the emergence of complete writing systems in Mesopotamia in the fourth millennium BC. He documents the rise of Phoenician and its effect on the Greek alphabet, generating the many alphabetic scripts of the West. Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese writing systems are dealt with in depth, as is writing in pre-Columbian America. Also explored are Western Europe's medieval manuscripts and the history of printing, leading to the innovations in technology and spelling rules of the 19th and 20th centuries.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (5 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Remarkable for its breadth, this work presents a concise history of writing authored by a linguist well known for his work on the Rongorongo script of Easter Island (Oceania's only pre-twentieth century writing system) and with the enigmatic Linear B script of Crete. Fischer's approach is essentially to circumscribe writing systems to a geographical area and then discuss their evolution within a chronological context. The author is adroit at synthesizing and drawing parallels from disparate writing systems but the book's principal strength is in unfolding the development of scripts and exploring how graphic expressions of speech are manifested in various logographic, syllabographic,

and alphabetic writing systems. The development of Babylonian cuneiform from its ancestral pictographs, the Phoenician and Etruscan roots of modern Latin scripts, and the evolution of the Standard Arabic script from its Nabataean origins serve as examples. The book is well endowed with illustrations of scripts, alphabets, inscriptions, glyphs, typefaces, and other source material. Linguistic terms are explained thoroughly as they are being introduced however the book would have benefited from inclusion of a glossary. Engagingly written, this book will appeal to anyone interested in linguistics and the historical development of writing systems.

This falls into the category of: Things You Never Knew You Were So Interested In Before You Read This Book." A fascinating account of the development of written language from the first cuneiform scratchings right up to the present, with family trees showing how the various writing styles diverged over time, with detailed accounts of how these various writing styles agree or disagree with each other, with an impressive wealth of illustrations, and perhaps most importantly, without getting bogged down in linguistic mumbo jumbo. This is not necessarily an easy read, but it is not that difficult either. I rarely give a book a five-star (in my opinion, Mark Twain cornered that market ages ago), but this one is truly worth it.

The book follows the development of writing in the different civilizations where it was used. A very interesting subject about which I have very little exposure, so it was pretty new to me. Interestingly this author believes that writing was only invented once, and was then picked up from travelers (including the Mayans).

This is the best presentation I have encountered. If you are interested in the subject get this item.

Purchased for my husband because he likes history and has become very interested in words and their use and wants such a book at hand

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