



# Inventions of Ancient China

The Ancient Chinese created and invented many things we use today.

**Silk** is a smooth, light fabric made from the cocoons of silkworms. It was such a valuable Chinese export that the trade route between Europe and China was referred to as the Silk Road. The process of making silk was a Chinese secret for hundreds of years.

The Chinese invented **paper** in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and perfected its manufacture around 105 AD. The Chinese used paper to make money and playing cards.

Wood block **printing** was invented in AD 868. The Chinese began printing with moveable type a few hundred years later, hundreds of years before Gutenberg invented the printing press in Europe.

The Chinese invented the **magnetic compass**. Initially used in city planning, it soon became important for ship navigation and map making.

**Gunpowder** was invented in the 9th century by accident: the chemists who discovered it were trying to find the Elixir of Immortality. Engineers soon figured out how to use it to create bombs, guns, mines, and rockets. It was also instrumental in the invention of fireworks.

The Chinese invented the **rudder**, the part of the boat that makes steering it possible. The Chinese were building enormous ships as early as 200 AD, long before they were built in Europe.

**DIRECTIONS:** Research Chinese inventions. What other important items that we still used today were invented in Ancient China?

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