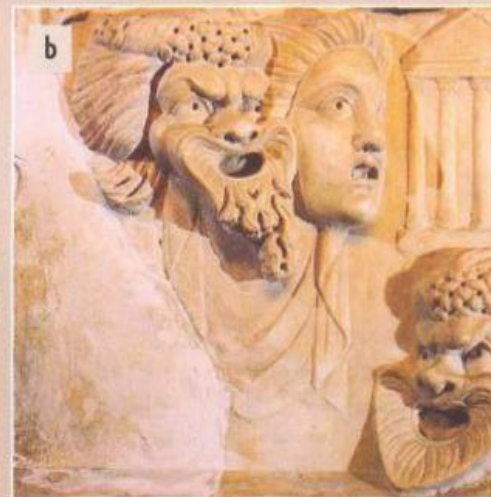


PEOPLE

the great communicators

We can communicate with other people in many different ways. We can talk and write, and we can send messages with our hands and faces. There is also the phone (including the mobile!), the fax, and e-mail. Television, film, painting, and photography can also communicate ideas.

Animals have ways of exchanging information, too. Bees dance and tell other bees where to find food. Elephants make sounds that humans can't hear. Whales sing songs. Monkeys use their faces to show anger and love. But this is nothing compared to what people can do. We have language – about 6000 languages, in fact. We can write poetry, tell jokes, make promises, explain, persuade, tell the truth, or tell lies. And we have a sense of past and future, not just present.



Communication technologies were very important in the development of all the great ancient societies:

- Around 2900 BC, paper and hieroglyphics transformed Egyptian life.
- The ancient Greeks loved the spoken word. They were very good at public speaking, drama, and philosophy.
- The Romans developed a unique system of government that depended on the Roman alphabet.
- In the 14th century, the printing press helped develop new ways of thinking across Europe.

Radio, film, and television have had a huge influence on society in the last hundred years. And now we have the Internet, which is infinite. But what is this doing to us? We can give and get a lot of information very quickly. But there is so much information that it is difficult to know what is important and what isn't. Modern media is changing our world every minute of every day.

