



Colonial Trades:  
The Printer

Printers were very important in Colonial America. To be a printer, a person needed to be able to read and write. They also needed to know how to run a printing press, in order to teach an apprentice or a pressman how to do this job.

Printers made newspapers, Bibles, pamphlets, flyers, invitations, and newsletters. They also printed poems, sermons, and advertisements.

Some tools they used were:

- **type:** single piece of metal with a letter or number used to create words
- **coffin:** part of the press that held the type
- **composing stick:** held the type as it was assembled into words or sentences
- **inking pad:** wood-handled, wool-stuffed, and leather-covered ink balls used to spread the ink evenly over the type
- **press:** machine that pressed down heavily, transferring the lettering of the type onto a page
- **stone:** large flat surface that held the work to be printed

The printers put important news down on paper so it could be shared with the people of the village. This might be news about what ships were sailing or what cargo the ships carried. People also would sometimes come to the printer's shop to read the news of the village.