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# WHAT IS IT

- **The Times** is a British daily (Monday to Saturday) national newspaper based in London, England. It began in 1785 under the title **The Daily Universal Register**, adopting its current name on 1 January 1788. *The Times* and its sister paper *The Sunday Times* (founded in 1821) are published by Times Newspapers, since 1981 a subsidiary of News UK, itself wholly owned by News Corp. *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* do not share editorial staff, were founded independently and have only had common ownership since 1967.
- In 1959, the historian of journalism Allan Nevins analysed the importance of *The Times* in shaping the views of events of London's elite:
- For much more than a century *The Times* has been an integral and important part of the political structure of Great Britain. Its news and its editorial comment have in general been carefully coordinated, and have at most times been handled with an earnest sense of responsibility. While the paper has admitted some trivia to its columns, its whole emphasis has been on important public affairs treated with an eye to the best interests of Britain. To guide this treatment, the editors have for long periods been in close touch with 10 Downing Street.
- *The Times* is the first newspaper to have borne that name, lending it to numerous other papers around the world, such as *The Times of India* and *The New York Times*. In countries where these other titles are popular, the newspaper is often referred to as **The London Times** or **The Times of London**, although the newspaper is of national scope and distribution.
- *The Times* is the originator of the widely used Times Roman typeface, originally developed by Stanley Morison of *The Times* in collaboration with the Monotype Corporation for its legibility in low-tech printing. In November 2006 *The Times* began printing headlines in a new font, Times Modern. *The Times* was printed in broadsheet format for 219 years, but switched to compact size in 2004 in an attempt to appeal more to younger readers and commuters using public transport. *The Sunday Times* remains a broadsheet.
- *The Times* had an average daily circulation of 446,164 in December 2016; in the same period, *The Sunday Times* had an average daily circulation of 792,210. An American edition of *The Times* has been published since 6 June 2006. It has been heavily used by scholars and researchers because of its widespread availability in libraries and its detailed index. A complete historical file of the digitised paper, up to 2010, is online from Gale Cengage Learning.<sup>1</sup>

# WHEN DID IT START

- *The Times* was founded by publisher John Walter on 1 January 1785 as *The Daily Universal Register*, with Walter in the role of editor. Walter had lost his job by the end of 1784 after the insurance company where he was working went bankrupt because of the complaints of a Jamaican hurricane. Being unemployed, Walter decided to set a new business up. It was in that time when Henry Johnson invented the logography, a new typography that was faster and more precise (three years later, it was proved that it was not as efficient as had been said). Walter bought the logography's patent and to use it, he decided to open a printing house, where he would daily produce an advertising sheet. The first publication of the newspaper *The Daily Universal Register in Great Britain* was 1 January 1785. Unhappy because people always omitted the word *Universal*, Ellias changed the title after 940 editions on 1 January 1788 to *The Times*. In 1803, Walter handed ownership and editorship to his son of the same name. Walter Sr had spent sixteen months in Newgate Prison for libel printed in *The Times*, but his pioneering efforts to obtain Continental news, especially from France, helped build the paper's reputation among policy makers and financiers.
- *The Times* used contributions from significant figures in the fields of politics, science, literature, and the arts to build its reputation. For much of its early life, the profits of *The Times* were very large and the competition minimal, so it could pay far better than its rivals for information or writers. Beginning in 1814, the paper was printed on the new steam-driven cylinder press developed by Friedrich Koenig. In 1815, *The Times* had a circulation of 5,000.
- Thomas Barnes was appointed general editor in 1817. In the same year, the paper's printer James Lawson, died and passed the business onto his son John Joseph Lawson (1802–1852). Under the editorship of Barnes and his successor in 1841, John Thadeus Delane, the influence of *The Times* rose to great heights, especially in politics and amongst the City of London. Peter Fraser and Edward Sterling were two noted journalists, and gained for *The Times* the pompous/satirical nickname 'The Thunderer' (from "We thundered out the other day an article on social and political reform."). The increased circulation and influence of the paper was based in part to its early adoption of the steam-driven rotary printing press. Distribution via steam trains to rapidly growing concentrations of urban populations helped ensure the profitability of the paper and its growing influence.
- *The Times* was the first newspaper to send war correspondents to cover particular conflicts. W. H. Russell, the paper's correspondent with the army in the Crimean War, was immensely influential with his dispatches back to England.
- A wounded British officer reading *The Times's* report of the end of the Crimean War, in John Everett Millais' painting *Peace Concluded*.
- In other events of the nineteenth century, *The Times* opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws until the number of demonstrations convinced the editorial board otherwise, and only reluctantly supported aid to victims of the Irish Potato Famine. It enthusiastically supported the Great Reform Bill of 1832, which reduced corruption and increased the electorate from 400,000 people to 800,000 people (still a small minority of the population). During the American Civil War, *The Times* represented the view of the wealthy classes, favouring the secessionists, but it was not a supporter of slavery.
- The third John Walter, the founder's grandson, succeeded his father in 1847. The paper continued as more or less independent, but from the 1850s *The Times* was beginning to suffer from the rise in competition from the penny press, notably *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Morning Post*.
- During the 19th century, it was not infrequent for the Foreign Office to approach *The Times* and ask for continental intelligence, which was often superior to that conveyed by official sources





