

## Topic Page: [Brick](#)

Definition: **brick** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Hardened block of clay used for building and paving. Usually rectangular, bricks are made in standard sizes by machines that either mould bricks or cut off extruded sections of stiff clay. They are baked at temperatures of up to 1300°C (2372°F). The first (sun-dried) bricks were used in the Tigris-Euphrates basin c.5000 years ago.



Image from: [The Dickinson House in Alloway, an example of... in Encyclopedia of New Jersey](#)

Summary Article: **brick**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

ceramic structural material that, in modern times, is made by pressing clay into blocks and firing them to the requisite hardness in a kiln. Bricks in their most primitive form were not fired but were hardened by being dried in the sun. Sun-dried bricks were utilized for many centuries and are used even today in regions with the proper climate. Examples from approximately 5,000 years ago have been discovered in the Tigris-Euphrates basin, and the ancient races occupying this region may have been the first users of brick. In Babylonia there was a lack of both timber and stone, and the thick clay deposited by the overflowing rivers was the only material adaptable to building. The Persians and the Assyrians used sun-dried blocks of clay for walls of great thickness, facing them with a protective coating of fired bricks. The Egyptians and the Greeks used bricks only to a limited extent, as they had access to plentiful supplies of stone and marble. The Romans manufactured fired bricks in enormous quantities and gave them an important role as a basic structural material in buildings throughout the Roman Empire. Bricks played an important part in early Christian architecture until the decline of the empire. Whereas the Romans had usually concealed their brickwork beneath a decorative facing of stone or marble, the Byzantines devised a technique for exposing the bricks and giving them a full decorative expression. This technique influenced the Romanesque style and brought especially good results in Lombardy and in Germany, where bricks came to be arranged in immensely varied patterns. Since the Middle Ages, brickwork has been in constant use everywhere, adapting itself to every sort of construction and to every change of architectural style. At the beginning of the 19th cent. mechanical brick-making processes began to be patented and by the latter half of the century had almost entirely replaced the ancient hand-fashioning methods. Contemporary American building bricks are rectangular blocks with the standard dimensions of about 2 1/4 by 3 3/4 by 8 in. (5.7 by 9.5 by 20.3 cm). Good bricks are resistant to atmospheric action and high temperatures and are more durable than stone. Where heat resistance is especially important, fire bricks are used; these are made of special refractory clays called fire clays and are fired at very high temperatures.

**APA**

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

brick. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/brick>

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

"brick." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, Columbia University Press, 8th edition, 2018. *Credo Reference*, <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/brick>. Accessed 12 Nov. 2019.