
Inspiration: The invention of printing

In this activity sheet students will:

- see text and images from a very early printed book as well as one of the first books printed in English
- learn about the history of printing, reflecting on the evolution of printing and its social impact
- hypothesise on future trends in printing.

Answers to question time

1. Johannes Gutenberg
2. Modern printing began in Asia – China, Japan and Korea c1000AD.
3. Printed books were made more quickly and cheaply, with the help of a machine to reduce labour costs. Therefore books were more readily available, and more people learnt to read and write.

Activity 2 – Imagine

Hold a class discussion. Students could discuss the excitement and frustration of printing (as if they are illiterate and unable to access the new technology). Possibilities for the future: could include teaching children to read, getting a job which requires an ability to read and write, encounter new ideas, have the ability to learn much more about the world.

Activity 3 – Printing in the future

1. Open discussion point on future of books.
2. Open discussion on future of print or the screen as a medium.
3. Some environmental concerns with current printing are the destruction of forests for paper tree plantations as well pollutants from paper production.

Sources consulted

Harris, Brayton, 1972, Johann Gutenberg and the Invention of Printing, Watts, New York.

Lienhard, John H, 1997, Inventing Printing, University of Houston website.
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<http://www.mediahistory.umn.edu/timeline>