

Johann Gutenberg

c.1397–1468



WHY HE MADE HISTORY Johann Gutenberg invented a form of printing that remains in use with only a few changes today.



As you read the biography below, think about how Johann Gutenberg's inventiveness helped him create a new method of printing that continued until modern times.

Johann Gutenberg was a German metal craftsman and inventor. Gutenberg was born in Mainz, Germany, into a **patrician** family. Gutenberg's family was wealthy enough that he could pursue things that interested him. As a young man, Gutenberg received training as a goldsmith. He also developed skills in metalworking and gem cutting. Gutenberg also taught crafts to many students.

Gutenberg was forced to leave Mainz because of problems between the patricians and the **guilds**. He moved to Strassburg where he continued to practice his crafts and to teach. Eventually Gutenberg was able to move back to Mainz.

Using his metalworking skills, Gutenberg began working on a secret invention. He finally completed it sometime in the 1450s. The invention was a new printing method using movable metal type, special inks, and other changes. Gutenberg's invention had elements that had never been used in the printing process. In fact, Gutenberg's method was so advanced that it continues to be used with few changes today.



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VOCABULARY

patrician person from a noble or leading family

guild association of craftsmen or merchants

Gutenberg's new printing method made it possible to reproduce religious works without losing their color and design. In fact, Gutenberg is known for printing several religious works using his new method.

The most important was the *Gutenberg Bible*, also known as the *Forty-two-Line Bible* or *Mazarin Bible*. The *Gutenberg Bible* was the first complete book printed in the West. It is also the first major work printed with metal movable type. Originally about 180 copies of the Bible were printed. Only about 47 copies still exist.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Identify What was Johann Gutenberg's invention?

2. Evaluate Why was Gutenberg's invention important for religious writings?

ACTIVITY

3. Johann Gutenberg was interested in reproducing religious writings. If you were a printer, what kind of writing or material would you like to print? Explain your choice.

Vocabulary Builder

Section 1

1. F; Leonardo da Vinci
2. T
3. T
4. F; Michelangelo
5. T
6. F; Humanism
7. T

Vocabulary Builder

Section 2

1. Christian humanism
2. Johann Gutenberg
3. William Shakespeare
4. Petrarch
5. Desiderius Erasmus
6. Miguel de Cervantes
7. Albrecht Dürer

Vocabulary Builder

Section 3

1. a reform movement against the Roman Catholic Church; attempt to end corruption and focus on religion
2. those who protested against the Roman Catholic Church; those who followed Martin Luther were called Lutherans
3. a religious order; created to serve the pope and the church
4. the sharing of power between local governments; a strong central government

1. F; John Calvin
2. T
3. F; Martin Luther

Biography

Jeanne d'Albret

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Possible answer: Jeanne d'Albret declared herself to be a Calvinist. She was a Protestant.
2. Possible answer: Jeanne d'Albret was a brave person because even though Protestants were being persecuted, she openly declared that she was a Calvinist. She gave protection to Protestants who were being persecuted.
3. Possible answer: Jeanne d'Albret raised her son under strict Protestant standards and took him to receive military training. During a short treaty, her son granted the Protestant minority the freedom to practice their religion in certain areas of the country.

Biography

Johann Gutenberg

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Johann Gutenberg's invention was a new printing method.
2. Possible answer: The new printing method made possible the mechanical reproduction of religious writings without losing their qualities of color and design.

Biography

Miguel de Cervantes

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Miguel de Cervantes' most famous work was *Don Quixote*.
2. Possible answer: Cervantes led a colorful and adventurous life. His experiences may have served as subjects for his writing such as his capture by pirates. He had disappointments in life such as financial ruin and imprisonment. This may have caused him to become disillusioned with society and want to write a satire about it.