

# Gutenberg: The History and Impact of the Printing Press

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2006680004/>

## Overview/Prior Knowledge

This lesson provides an overview of the printing press and the history and change over time of printing prior to the Renaissance. This lesson also introduces the importance of the printing press in impacting the Reformation and Scientific Revolution. It is assumed that the students have been introduced to the concept of the Renaissance.

## Objectives

- The students will examine various ways of printing over time using the “History of Printing” Google Expedition.
- The students will identify how the Gutenberg Press was different from hand carved and woodblock printing.
- The students will explain the impact of the efficiency of the Gutenberg Press on reproducing books and manuscripts on knowledge dissemination and distribution.
- TSW analyze a primary source using an existing analytical tool (e.g., Library of Congress ORQ, See-Think-Wonder, SOAPS, Visual Discovery, etc.).

## Time Required

~2-3 50-minute class periods

## Recommended Grade Range

6-8

## Subject/Sub-Subject

Social Studies

## Standards

### ***Social Studies***

7.9 Investigate the impact of the Renaissance and the Reformation on Europe. (Strands: Civics, Civil Rights, Geography, History, Economics)

7.9.2 Identify key figures of the Renaissance throughout Europe to include their accomplishments in the arts, music, literature, and architecture

### ***English Language Arts***

RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

## Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills

- Identify details when observing a primary source(s)
- Ask questions related to observations and the topic of a primary source
- Connect new knowledge from primary sources to other learning experiences

## Highlighted Strategies

- See Think Wonder, *Making Thinking Visible*
- Explanation Game, *Making Thinking Visible*

## Credits

Nicole C. Miller, Mississippi State University

## Materials

- Primary Sources – See Resource Guide at the end of this document.
- Internet Access/Devices for Students including access to Google Expeditions
  - May want a router to create a private network to conduct the Expedition. It is possible that a school WIFI network does not work well using Expeditions.
- Google Expeditions Markers - 1 per group: Best not to laminate these  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xOXChdSM5tSxZLkBLnci3QZRTLO1-uDe/view>
- ReadWorks.org article: *Johannes Gutenberg and the Printing Press* –  
<https://www.readworks.org/article/The-Reformation/13ef3a85-175a-4ae1-8179-7e822a9a2d4d#!articleTab:content/contentSection:81cdeb27-d303-45cf-81f7-4f3ad91208b6/>

## Procedures

### Introduction

- To introduce this lesson - Conduct a See-Think-Wonder with this source:  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2006680149/>
  - Provide the students with a copy of the image and the See, Think, Wonder handout. (Note: See strategy information in supplementary resources)
  - Guide the students through conducting the See, Think, Wonder activity.
    - Have students identify what they see, what they think about what they see or what inferences they can make from it, and what questions they may have.
      - If needed prompt students with the following questions: (From the Library of Congress analyzing photographs and prints analysis guide)
        - See: Describe what you see. • What do you notice first?  
• What people and objects are shown? • How are they arranged? • What is the physical setting?
        - Think: What’s happening in the image? • When do you think it was made? What can you learn from examining this image? • If someone made this today, what would be different? • What would be the same?
        - Wonder: What do you wonder about... who? • what? • when? • where? • why? • how?
- Share with the students that books and manuscripts had to be hand copied which limited who could afford to own books. This meant that information could not be easily shared.
- Transition to ask students:
  - How do we distribute information today? How do we get access to information?
    - What types of resources can we choose from? (e.g. books, newspapers, pamphlets, Internet, apps, etc.)
  - How do you think this was different before we had the Internet and television?
    - Was it faster or slower to get new information?
  - How do you think this is different than before books/manuscripts could be made?

### During

- Share with the students that they will learn more about the history of printing.
- Distribute the History of Printing handout and iPads.
- Groups of students will be led on the Google Expeditions History of Printing AR tour going through the first three scenes: You need a device and a Google AR “marker” for each group.
- In groups have the students examine each of the 3 methods of printing (the first 3 scenes – Hand Carved, Woodblock printing, Gutenberg Press). Have one student record the information on the student handout (See end of lesson plan).
  - Before sharing information about each type of printing – prompt with questions such as: (This is based on the Explanation Game strategy from *Making Thinking Visible*)
    - What do you notice?

- What could it be?
- What is the artifact like?
- How do you think it works?
- Where do you think it came from?
- What makes you say that? (this can be asked at various points in the questioning)
- Share the brief information about each scene after questioning. Have the recorder in the group take notes on the handout. Have the students as a group identify possible challenges or limitations to that type of printing method and then how it was an improvement upon the previous type (once you explore the 2<sup>nd</sup> scene).
- You may want to share this 30 second video of a real Gutenberg Press so students can see how it operates (given that the AR is an animation): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXfV8sg5A-c>
- Pass out the full-page copies of the Gutenberg Bible from the Library of Congress (handouts at the end – or use one such as this: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/gutenberg-bible>).
- Have the students complete the See Think Wonder about this document doing an initial analysis. Guide them through questions such as these:
  - What do you notice? (What is similar and different between these two images?)
  - What could it be?
  - What role or function might it serve? (Why are they different?)
  - What is the artifact like? (How are they similar and different?)
  - Where do you think it came from?
  - How do you think it was created? (Here you want to get at the printing press – but that the illumination was done by hand after the books were printed. This embellishment was still valued. This type of ornamentation wasn't really replicable in terms of speed and efficiency for several hundred years (late 1800s).)
  - What makes you say that? (Can be asked in response to any student questions.)
- Have students read the following article.
  - ReadWorks.org: *Johannes Gutenberg and the Printing Press* – <https://www.readworks.org/article/The-Reformation/13ef3a85-175a-4ae1-8179-7e822a9a2d4d#!articleTab:content/contentSection:81cdeb27-d303-45cf-81f7-4f3ad91208b6/>
  - Or show this ~3-minute video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kOmdSlpCm4>
  - Suggested to ask:
    - How were manuscripts copied in western Europe prior to the Gutenberg Press?
    - How did the printing press work? (moveable type)
    - What was the benefit of this printing press over the previous method?
    - What was the impact of this invention on western Europe?

## After

- Close the lesson to summarize the following:
  - Gutenberg's "invention" of the moveable type printing press in Western Europe had a significant impact on how manuscripts/books were duplicated. By increasing the efficiency of this process, it changed the access of people to knowledge that was previously held by an even smaller minority of the population. Through the dissemination of this knowledge, including the Bible itself, this invention played a significant role in the Renaissance, Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution.
  - Link to how the Internet has changed the world like the printing press did. We now have instant access to knowledge in an unparalleled way.
- Have the students create a "town crier" announcement heralding the invention and its importance.

## Assessment

- Student responses to questions and exploration of each of the printing methods.
- Student completion of the matrix on the types of printing from the AR Expedition.
- Student completion of the See-Think-Wonder about the Gutenberg Bible. Examine the quality of the inferences and the questions asked.
- Student completion of the "town crier" announcement summarizing the importance of the Gutenberg Press.

## Differentiation

- The Explanation Game thinking routine allows all students to participate in naming or identifying what they see, but allows more advanced students (and all students) to generate hypotheses about what it is that they see in the image.
- The Read Works article could be read through a screen reader for struggling readers (though the reading is on a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level to keep it accessible to most students).

## Supplementary Materials

### Woodblock Printing

- The Invention of Woodblock Printing in the Tang (618-906) and Song (960-1279) Dynasties  
<https://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/background-information/invention-woodblock-printing-tang-618%E2%80%9393906-and-song-960%E2%80%931279>

### Gutenberg Printing Press and Bible

- How the Printing Press Works – (~7 min.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLctAw4JZXE>
- Bible: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/gutenberg-bible>
- Gutenberg Bible – Library of Congress Interactive Presentation:  
<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/bibles/interactives/gutenberg/index.html>

### Printing Press in History – Connecting to the U.S. History

- "Franklin" Common Press: Can tie to U.S. History – he and P Revere were printers and this played a significant role in the American Revolution  
[https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah\\_882271](https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_882271)



## Strategies

- See, Think, Wonder – strategy  
[http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking\\_html\\_files/03\\_ThinkingRoutines/03c\\_Core\\_routines/SeeThinkWonder/SeeThinkWonder\\_Routine.html](http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03c_Core_routines/SeeThinkWonder/SeeThinkWonder_Routine.html)
- Explanation Game – strategy  
[http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking\\_html\\_files/03\\_ThinkingRoutines/03d\\_UnderstandingRoutines/ExplanationGame/ExplanationGame\\_Routine.html](http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03d_UnderstandingRoutines/ExplanationGame/ExplanationGame_Routine.html)

## Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

**Title:** Gutenberg: The History and Impact of the Printing Press

**Historical Background:**

Gutenberg's "invention" of the moveable type printing press in Western Europe had a significant impact on how manuscripts/books were duplicated. By increasing the efficiency of this process, it changed the access of people to knowledge that was previously held by an even smaller minority of the population. Through the dissemination of this knowledge, including the Bible itself, this invention played a significant role in the Renaissance, Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution.

**Source 1:**



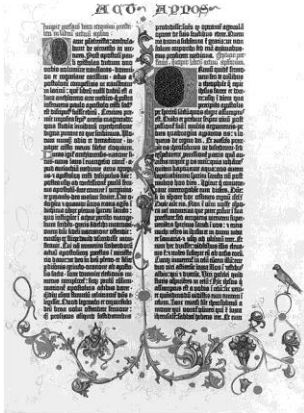
Title: [Medieval scribe Jean Miélot, sitting at a desk, making a copy of another book]

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006680149/>

Purpose: This image allows students to see how books/manuscripts were duplicated in Western Europe before the Gutbenberg Press.



**Source 2:**



Title: An illuminated page of the...Gutenberg Bible...

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006680004/>

Purpose: This image is used to show another view of an illuminated page of the Gutenberg bible rather than the digital form provided by the Google Expedition. It also allows for the discussion of the fact that the illumination was still done by hand as an artistic addition.

**Source 3:**

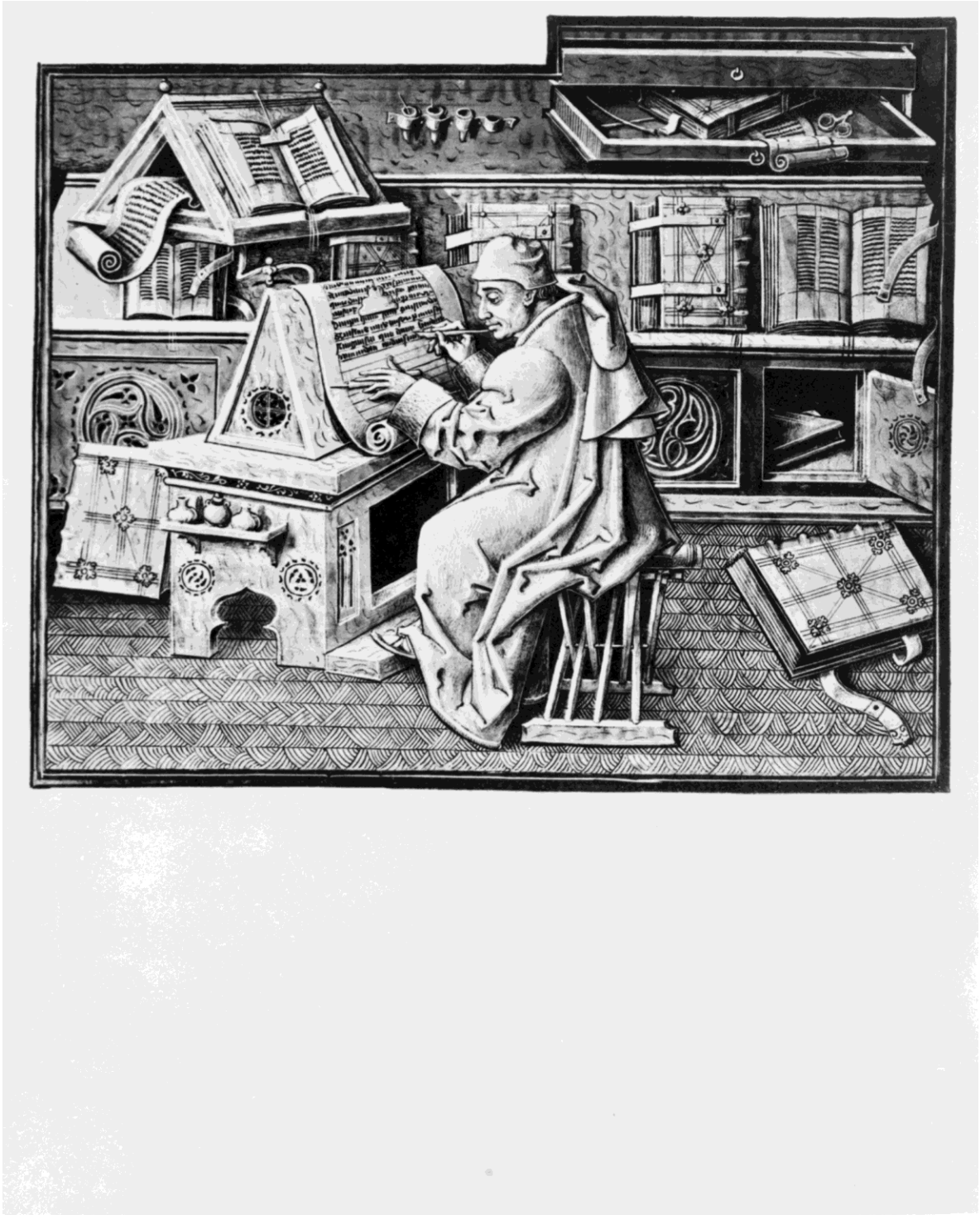


Title: [Gutenberg Bible opened to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke]

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006681099/>

Purpose: This image is used to show how the Bible was printed using the press, prior to the hand drawn illuminations that were sometimes commissioned.





PORTRAIT OF JEAN MIELOT.

*(Paris, Bibl. Nat. 9198 Fonds Fr.)*

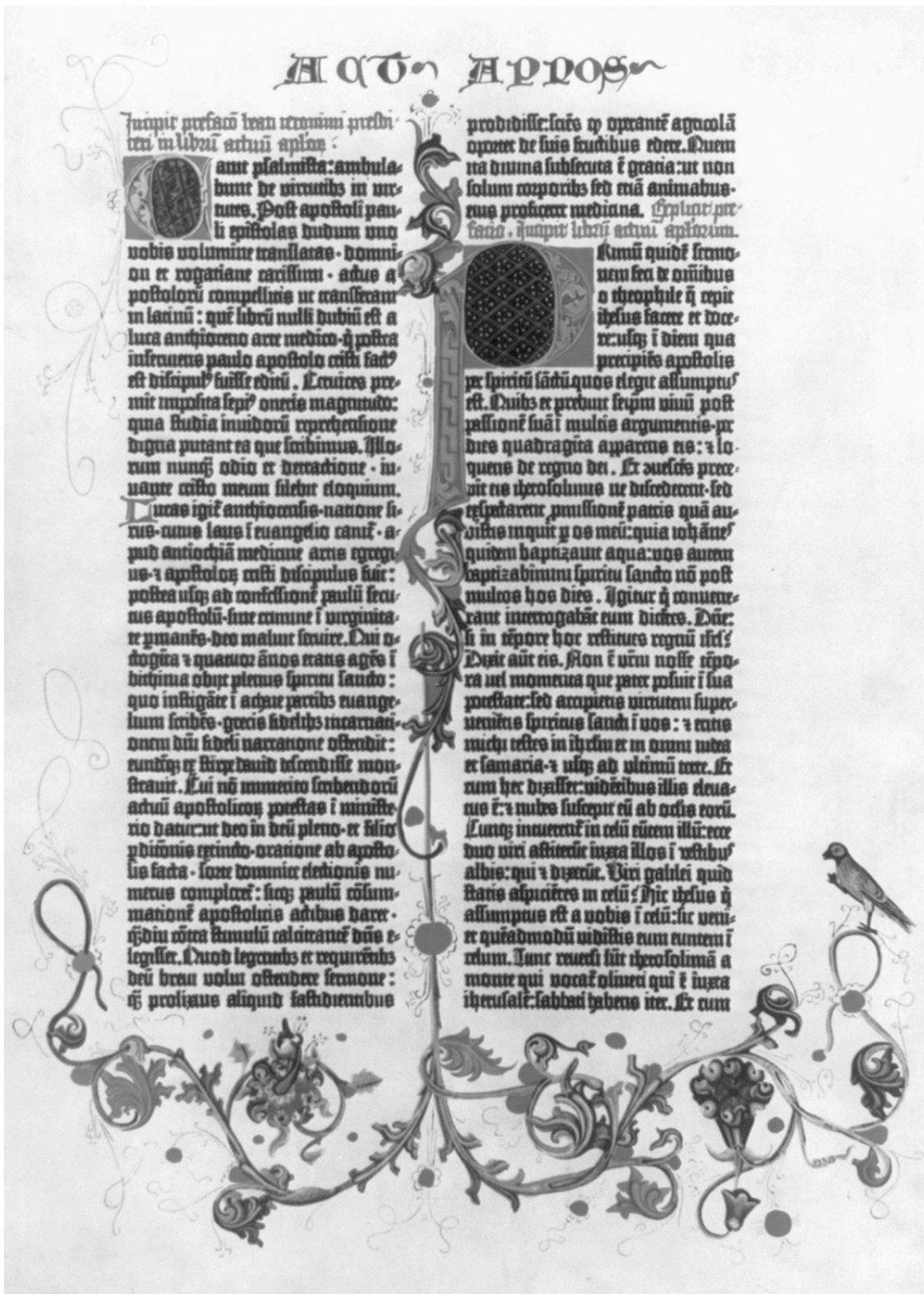
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

**TEACHING** WITH **PRIMARY SOURCES**

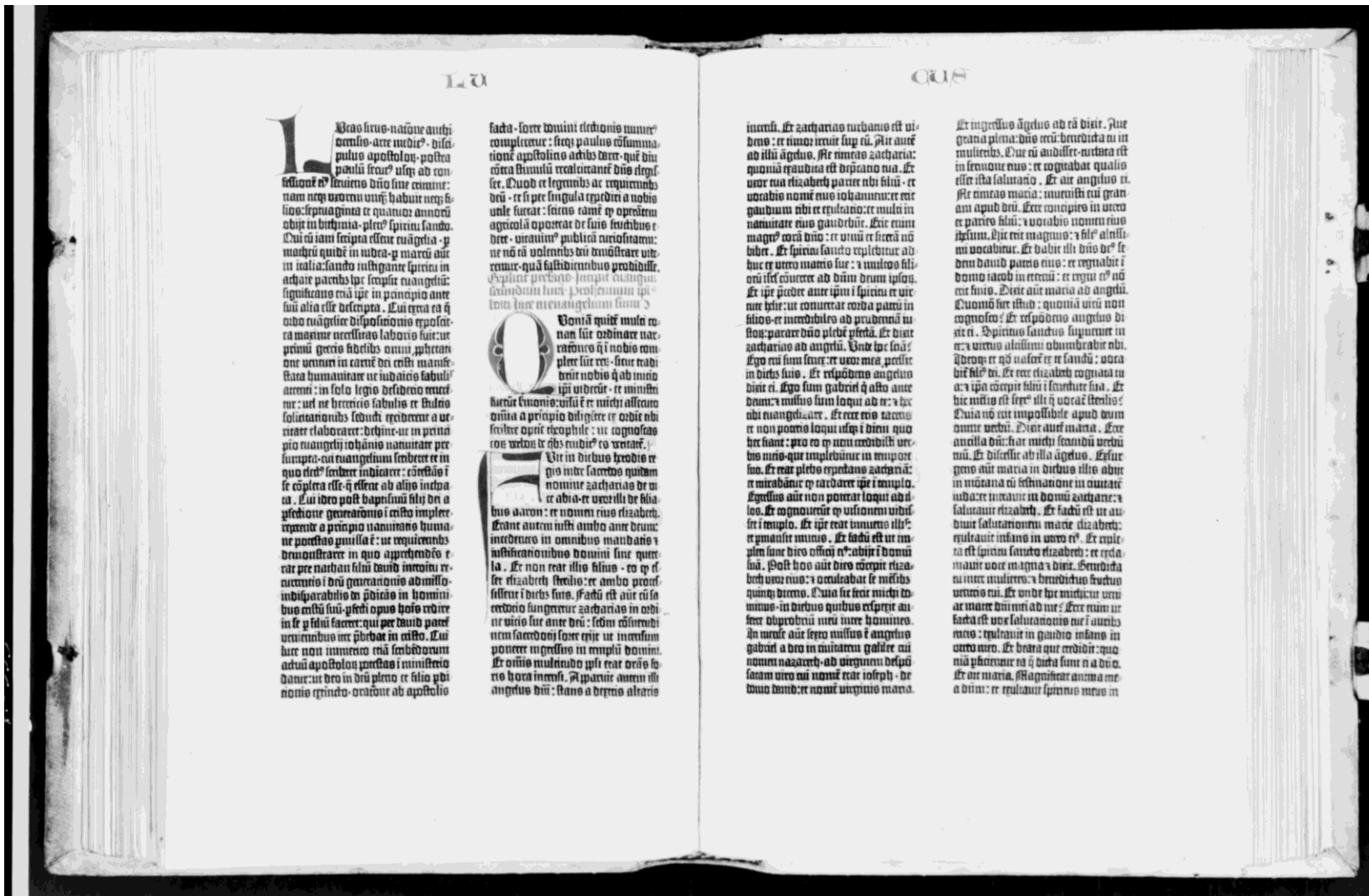
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**L**ucas seruo natione aucti-  
centis ante iudeis. bina-  
pulus apostolorum postea  
pauli factus usque ad con-  
suetudinem dno sine comite:  
nam neque uocatum unquam habuit neque fi-  
lios: septuaginta et quatuor annorum  
obijt in bethania plebs spiritus sancti.  
Cuius iam scriptura esset euangelia. y  
mostru quide in iudea. y marcu aut  
in italia: sancto iustigante spiritu in  
achate patris ipse scripte euangelii:  
significans eam ipse in principio ante  
sua alia esse descripta. Cuius etiam q  
ordo euangelii dispositionis respicit  
maxime necessarios laboris sui: ut  
primus grecis fidelibus omni pphetan-  
tior uenerit in carnis dei ceteri manife-  
stata humanitate ut iudaeis fabulis  
acerent: in solo legio desiderio reuer-  
tor: ut ne hereticis fabulis et falsis  
solimanianis seducti reciderent a ue-  
ritate laborarent: deinde ut in prin-  
cipio euangelij iohannis nominare pre-  
sumpt: ut euangelium scriberet et in  
quo dicitur scriberet indicaret: ceteris  
se copla esse q essent ab alijs incho-  
ta. Cuius ideo post baptismum filij dei a  
pfectione generatio in cetero imple-  
tente a principio uanumano huma-  
ne personae pmissa e: ut requirerent  
demonstraret in quo apprehensio e-  
rat pre natum filii dei in uero re-  
uerentio in dno generationis ad mis-  
sionem arabibus in p dicio in homini-  
bus mlti sui. p dicit opus huius redire  
in se y filij faceret: qui pre dno pater  
ueritatis uer p dicit in mltis. Cui  
huc non numeris sua scribendum  
actum apostolorum p dicit in ministerio  
datur: ut deo in dno p dicit et filio phi-  
lomonis p dicit. oratione ab apostolo

fada. forte domini electionis numer  
completeret: scilicet paulus consumma-  
tionem apostolorum actus dicit: qui dicit  
cetera humiliter recalcitrant dno elegit  
ser. Quod et legimus ac requirerent  
dno. et si pre singula ep dicit a nobis  
unde fuerat: factus tamen q op dicitur  
agricola oporere de suis fructibus e-  
dret. uirumque publici ueritatem:  
ne no ra uolentis dei temeritate uir-  
tutum: quia factiducibus prohiberet.  
Explorat p dicit. Inquit dicitur  
secundum lucam. p dicitur ipse  
tam huc euangelium suum d

**Q**uonia quide mltis co-  
nan sui ordinare nar-  
rationes q i nobis com-  
pletur sui res: sicut radi-  
dent nobis q ab inicio  
ipij uideat. et in mltis  
suerit uimonia: uis e et mlti aliter  
omnia a principio dicitur et uideat  
scribere opit sic op dicit: ut cognosce-  
ros ueritas et sibi uideat. ro ueritat.

**V**ir in dicitur huius re-  
gis in dicitur factus quidem  
nominis zacharias de ui-  
re abia: et ueritatis de sibi  
bus aaron: et nomen eius zachab:  
erat autem iusti ambo ante deum  
in dicitur in omnibus manibus y  
iustificationibus domini sine que-  
la. Et non erat illis filius: eo q f  
fr zachabre dicitur: et ambo pater  
sister in dicitur suis. factus est autem in sa-  
centio fungente zacharias in ordi-  
ne uisus sui ante deum: sedm ceteri  
uicem sacerdotum fore epie ut memorem  
poneret in p dicitur in templo domini.  
Et omnia multum ipse erat dno fo-  
ro hoc in mltis. A paruit autem illi  
angelus dno: tunc a deum altaris

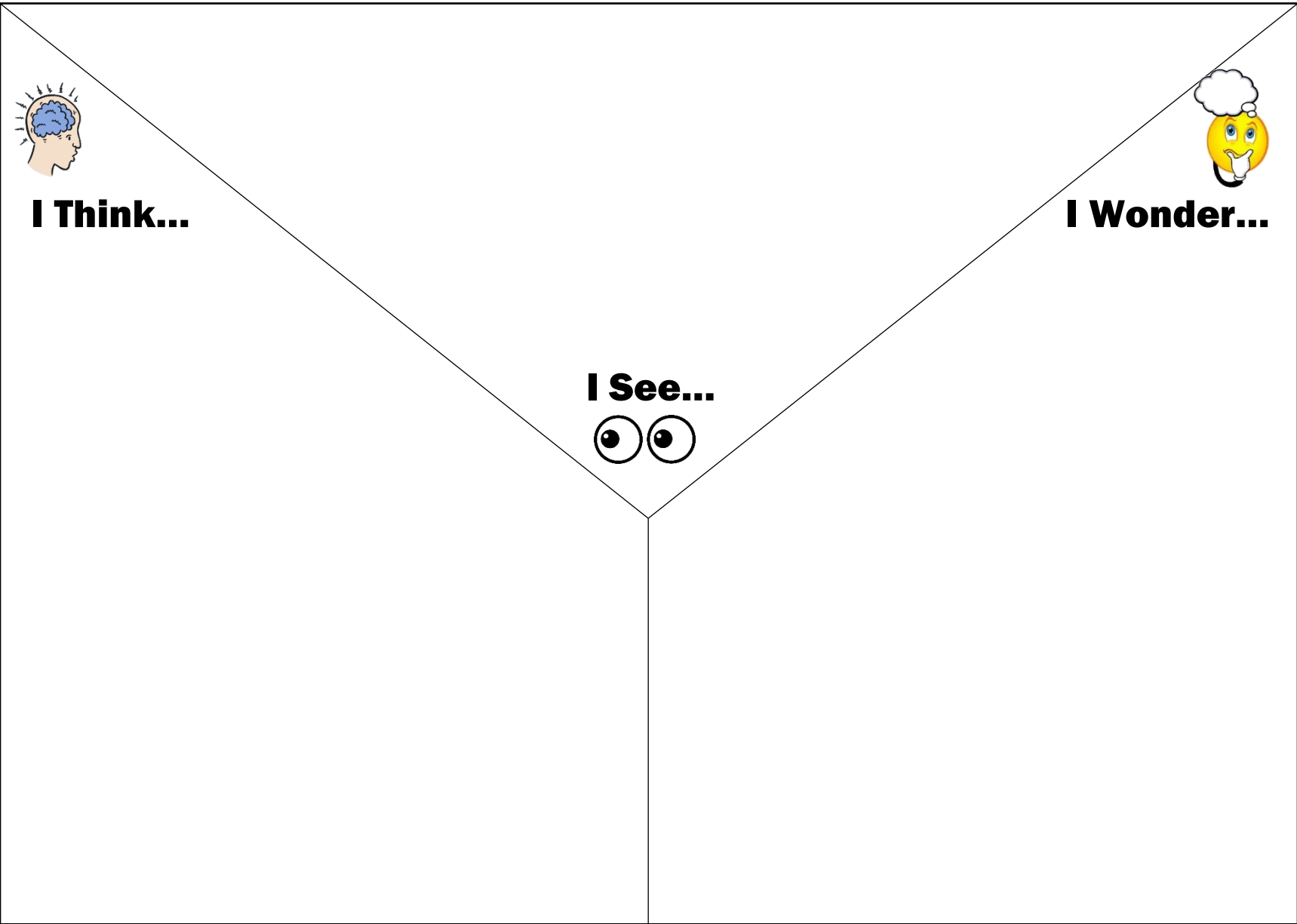
in mltis. Et zacharias uerbis est ui-  
dno: et nomen ueritatis sui. Et aut  
ad illi angelus. Et nomen zacharia:  
quonia reuerentia est dno suo. Et  
uor sua zachabre pater nbi filij. et  
uocabio nomen eius iohannem: et mlti  
gaudium nbi et reuerentia: et mlti in  
nominare suo gaudent. Et tunc  
magnus coram dno: et ueritatis nomen  
habet. Et spiritus sanctus replebitur ad  
huc et uero nomen sui: et multos filio-  
rum istel dicitur ad dno dicitur ipse.  
Et ipse pater ante ipse i spiritus et uer-  
tatis huius: ut conuertat corba patris in  
filiis: et in dicitur ad p dicitur in  
suis: parat dno plebs p dicit. Et dicit  
zacharias ad angelum. Unde ipse factus  
Ego sui sum serui: et uor mea. p dicit  
in dicitur suis. Et respondens angelus  
dicit ei. Ego sum gabriel q alto ante  
dno: multo sum loqui ad te: et hoc  
nbi euangelizare. Et ecce ego ueritas  
et non potero loqui usque in dno quo  
habet sunt: pro eo q non creditur uer-  
bis meis: que implebitur in tempore  
suo. Et erat p dicitur zacharias:  
et micabatur q r dicitur ipse i templo.  
Et dno aut non poterat loqui ad il-  
los. Et cognouit q uisionem uideat  
fr i templo. Et ipse erat ueritas illi:  
et p dicitur in mltis. Et factus est ut im-  
plem sunt dno officij ei: abijt i domi-  
na. Post hoc aut dno cepit zachab:  
uor suo: et uocabatur se mltis  
quinq dno. Quia fr factus mlti to-  
muis: in dicitur quibus respicit au-  
ster obprobria ueritatis hominis.  
In ueritatis aut seruo nullus e angelus  
gabriel a deo in mltis p dicitur  
sancti uero nomen erat ioseph: de  
uero dno: et nomen ueritatis maria.

**E**t ingressus angelus ad ra dicit. Que  
gratia plena dno ueritatis: benedicta tu in  
mulieribus. Cur tu audierit: ueritas est  
in seruo tuo: et cognouit qualis  
esset ista saluatio. Et ait angelus ei.  
Et nomen tua: mltis tui gran-  
tam apud deum. Et concepit in uero  
et pater filij: et uocabio nomen eius  
ihsum. Hic tui magnus: et filij alim-  
ni uocabitur. Et dabit illi dno de se  
dno dno pater eius: et regnabit i  
domo iacob in eternum: et regni ei non  
erit finis. Dicit aut maria ad angelum.  
Quomodo fiet istud: quonia ueritatis non  
cognosco? Et respondens angelus di-  
xit ei. Spiritus sanctus superuenit in  
te: et ueritas altissimi obumbrabit tui.  
Ideo: et q nomen est et factus: uoca-  
bitur filij dei. Et ecce zachabre cognata tu  
a: ipse cepit filij i factus sua. Et  
hic mltis est serui illi q uocatur dno.  
Quia non est impossibile apud deum  
omne ueritas. Dicit aut maria. Et  
ancilla dno: factus michi factus ueritas  
nui. Et dicitur ab illa angelus. Et ser-  
uato aut maria in dicitur illis abijt  
in ueritas tu factus in dno: et  
uocabatur zachabre: et factus est ut au-  
ditur saluatio tua marie zachabre:  
repleuit infans in uero ei. Et reple-  
to est spiritus sanctus zachabre: et reple-  
to ueritatis magna: et dicit. Benedicta  
tu inter mulieres: et benedictus fructus  
uero tuo. Et ueritatis huius mltis ueritatis  
a matre dno ueritatis me: et tunc ueritatis  
factus est ueritatis saluatio tua i ueritatis  
natio: et ueritatis in gaudio infans in  
uero tuo. Et dicitur que dno: quonia  
p dicitur tu q dno sunt in a dno.  
Et ait maria. Et agnoscit anima me-  
a dno: et repleuit spiritus meo in

## History of Printing

Google Expeditions (AR)

	Notes/Describe	Challenges/Limitations	How It was an improvement on the previous method
Hand Carved			
Woodblock Printing			
Gutenberg Printing Press			



**I Think...**

**I Wonder...**

**I See...**



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