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
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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 2nd 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 5th 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%26c2%80%93906-and-song-960%26c2%80%931279

Gutenberg Printing Press and Bible
- Bible: https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/gutenberg-bible

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
Strategies
- See, Think, Wonder – strategy
  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
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 Guttenberg 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.
# History of Printing

Google Expeditions (AR)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes/Describe</th>
<th>Challenges/Limitations</th>
<th>How It was an improvement on the previous method</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Hand Carved</td>
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