

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Johannes Gutenberg

Johannes Gutenberg was born around 1398, though the exact date is unknown and died in 1468. He was born in the city of Mainz in Germany and when he became of age, he started learning the trade of goldsmith. Though not much is known about his earlier life, it is known that he and his family moved to Strasbourg. In 1438, he started beginning some experiments in printing. Around 1450, Gutenberg returned to Mainz where he asked to borrow money from Johann Fust, who was a merchant and money lender. Gutenberg supposedly borrowed the money from Fust so that he could set up his printing workshop.

At the time, books were either copied manually by hand or printing was based on the use of individually carved wooden blocks. The oldest example of block printing is the "*Diamond Sutra*," which is a Buddhist Scripture dating back to around 868 AD. In China, around 1045, Bi Sheng invented the use of movable type in printing. However, it is not likely that Gutenberg knew of the techniques developed in China.

Starting 1450, Gutenberg began improving on the printing techniques. In developing these new techniques, he relied on the technology used by the winemakers. Gutenberg is generally credited to have been the first person to have invented movable type printing. He discarded carved wooden blocks so that he could use individual letters made of wood, then metal. This means that instead of using the wooden carved blocks, he used parts that were usually letters or characters or punctuation marks that one can move and shift in order to copy or recreate what is written in a document. He is also known to have invented an oil based ink and to have made his movable type parts from a metal alloy that is still used till this day.

During that time, most books, especially the Bible or other religious books were copied by hand in monasteries. This took a very long time and was not very efficient. The Gutenberg press made it possible to produce a few hundred copies a year. Though not many people knew how to read and sheets had to be fed manually, this resulted in there not being many pages printed per day.

Between 1450 and 1455, Gutenberg printed a few books. Though definitely not his first book, but the most famous of his books ever printed and considered his greatest work is the Bible. It is commonly referred to as the Gutenberg Bible, the Mazarin Bible, or the 42-Line Bible. It is called the 42-Line Bible, as there were 42 lines printed on each page. The printing of the Gutenberg Bible started the "Age of the Printed Book," also known as the "Gutenberg Revolution." For around 500 years after Gutenberg's invention, no major changes or improvements in printing techniques were made.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Johannes Gutenberg (Cont'd)**

This revolution not only changed how books were printed, but made the entire process more efficient. Instead of taking a year to hand copy a book, it spread the teachings of the Bible. In addition, it allowed people to have greater access to books, and also helped in increasing the rate of literacy. Literacy is the ability to read and write. Moreover, the arts, the sciences, and religion also advanced due to the spread and circulation of written texts in these areas.

The first book of Gutenberg and the books produced between then and the year 1500 are referred to as the incunabula. The Vatican Library currently owns a third of the surviving texts.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Johannes Gutenberg Questions

### Multiple Choice:

1. The Gutenberg Bible is also referred to as:

- a. King James Bible
- b. First Bible
- c. 42-Line Bible
- d. All of the above

2. Johannes Gutenberg also invented:

- a. Paper
- b. Oil-based ink
- c. Wine making machinery
- d. All of the above

### Fill In:

3. At the time, books were either copied manually by hand or printing was based on the use of individually carved \_\_\_\_\_ blocks.

4. Gutenberg is generally credited to have been the first person to have invented \_\_\_\_\_ type printing.

5. The oldest example of block printing is the \_\_\_\_\_, which a Buddhist Scripture dating back to around 868 AD.

6. The printing of the Gutenberg Bible started the “Age of the Printed Book,” also known as the \_\_\_\_\_.

### True or False:

\_\_\_ 6. The Gutenberg Bible was the first book Gutenberg printed.

\_\_\_ 7. The improvements in the printing techniques did not affect the arts, the sciences, and religion, as there was no advancement or progress made.

\_\_\_ 8. 200 years after Gutenberg’s invention, many major changes and improvements in printing techniques were made

\_\_\_ 9. Instead of using the wooden carved blocks, he used parts that were usually letters or characters or punctuation marks that one can move and shift in order to copy or recreate what is written in a document

## Johannes Gutenberg Answers

### Multiple Choice:

1. The Gutenberg Bible is also referred to as:

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### Fill In:

3. At the time, books were either copied manually by hand or printing was based on the use of individually carved \_\_wooden\_\_ blocks.

4. Gutenberg is generally credited to have been the first person to have invented \_\_movable\_\_ type printing.

5. The oldest example of block printing is the \_\_*Diamond Sutra*\_\_, which a Buddhist Scripture dating back to around 868 AD.

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