

UNIT 1

Who Is the
Most Important
Person from
History?



Who Is the Most Important Person from History?

1 What person from history has the greatest **effect** on our lives today? Recently, a group of many different experts decided it was a man named Johann Gutenberg. Gutenberg is famous for inventing printing, but he didn't really invent it. He invented a better way of printing.

2 For hundreds of years people used blocks of wood to print. They used a knife to cut words in the block of wood. They made the words **backward**. Then they covered the block with ink and **pressed** it onto paper. When they pulled the paper from the inky blocks, the words appeared on the paper in the right direction. In Korea and China, people printed with metal stamps instead of wood. Either way, printing was difficult and very slow. People usually wrote books **by hand**, so it took several years to make one copy of a book.

3 Books were very expensive and **rare**. Only rich people could buy them, and only rich people could read. As more people learned to read, books became more popular. People around the world wanted to find a quicker, better, and less expensive way to print books. One of these people was Johann Gutenberg.

4 Gutenberg was born in Mainz, Germany, around 1400. We do not know the exact year. He was an intelligent man, and he was good at working with metal. Gutenberg probably **had no idea** how people printed in China. His idea was to make a metal stamp for each letter of the alphabet and use the letters **over and over**. He could put the stamps together to make words and **arrange** the words to make pages. With ink on the stamps, he could press paper on them to make a page. A "printing press" machine could make hundreds of copies of a single page quickly. After that page, he could rearrange the same letters to make other words and print other pages.

5 It took Gutenberg many years to make the stamps for each letter of the alphabet. When he finished the stamps, he didn't have enough money to make the printing press. He **borrowed** money from a man named Johann Fust. They became business **partners**. After many years, Gutenberg's printing press was ready. Gutenberg printed his first book, the Bible, around 1455.

6 Johann Fust was a good businessman. He understood the importance of Gutenberg's invention. He took Gutenberg to court because Gutenberg still owed him money. Gutenberg had no money, so Fust took his printing press and started his own business. He printed and sold more Bibles and kept all the money. Gutenberg was sad and broke. He died in 1468, a poor man.

7 Today people remember Johann Gutenberg. The city of Mainz has a statue of him and a museum. His original printing press is in the museum. They print several pages a day to show that it is still in good condition. There are only forty-eight copies of the original Bible. It is the most expensive book in the world. In 1987, a Gutenberg Bible sold in New York for \$5.3 million.

VOCABULARY



MEANING

Write the correct words in the blanks.

backward	rare	broke	pressed	effect
partners	statue	borrowed	arranged	

1. Gutenberg _____ money from Johann Fust and said he would give it back later.
2. There were few books before the printing press. Books were _____.
3. Gutenberg _____ words to make pages, then printed the pages.
4. Gutenberg's invention was very important. It has a big _____ on our lives today.
5. People cut words _____ into blocks of wood so that the printed words would be in the right direction.
6. Gutenberg and Fust worked together and became _____ in business.
7. Before Gutenberg's printing press, people _____ blocks of wood on paper to print a page.

8. Later in his life, Gutenberg had no money and was _____.
9. The people of Mainz, Germany, wanted to remember Gutenberg, so they put a _____ of him there.



WORDS THAT GO TOGETHER

Write the correct words in the blanks.

by hand had no idea over and over took ... to court

1. The Chinese also printed on paper, but Gutenberg _____ of this. He didn't know about it.
2. They used the metal stamps not just one time, but _____.
3. Before the printing press, people copied books _____.
4. Fust wanted his money back from Gutenberg. He needed help from a judge and a lawyer. He _____ Gutenberg _____.

COMPREHENSION



UNDERSTANDING THE READING

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Before Gutenberg's printing press, _____.
 - a. there were other kinds of printing
 - b. it was easy to print books by hand
 - c. Europeans printed with metal stamps
 - d. people only wrote books by hand

2. Gutenberg _____.
 - a. had the idea for a printing press
 - b. knew about printing in China
 - c. had the idea for printing
 - d. was good at working with paper
3. Today people think of Gutenberg as _____.
 - a. a statue in Mainz, Germany
 - b. a great inventor
 - c. a great seller of Bibles
 - d. sad and broke



REMEMBERING DETAILS

Reread the passage and answer the questions.

1. Where was Gutenberg born?
2. What was he good at?
3. Who did he borrow money from?
4. When did Gutenberg print his first book?
5. Where is Gutenberg's printing press?
6. How much did a Gutenberg Bible sell for recently?