

The Printing Press & Spread of Ideas

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will simulate the impact of the printing press by creating and using a simple stamp to reproduce text/images.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- a foam sheet, eraser, or halved potato
- a plastic knife or carving tool (adult supervision if using a potato)
- ink pad or paint
- paper

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

1. Carve a simple letter, word, or small symbol into a foam sheet, eraser, or the flat side of a halved potato to create a reusable stamp.
2. Press your stamp onto an ink pad or dab it with paint, then stamp it onto paper. Try to reproduce the same stamped image 5 times in a row as quickly and consistently as you can.
3. Time how long it took to make all 5 copies, then imagine hand-copying the same message 5 times by writing it out completely by hand, and estimate how much longer that would take.
4. On the same paper, write a 2-3 sentence caption explaining how this stamping process is similar to how Gutenberg's printing press worked.

QUESTIONS

1. How long did it take you to stamp 5 copies, versus your estimate for hand-copying 5 times?
 2. How is your stamp similar to Gutenberg's printing press with movable type?
 3. Why did the printing press dramatically increase the spread of ideas during the Renaissance?
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4. Name one specific historical event that was influenced by the printing press's ability to spread ideas quickly.
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