

Mini-Q™s in World History  
Volume 2, Unit 11

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# Exploration or Reformation: Which Was the More Important Consequence of the Printing Press?

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## MINI-Q™ LESSON PLAN

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### DAY 1 – 45 minutes

**Step One: Hook** Refer to the Step One teacher notes in the Mini-Q. Read the directions aloud. The purpose is to get students engaged, talking, and wanting to do the Mini-Q.

**Step Two: Background Essay** Refer to the Step Two teacher notes in the Mini-Q. Students can write out answers to the BGE questions or the questions can simply be discussed.

**Step Three: Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing** The task of recognizing and defining key words in the question is a crucial habit of mind. The second task of pre-bucketing based on clues in the question and in document titles is a huge categorization skill.

**Step Four: Document Analysis** Do Document A with the whole class, modeling the kind of detail you expect in student answers to the Document Analysis questions.  
Homework: Analyze the remaining documents and answer the questions that follow.

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### DAY 2 – 45 minutes

**Step Four (continued): Discussion of Documents**

*Option One:* Working in pairs or threesomes, have students discuss the answers to the first set of Document Analysis questions they did for homework. Using a different-colored pen than they used for homework, they may add to their answers. After five minutes, open the discussion of that document to the full class. Then proceed to the next document and repeat.

*Option Two:* Proceed as above, but have a volunteer group lead each of the three or four different document discussions. Students at their desks may add to their notes, again in a different pen.

**Step Five: Bucketing and Chicken Foot** Have students complete the bucketing and chicken foot work page. This step will help students clarify their thesis and road map.

**Step Six: From Thesis to Essay Writing** (For homework) Have students fill out the Outline Guide Sheet or write their multi-paragraph essay.

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### DAY 3 (Optional)

**Step Six (continued):** Conduct an in-class Writing Workshop.

## MINI-Q™ LESSON PLAN: CLEAN VERSION OPTION

If students are ready, use the Clean Version of the Mini-Q, which requires them to handle more of the analysis on their own. Estimated time to complete is 1-2 class periods.

## TEACHER DOCUMENT LIST (EV)

There are five documents in this Mini-Q. Students are provided with a document list, but it is not divided into analytical categories or buckets. Students may develop buckets that are different from these.

### Context

Document A: The Spread of Printing (map)

### Reformation

Document B: The Spread of Protestantism

Document C: Religions in Europe (map)

### Exploration

Document D: Columbus's Letter (text and map)

Document E: Printing and Mapmaking

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# Exploration or Reformation: Which Was the More Important Consequence of the Printing Press?

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**Overview:** There are historians who believe that the printing press ranks among the most revolutionary new technologies in the history of humankind. Like the invention of the alphabet two thousand years before, and the computer 500 years after, the printing press changed the way and the speed with which we share ideas with one another. As much as any invention in human history, the printing press changed our lives.

## The Documents:

- Document A: The Spread of Printing (map)
- Document B: The Spread of Protestantism
- Document C: Religions in Europe (map)
- Document D: Columbus' Letter (text and map)
- Document E: Printing and Mapmaking

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A Mini Document Based Question (Mini-Q)

## Step One: The Hook

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**Teacher Note:** The purpose of this hook exercise is get students engaged, to get them talking with one other, and to do a thinking exercise that will warm them up for the printing press Mini-Q.

After students complete their prioritization, project a copy of the ranking sheet on the wall. Ask a volunteer to share his or her top three picks and check them off on the projection. What reasons do they have for their number one pick; their number two pick? Invite other number one choices from the class, always asking students to give at least one reason (argument) for their choice.

**Here are some sample reasons for number-one picks:**

**Sign language:** The jump from no communication to some communication is the most important breakthrough one can make. Sign language can enable one to find water, find food, indicate danger. It can greatly increase the chance of survival. All the other breakthroughs are just frosting on the cake. They are nice but not essential to staying alive.

**Spoken language:** This was really the beginning of the sharing of complex ideas. Sign language is helpful but very limited. Spoken language opened the door to shades of meaning and therefore more sophisticated ideas. It was the difference between signing “BIG BEAR THAT WAY” and “Aba saw a giant brown bear yesterday at dawn about 300 paces northwest of the bubbling spring. It has two cubs that it is protecting, so be careful.” Most people have gotten along without knowing how to write for thousands of years. But speaking would have been key to building communities that lived and worked together.

**Cell phone:** Sign language and spoken language brought individuals together. The cell phone brought the world together. Now a farmer in his field in Tanzania can talk, without the need for landlines, to his brother who is a taxi driver in New York City. The cell phone has made the world a smaller, cozier place and gives us a new chance to learn how to get along (even if it drives my grandpa nuts in the process).

Thank students for their participation. They will now be turning to a Mini-Q about judging the consequences of the printing press.

## Hook Exercise: Ranking Historical Importance

**Directions:** The history of communications is dotted with milestones – developments and discoveries that greatly advanced human ability to exchange feelings and ideas. Below are twelve communications milestones. From these create a “top ten” list placing a “1” in front of the most important breakthrough, a “2” in front of the second most important breakthrough, etc. In the space to the right, explain the reasons for your first two or three choices. Be ready to discuss your rankings.

**Note:** c = circa = about/around

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RANK	MILESTONE	REASON FOR RANK
_____	Sign language (c. 2,000,000 BCE)	
_____	Spoken language (c. 25,000 BCE)	
_____	Picture drawing (c. 20,000 BCE)	
_____	Picture writing (c. 6,000 BCE)	
_____	Hieroglyphics (pictures plus letters) (3,100 BCE)	
_____	Alphabetic writing (c. 1,500 BCE)	
_____	Paper (c. 105 CE)	
_____	Printing press (c. 1450 CE)	
_____	Typewriter (c. 1870 CE)	
_____	Telephone (c. 1875 CE)	
_____	Personal computer (c. 1984)	
_____	Cell phone (1990s CE)	

## Step Two: Establishing the Context

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### General Instructions

- Pre-teach the bold-faced vocabulary.
- Have students read the Background Essay or read it aloud.
- Have students answer the Background Essay questions.

### Specific Considerations

The main purpose of the Background Essay is to create a context for the Mini-Q exercise. Its job is to provide a sense of time, place, and story, and to introduce important vocabulary and concepts. Doing this well gives all students a more equal chance to succeed with the Mini-Q.

**Time:** It is an interesting thought that the history of verbal communication is a relatively recent development. Man signed for two million years; he has only spoken for about one one-hundredth of that time. He has only written with an alphabet for about one one-thousandth of that time. Seen against this two-million year backdrop, Gutenberg is a new kid on the block. Point out that Gutenberg was alive 600 years ago (1398 – 1468) and preceded Columbus by a generation or two.

**Place:** Gutenberg was born in Mainz, Germany, lived much of the next 50 years in Strassburg, and then moved back to Mainz in the late 1440s. Mainz is located on the Rhine River near Frankfurt and today is a city of about 200,000 people.

**Story:** We suggest reading the Background Essay aloud. It is good for students, even strong readers, to hear the words as they see them. For many, it is important to hear the cadence of the language, to experience pauses and emphasis. Use the Background Essay questions to review the text.

We don't have room in this little essay to discuss typesetting, but here is a snapshot to share. As a goldsmith in Mainz, Gutenberg developed the necessary skill to carve intricate letters out of metal. Once enough letters had been created, it was simply a matter of moving the letters around and arranging them to form all the words and sentences on a page. This process was called typesetting. Once a page had been typeset, a person called a composer would clamp together all of the typeset letters into a nearly solid form and place them on a lower level of the printing press. The type would be inked and paper placed on top. The flat upper plate of the press would be screwed down on top of the inked paper. To this day engineers marvel at how Gutenberg was able to create a uniform impression that was not too inky or uneven. In fact, some historians argue that one of Gutenberg's greatest breakthroughs was his development of a new kind of ink that wouldn't smear or smudge and that allowed for a clean imprint. Once a page had been typeset, inked and readied for press, a printer could make thousands of identical copies, then move on to the next page. A printer using Gutenberg's processes could produce thousands of books in the time it took a scribe to finish one copy.

**Vocabulary and Concepts:** You may want to pre-teach the seven bold-faced terms in the essay. Our feeling about vocabulary is that some pre-teaching is good, but keep the word list short. When reading aloud, see how much students can get from context.

## Exploration or Reformation: Which Was the More Important Consequence of the Printing Press?

At the end of the **millenium**, in late 1999, Arts and Entertainment Television identified 100 of the most influential people in the last 1,000 years of world history. It then asked a panel of experts to select the most influential person of these. From a list that included William Shakespeare, Isaac Newton, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein, the experts picked Johannes Gutenberg. Many viewers were surprised, even shocked. Some weren't sure who Gutenberg was.

What Johannes Gutenberg did in the 1450s was to invent the first practical printing press.

His invention came as a milestone event in the evolution of human communication. For probably a million years or more, early mankind had depended on sign language for communicating. Then, about 25,000 years ago, man learned to speak. The first picture writing dates from 8,000 years ago and the first evidence of an alphabet comes from Phoenicia around 1500 BCE.

The amazing thing about the alphabet is that every sound that we can imagine can be shown by some combination of a handful of letters. Unlike the ancient written languages of the Egyptians or Chinese, the alphabet represents sounds, not ideas. The Chinese written language has more than 50,000 different characters; our modern alphabet has 26 letters.

While the alphabet was easy to learn and put down on **papyrus** or eventually paper, it did not make written communication fast or cheap. **Scrolls** and then bound books were developed, but both had to be written by hand. During the Middle Ages, monks wrote manuscript books with pen and ink in a copying room known as a **scriptorium**. Even a small book could take months to complete. A book the size of the Bible could take several years. By the 1400s mass production scriptoriums did exist, with over 50

scribes writing away as a single reader dictated a text. But it was slow and the books that were created, while often beautiful, could only be afforded by the rich.

At this same time, Gutenberg, a goldsmith in Mainz, Germany, began his work on a mechanical printing system. Gutenberg was a businessman and he saw the future. The **Renaissance** was underway with a surge of ideas breathing new life into painting, architecture, old classical literature, theater, and much more. If only books could be created faster. The idea wasn't



new. The Chinese introduced **woodblock printing** in 600 CE. They even experimented with movable wooden type, but with 50,000 characters, carving each character was impossible. Gutenberg saw his chance. Why not metal letters that wouldn't wear out, set in a frame that could be inked, papered, and pressed? Copies could be printed by the hundreds, or even thousands.

In 1455 Gutenberg printed 180 Bibles, each of them over 1800 pages long. There are only 21 of these **Gutenberg Bibles** left, some worth over \$30 million. By 1500 more than 20 million printed books were in existence. By 1600 more than 200 million books had come off the presses. The impact of all this is hard to overestimate.

Two areas that were clearly affected by the printing press were overseas exploration and the Protestant Reformation. The first involved doubling the size of the known world. The second involved dividing the Christian church into several pieces. Your task in this Mini-Q is first to look at documents that reveal the role played by the printing press in these two movements. Then address the question – *Exploration or Reformation: Which was the more important consequence of the printing press?*

## Step Two: Establishing the Context (continued)

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### Answers to Background Essay Questions

1. Who did Arts and Entertainment Television select as the most influential person of the millenium?  
Johannes Gutenberg

2. What communication breakthroughs are connected with each of these dates?

25,000 BCE First verbal communication; human speech

6,000 BCE First picture writing

1,500 BCE First alphabet (in Phoencia)

600 CE First woodblock printing in China

c. 1,450 CE Gutenberg's printing press

3. Why is typesetting with alphabet letters easier than setting type with Chinese characters?  
There are only 26 letters in the Western alphabet. There are about 50,000 Chinese characters.

4. What effect did the printing press have on the number of books produced and their selling price?  
The number of books greatly increased and the price per book greatly decreased.

5. What is the approximate value of a Gutenberg Bible today?  
About \$30,000,000

6. Define these terms:

millennium: a one-thousand year period

scroll: a roll of parchment, papyrus or paper used for writing a document

papyrus: an ancient paper made from the papyrus plant

scriptorium: a room, usually in a monastery, used for writing or copying manuscripts

Renaissance: a period beginning in the 14th century in Italy which experienced the revival of art, literature, and general learning

woodblock printing: making inked prints from a carved block of wood

Gutenberg Bible: refers to one of the 180 Bibles first printed by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany in 1455



## Background Essay Questions

1. Who did Arts and Entertainment Television select as the most influential person of the millenium?
2. What communication breakthroughs are connected with each of these dates?
  - 25,000 BCE
  - 6,000 BCE (8,000 years ago)
  - 1,500 BCE
  - 600 CE
  - 1,450 CE
3. Why is setting type using alphabet letters easier than setting type using Chinese characters?
4. What effect did the printing press have on the number of books produced and their selling price?
5. What is the approximate value of a Gutenberg Bible today?
6. Define these terms:
  - millennium
  - scrolls
  - papyrus
  - scriptorium
  - Renaissance
  - woodblock printing
  - Gutenberg Bible

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**1040 CE** – Chinese experiment with moveable type.

**c.1300** – Uighurs of central Asia develop moveable type. Word does not reach Europe.

**1455** – Gutenberg uses moveable type to print first Bibles.

**1465** – First printing press in Italy

**1474** – First printed book in English

**1492** – Columbus lands in the West Indies.

**1543** – Catholic Church decrees no book may be printed without its permission.

## Step Three: Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

### Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?

Exploration or Reformation: Which Was the More Important Consequence of the Printing Press?

2. What terms in the question need to be defined?

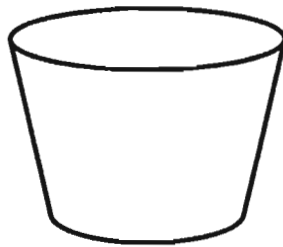
No term requires defining.

3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

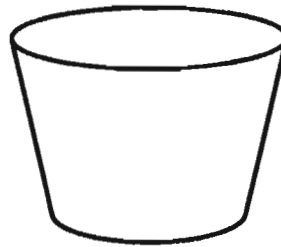
Although exploration and The Reformation were both influenced by the printing press, which of the two was the more significant consequence?

### Pre-Bucketing

**Teacher Note:** We suggest a very simple two-bucket format at the pre-bucketing stage.



Exploration



Protestant Reformation

## Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

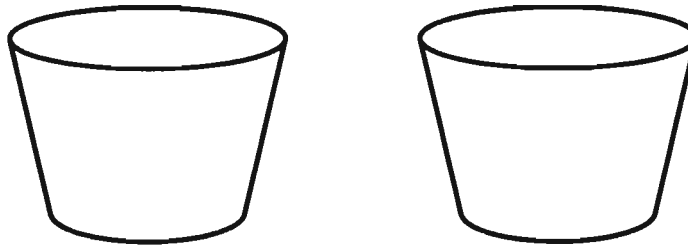
### Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?
2. What terms in the question need to be defined?
3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

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### Pre-Bucketing

**Directions:** Using clues from the Mini-Q question, suggest possible labels for the buckets.



## Step Four: Document Analysis

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### Document A: The Spread of Printing

#### Content Notes:

- Despite some initial resistance, printing spread throughout Europe with incredible speed. The map shows the growth of the establishment of printing presses in all the major countries of Europe.
- By 1500 historians estimate that European presses had produced 20 million books and about 30,000 different titles.
- It is interesting to note that printing took over two decades to reach England. William Caxton was the first man to print books in the English language. He chose to go beyond religious and classical texts to print English poets and works like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Many of these works became known to later writers like William Shakespeare. Thus, Caxton was one of the most significant agents in establishing English as a respectable literary language.
- England was the only nation that from the beginning printed a vast majority of books in the vernacular (English). In 1500, on the continent, about three-quarters of all printed matter was in Latin. The other fourth was primarily in Italian and German. However, with the boost from Luther and the Reformation, vernacular editions became much more popular and even expected. As demand grew for vernacular editions, printers responded.
- For nearly 400 years, the spread of the press in Europe stopped when it hit the Muslim world. Why did Muslims not embrace the press? The answer lies in a combination of factors. Foremost is the idea that, for Muslims, the Qur'an is literally the word of God, even more so than the Bible is for Christians. It was written only as a way to aid memory and oral transmission. Printing threatened this entire tradition. Muslim rulers finally embraced the printing press in the 19th century as a way to combat the success of text-laden missionaries of the Christian and Hindu faiths.

#### Teaching Tips:

- Discuss the Document Analysis questions:
  1. How many printing presses were in Europe in 1471?  
15 presses
  2. About how many printing presses were in Europe in 1500?  
About 200
  3. What inference can you make about change in the price of books in Europe between 1471 and 1500? Explain your thinking.  
The price would likely have gone down. The reason is that the cost of production would have been lower than handwritten copies. Also, the supply was greater, which tends to drive down price.
  4. What inference can you make about change in literacy in Europe between 1471 and 1500? Explain your thinking.  
Literacy rates could be expected to rise. With cheaper books available, people had reason to learn to read. Also, with more writers and poets and scientists able to publish their work, quality books would increase and there would be even more reason to learn to read.
  5. What inference can you make about changes in people's interest in geography? Explain.  
Interest in geography would increase as people were exposed to printed accounts of exotic foreign lands.
  6. What inference can you make about changes in the power of the Pope? Explain.  
One might expect the power of the Pope to lessen as competing new ideas challenged old Church truths.

## Document A

Sources: Maps created from various sources.

### Document Analysis

1. How many printing presses were in Europe in 1471?

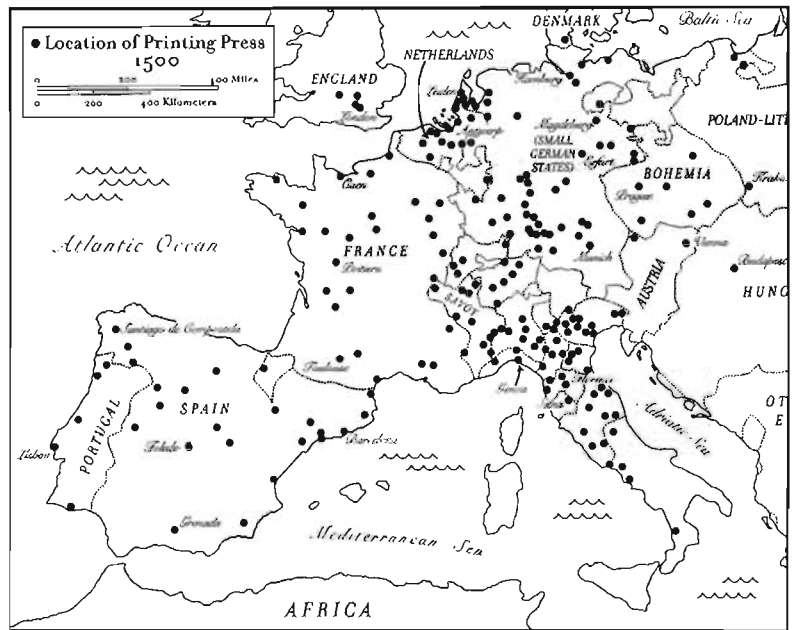
2. About how many printing presses were in Europe in 1500?

3. What inference can you make about change in the price of books in Europe between 1471 and 1500? Explain your thinking.

4. What inference can you make about change in literacy in Europe between 1471 and 1500? Explain your thinking.

5. What inference can you make about changes in people's interest in geography? Explain.

6. What inference can you make about changes in the power of the Pope? Explain.



## Step Four: Document Analysis (continued)

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### Document B: The Spread of Protestantism

#### Content Notes:

- Several things are important to note about Luther as students examine the documents. Luther initially had no intentions of starting a revolution that would reshape all of Europe. His original aim was to challenge the growing practice of selling indulgences. Yet, when Luther's protest was rebuffed by the Catholic Church hierarchy, he soon began to challenge the entire foundation of Catholic teaching. By 1520, Luther had published letters arguing that priests should be able to marry (as he did), that the Bible should be translated from Latin so average people could read it, and that the Pope ultimately had no real authority over matters as important as salvation.
- In 1520, Luther published his Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, where he called upon the ruling class in Germany, including the emperor, to reform the church externally by returning it to roots based in poverty and simplicity. The Reformation was now officially in motion and demanding continent-wide interest at the highest levels.
- There is debate among historians about whether the printing press was one of the primary causes of the Protestant Reformation. Some suggest that the ideas that fueled the break with Rome would have spread, just more slowly. But most Reformation historians would probably agree with John Man's words. Most would also agree with Margaret Aston, who wrote that the printing press "provided the stroke of magic by which an obscure theologian in Wittenberg managed to shake Saint Peter's throne."

#### Teaching Tips:

- Discuss the terms "protest" and "Protestant" with the class. 1517 is commonly accepted as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, the reform movement triggered by the protests of Martin Luther that sought to change the Catholic Church. The movement led to the creation of a new major branch of Christianity called Protestantism. Protestantism in its many different forms (Lutheranism, Anglicanism, Presbyterianism, Baptist, et. al.) vigorously continues to this day.
- Discuss the Document Analysis questions:
  1. Who was Martin Luther?  
Luther was a Catholic priest from Germany.
  2. What was Martin Luther's main objection with the Catholic Church? Explain in some detail.  
Luther was most angry at the sale of indulgences by the Catholic Church. Indulgences were cash payments that people made to the Church in exchange for a letter promising that they would have their sins excused and could avoid going to purgatory. Purgatory was a place where the souls of dead folks went while they cleansed themselves enough to move on to Heaven. Purgatory was not a pleasant place and the Church made money off of people's fears. This infuriated Luther.
  3. According to Luther, what will happen to people who pay the Catholic Church to get out of purgatory and into Heaven?  
The people who paid the indulgences and their teachers, i.e. Catholic priests, were damned, which meant they would go to Hell.
  4. How did the printing press help Luther's protest against the Catholic Church? Provide concrete numbers.  
The printing press enabled Luther to spread his protests quickly and widely. According to John Man, one third of all the books printed in Germany between 1518 and 1525 were by Luther. This amounted to about 300,000 copies of books by Luther *per year*.

## Document B

**Source:** Excerpts from Martin Luther's *95 Theses*, 1517.

**Note:** Martin Luther was a Catholic priest who was unhappy with his church. On October 31, 1517 he posted 95 Theses' or criticisms' on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. One of his goals was to stir up debate about indulgences. Indulgences were payments to the Roman Catholic Church in return for pardons for one's sins and grants of salvation in the afterlife. Because of the printing press, the *95 Theses* were known throughout Germany in two weeks and throughout Europe in a month. Luther's protest triggered a movement called the Protestant Reformation and led to the Lutheran religion.

EV

- 20. Thus those indulgence preachers are in error who say that a man is absolved (pardoned) from every penalty and saved by papal indulgences.*
- 27. They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.*
- 32. Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.*

**Source:** John Man, *Gutenberg: How One Man Remade the World with Words*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2002.

As Rome prepared the heavy artillery, Luther fired off more salvos, with the help of the press. His sermons, tracts and polemics, all in German ... streamed from presses by the hundreds of thousands.... According to one estimate, a third of all books printed in Germany between 1518 and 1525 were by him. Pause to consider that figure. Of course, printing was in its infancy, but Germany at the time was turning out about a million books a year, of which a third – 300,000 – were by Luther.

### Document Analysis

1. Who was Martin Luther?
2. What was Martin Luther's main objection with the Catholic Church? Explain in some detail.
3. According to Luther, what will happen to people who pay the Catholic Church to get out of purgatory and into Heaven?
4. How did the printing press help Luther's protest against the Catholic Church? Provide concrete numbers.

## Step Four: Document Analysis (continued)

### Document C: Religions in Europe (map)

#### Content Notes:

- Protestantism spread throughout Europe but mainly in the northern countries farthest from the influence of Rome.
- 20th Century Europe bears the imprint of the Reformation. Italy, France, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, the south of Germany, Austria, and Hungary, Poland, and parts of the Balkans in Eastern Europe, have continued to be predominantly Catholic. The rest – Scandinavia, England, Scotland, Switzerland, the north and east of Germany, and parts of Eastern Europe – have largely remained Protestant.
- The Reformation leaders defied the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and destroyed the unity of medieval Christianity. Attempts at religious reconciliation had become hopeless, as the events of the late 16th and 17th centuries unfolded. The Church was shattered, and Protestantism itself fragmented into numerous sects.
- The ideas and emotions that fueled the Reformation were passed on by the press not only through words, but by visual propaganda. Since most of Europe was illiterate, printed woodcuts had a powerful appeal in spreading anti-papal views to the masses.
- Outside Germany and Scandinavia, John Calvin (1509-1564) guided the Reformation from his stronghold in Geneva, Switzerland. Calvin emphasized the importance of education and reading – if the Bible was Truth, then one must be able to read in order truly to understand. The printing press made available this exact Truth.
- One of the most dramatic conflicts of the Reformation period involved King Henry VIII of England. His initial support of the Pope against Luther's supporters earned him great praise from the Catholic Church. But after his divorce to his first wife was denied, Henry broke from the Pope and established the Anglican Church, of which he was the head. As you might suspect, the printing press was right in the middle of the fight.

#### Teaching Tips:

- Discuss the Document Analysis questions:

1. According to the inset map, what religion dominated Europe in 1500?

The Catholic religion (Catholicism)

2. By 1560, what two main branches of Christianity existed in western Europe?

Catholicism and Protestantism

3. What countries, or parts of countries, were all or mostly Protestant in 1560?

Norway, Sweden, Denmark, England, Scotland, northern Germany. Protestantism was also present in southern France, Poland, Austria, and Hungary.

4. Compare this map with the printing press map in Document A. Is there a connection between the spread of Protestantism and the spread of the printing press? Explain your thinking.

The Reformation map shows that Protestantism spread widely in the sixty years after the printing press had established itself. This suggests a strong connection between the two. However, the 1500 printing press map also shows the greatest abundance of presses in Italy, with another 25 or so in Spain and Portugal. Interestingly, all three of these areas remained Catholic. Bottom line: The printing press may well have assisted the Reformation, but it didn't guarantee acceptance, especially in southern Europe, which was near the Pope's stomping grounds in Rome.

5. What arguments can be made to support the claim that the Protestant Reformation was a very important consequence of the printing press?

The Catholic Church and religion were the dominant force in Europe and everyday life for more than a millenium before the printing press. The Reformation transformed the social, religious, political and economic life of the majority of Europeans. The printing press was a key calalyst of this change. Nothing could be more significant.



## Document C

Source: Map created from various sources.



### Document Analysis

1. According to the inset map, what religion dominated Europe in 1500?
2. By 1560, what two main branches of Christianity existed in western Europe?
3. What countries, or parts of countries, were all or mostly Protestant in 1560?
4. Compare this map with the printing press map in Document A. Is there a connection between the spread of Protestantism and the spread of the printing press? Explain your thinking.
5. What arguments can be made to support the claim that the Protestant Reformation was a very important consequence of the printing press?

## Step Four: Document Analysis (continued)

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### Document D: Columbus's Letter

#### Content Notes:

- Columbus described his arrival to the “Indian Sea” on the 33rd day. He had set out believing he would run into the island nation of Cipangu (Japan) based on his best estimates and reading of the maps available to him. Columbus made three more trips to the “New World” and stubbornly refused to admit that the land he reached each time was anything but the southeastern tip of the islands of Asia.
- Christopher Columbus's letter announcing the success of his voyage to the “islands of the India Sea” is one of the most important documents ever published. It quickly became one of the earliest “best-sellers” of European publishing. The map traces the extremely rapid dissemination of the Columbus letter through its first published editions.
- No less than eleven editions of the letter were published in 1493. They were issued across Western Europe, in Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Six more editions were published in 1494-97. Today, the only known copy of the first printed letter is in the New York Public Library.

#### Teaching Tips:

- Discuss the Document Analysis questions:

1. In his letter to the king of Spain, what did Columbus claim to have discovered?

Columbus claims to have discovered the Indian sea. He thought he had found a new route to Asia.

2. Why, in 1493, would this discovery have been big news?

The only known route to Asia from Europe was east via the Mediterranean and the Silk Roads. Now Columbus is reporting a much shorter, quicker route by sailing west across the Atlantic. It could be a huge boon to European traders.

3. Where was Columbus when he wrote his letter?  
On board ship on his return from the Americas.

4. In what European cities, and in what languages, was the letter published in 1493?

Barcelona (Spanish), Rome (Latin and Italian), Paris (French)

5. Based on this document, do you think the printing press is likely to have had a significant effect on exploration in the late 1400s and early 1500s? Explain your thinking.

There must have been widespread interest in Columbus's voyage. Printers with their new presses saw an opportunity. What the printing press made possible was quickly reaching hundreds of thousands of people, often in their own language, and whetting their appetite. This news of a new route to Asia, even if it was wrong, must have stirred the dreams of sailors, ship builders, traders, and adventurers. The printing press was helping to fuel a revolution in travel and trade that would change the world.

## Document D

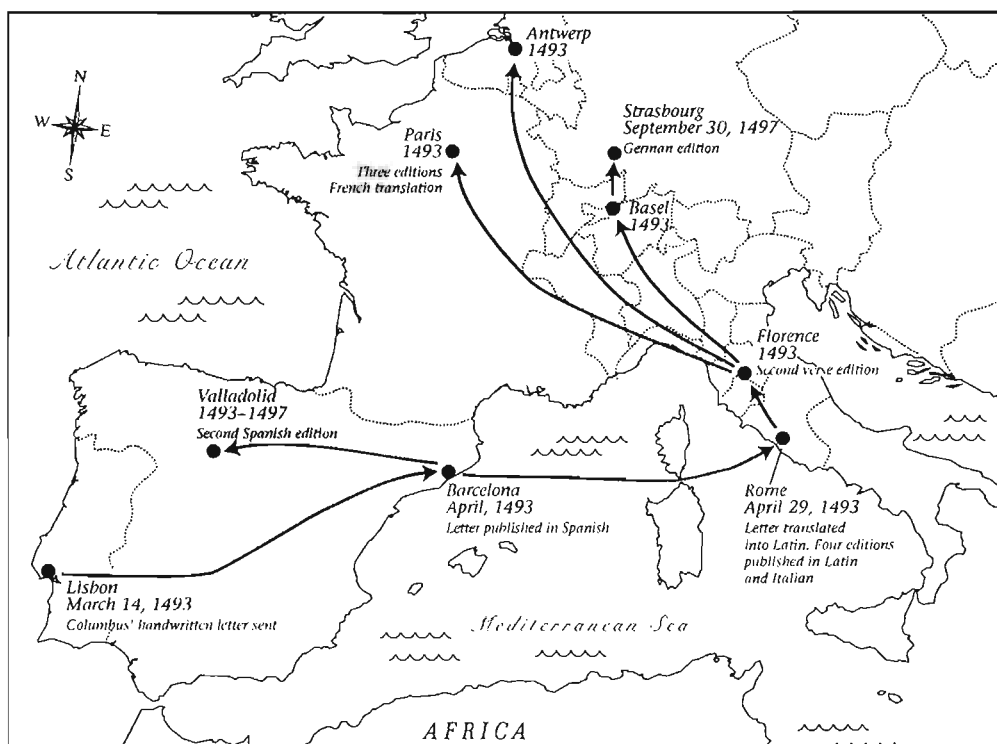
**Sources:** Christopher Columbus's letter, *Concerning the Islands Recently Discovered in the Indian Sea*, 1493.  
Map created from various sources.

Because my undertakings have attained success, I know that it will be pleasing to you: these I have determined to relate, so that you may be made acquainted with everything done and discovered in this our voyage. On the thirty-third day after I departed from Cadiz, I came to the Indian sea, where I found many islands inhabited by men without number, of all which I took possession for our most fortunate king, with proclaiming heralds and flying standards, no one objecting.

**Note:** Columbus's 15-page letter to the King of Spain was written on his return voyage from the Americas.

EV

## Distribution of Columbus's Letter



## Document Analysis

1. In his letter to the king of Spain, what did Columbus claim to have discovered?
2. Why, in 1493, would this discovery have been big news?
3. Where was Columbus when he wrote his letter?
4. In what European cities, and in what languages, was the letter published in 1493?
5. Based on this document, do you think the printing press is likely to have had a significant effect on exploration in the late 1400s and early 1500s? Explain your thinking.

## Step Four: Document Analysis (continued)

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### Document E: Printing and Mapmaking (maps)

#### Content Notes:

- The first map in this set was printed just three years before Columbus set sail. It is a Renaissance recreation of Ptolemy's world. Students should note not only the absence of North and South America, but also the small size of the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover, it is important to note that although European cartographers had a good understanding of the Euro-Asian landmass, the outer edges of their maps were often mere conjecture.
- The second map is the famous 1507 Waldseemuller World Map. It has the nickname "America's Birth Certificate" because it is the first known map to record the existence of the American continents (albeit in a strange, inaccurate shape).
- These maps demonstrate the European progression of geographical knowledge from the late 15th to the late 16th centuries. The printing press was instrumental in spreading the knowledge of the new explorations not only through explorers' letters and accounts, but also through geographic images and increasingly more accurate maps.
- Before printed maps, manuscript maps were only available to a handful of explorers and scholars. Before the press a process which historians call incremental fact checking, which is at the heart of cartography, could not occur. Because of the press, over time (sometimes centuries) voyagers were provided with uniform maps and encouraged to exchange information with map publishers.
- The Waldseemuller map was discovered in 1901 by a Jesuit historian in Wurttemberg, Germany. It had been bound between several other less significant maps and was in mint condition. In the fall of 2003 the Library of Congress purchased this map for 10 million dollars – its single most expensive acquisition ever!

#### Teaching Tips:

- Discuss the Document Analysis questions:
  1. In what year was the Martellus World Map printed and published? The Waldseemuller World Map?  
1489, 1507
  2. What discoveries made between 1489 and 1507 appear on the Waldseemuller Map?  
First, southern and east Africa are more accurately drawn. Second, and perhaps

most exciting, is that the Americas appear beyond the western sea. Their shape is strange but Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, the isthmus of Panama, and the north and east coast of South America are recognizable.

3. What inference can you make about the connection between the Waldseemuller Map and the published 1493 letter of Columbus in Doc D).

The several editions of the printed Columbus letter indicate great interest in his voyage. The Waldseemuller map was published just fourteen years later, in 1507. Although it is a bit crude, it shows that additional voyages must have been made along the east coast of North America, into the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, and down past the hump of Brazil. It is very possible to infer that excitement over Columbus triggered these additional discoveries.

4. How can you use documents D and E to argue that the printing press played an important role in stimulating exploration?

The speed with which new discoveries took place after 1493 suggests that the printing press was a big factor in exploration. The press made two things possible – quick distribution of news about discoveries, and widespread distribution to people who otherwise would not have read about the discoveries or seen the maps. New voyages would mean new travel accounts, printed drawings of new people, new plants and animals. Without radio or television or the telephone, the printing press was the publicity engine of exploration and discovery.

5. What arguments can be made that exploration was a more important consequence of the printing press than the Reformation?

The discovery and exploration of the Western Hemisphere doubled the size of the known world. It was a global event, unlike the Reformation. Exploration led to trade, spread of disease, new resources, and a new world power alignment. The Reformation was not so far-reaching, even though it was important.

## Document E

Source: Henricus Martellus's World Map, 1489.



EV

Source: Martin Waldseemüller's World Map, 1507.

Note: The map at right is the famous 1507 Waldseemüller World Map. It has the nickname "America's Birth Certificate" because it is the first known map to record the existence of the American continents (albeit in a strange, inaccurate shape).



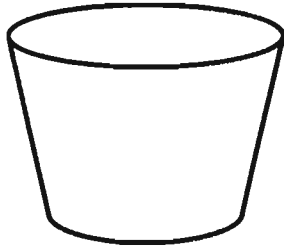
### Document Analysis

1. In what year was the Martellus World Map printed and published? The Waldseemüller World Map?
2. What discoveries made between 1489 and 1507 appear on the Waldseemüller Map?
3. What inference can you make about the connection between the Waldseemüller Map and the published 1493 letter of Columbus in Doc D?
4. How can you use documents D and E to argue that the printing press played an important role in stimulating exploration?
5. What arguments can be made that exploration was a more important consequence of the printing press than the Reformation?

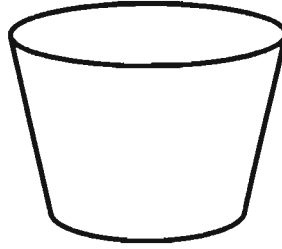
# Step Five: Bucketing – Getting Ready To Write

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## Task One: Bucketing

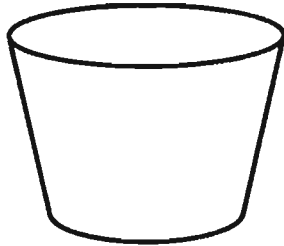


The case for exploration

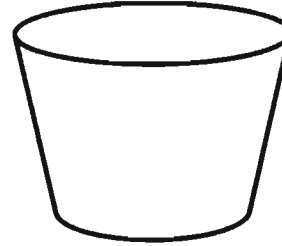


The greater case for Reformation

OR



The case for Reformation



The greater case for exploration

## Task Two: Thesis Development and Road Map

The printing press had important consequences:

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*One important consequence was exploration*

*An even more important consequence was the Reformation*

OR

The printing press had important consequences:

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*It had an important impact on the Reformation*

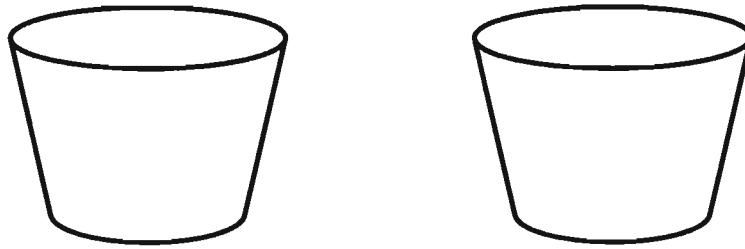
*It had an even greater impact on exploration*

## Bucketing – Getting Ready to Write

### Bucketing

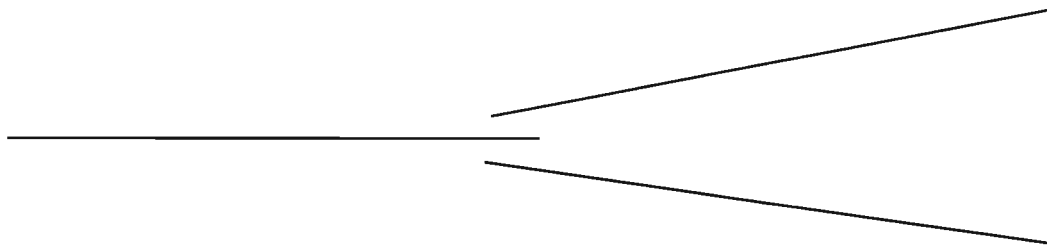
Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write bucket labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents in the buckets where they belong. In this Mini-Q, lots of multi-bucketing is expected. Remember, your buckets are going to be your body paragraphs.

EV



### Thesis Development and Road Map

On the chicken foot below, write your thesis and your road map. Your thesis is always an opinion and answers the Mini-Q question. The road map is created from your bucket labels and lists the topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.



## Step Six: From Thesis to Essay Writing

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### Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

**Working Title:** Exploration or Reformation: Which Was the More Important Consequence of the Printing Press?

#### Paragraph #1

Grabber: Difficult to exaggerate the impact of the printing press on history

Background: Before 1450s, only hand copies. Then Johannes Gutenberg. First practical printing press.

Thesis and road map: Exploration important, but the greater consequence of the printing press was Reformation

#### Paragraph #2

Baby Thesis for bucket one: Exploration was one important consequence of the printing press.

Evidence: Columbus's 15-page letter published in Barcelona April 1493 (Doc B)

Numerous other editions soon published in 1493 in Rome, Basil, Florence, Antwerp, Paris  
Waldseemuller map published in 1507. Showed the Americas (Doc C).

Argument: connecting evidence to the thesis:

Impact of published Columbus letter was reflected in the published Waldseemuller map.

Printing was publicizing exploration, and exploration would lead to colonization, trade, destruction of local peoples and new countries. For better or worse, press and exploration were teaming to change the world

#### Paragraph #3

Baby Thesis for bucket two: An even greater consequence of the printing press was Protestant Reformation.

Evidence: When Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church wall in Wittenberg, press became his ally (Doc D).

Luther's letters and sermons were published and distributed throughout Europe (Doc D).

One-third of all material published in Germany between 1518 and 1525 was written by Luther.  
300,000 books in all (Doc D).

Protestantism grew rapidly and spread throughout German states into Scandinavia, Britain, parts of eastern Europe, and southern France (Doc E).

Argument: The reason the Reformation was such an important consequence of the printing press is because it broke the domination of the Catholic Church and its control of certain truths.

In time, the Reformation would lead to freer expression of ideas in areas like astronomy, science, medicine, and literature.

#### Paragraph #4

Conclusion: Remarkable that the printing press could have such an impact on human society. The printed word's boost to exploration opened the door to an expanded physical world. The printing press's spread of the Reformation opened the door to an even greater world, the world of the mind and the spirit.



# From Thesis to Essay Writing

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## Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

### Working Title

### Paragraph #1

Grabber

Background

Stating the question with key terms defined

Thesis and road map

### Paragraph #2

Baby Thesis for bucket one

Evidence: supporting detail from documents with document citation

Argument:

### Paragraph #3

Baby Thesis for bucket two

Evidence

Argument

### Paragraph #4

Conclusion:

EV

**Mini-Q Sample Essay: Non-Proficient**  
**Exploration or Reformation: Which Was the More Important**  
**Consequence of the Printing Press?**

Three cheers for Gettysburg! He discovered the printing press in Germany thousands of years ago and printed Bibles faster than most people could write them. It had some consequences that were pretty amazing when you think about it.

First, the printing press made Columbus famous. He wrote a letter that he discovered the United States (Doc B). This was good for Columbus and it was good for exploration and tourism.

The second big consequence of the printing press was that it reformed religion. Most people don't know it but Martin Luther King got his start by creating a new religion called Protestantism which spread as far as Germany and Scandinavia (Doc E). That was way before civil rights.

The printing press was probably more important than the telephone because it got so many things going. We should have a special Gettysburg Day where we get off from school and print letters or read.

**Mini-Q Sample Essay: Basic Proficiency**  
**Exploration or Reformation: Which Was the More Important**  
**Consequence of the Printing Press?**

Three cheers for Gutenberg! Before he invented the printing press in the 1450s, the only way to write books was to copy them by hand. Now a printer in Germany changed all that, and it had many consequences for human history. One important consequence was exploration of the world. An even more important consequence was the Protestant Reformation.

There is no doubt that a major consequence of the printing press was world exploration. When Christopher Columbus returned from America in 1493, a copy of his 15-page letter was printed in many cities like Barcelona, Rome, and Paris, (Doc B). Also, within a few years, new maps were printed, like the famous Waldseemuller Map in 1507 (Doc C). That map showed the Americas for the first time. It must have excited people who read the new atlases and books. Exploration would lead to new settlements and new kinds of trade and new kinds of government. It was a big consequence of the printing press.

An even bigger consequence of the printing press was the Protestant Reformation. A German priest named Martin Luther was angry at the Catholic Church for selling tickets to Heaven, which were called indulgences. His protest and his writings appeared in more than 300,000 books that were printed in Germany between 1518 and 1525 (Doc D). The result was a new Protestant Church that spread through Germany and into Scandinavia, England, and parts of France (Doc E). This was important because it meant the Catholic Church was not the only church on the block. It was really the beginning of religious freedom. That makes it a huge consequence of the printing press.

The printing press was probably one of the most important inventions in history. It helped explorers find their way around the world. Even more important, it helped people find their own way to God.

## **Mini-Q Sample Essay: High Proficiency**

### **Exploration or Reformation: Which Was the More Important Consequence of the Printing Press?**

It is difficult to exaggerate the impact of the printing press on human society. Before the 1450s, written ideas could be shared only by making hand inscriptions or hand copies in stone, on clay, or on paper. Then, in the 1450s, a goldsmith in Mainz, Germany, named Johannes Gutenberg changed all that with the invention of a practical printing press. The impact of the press on all areas of human experience was great. Two of these areas were exploration and the Protestant Reformation. It will be argued here that while the impact of exploration was important, the greater consequence of the printing press was the Reformation.

There can be little question that global exploration was an important consequence of the printing press. On return from his first voyage to what turned out to be a new hemisphere, Christopher Columbus wrote a 15-page letter announcing, wrongly, as it turned out, his discovery of a new route to the Indies. That letter was first printed in Barcelona in April 1493. Within that same year, new editions were printed in Rome, Florence, Basil, Antwerp, and Paris (Doc B). The word was spreading quickly, and not just to the rich and famous, but to the people. Also, the printing press was publishing more than just text. It was printing maps. The famous Waldseemuller Map of 1507 now included a strange-looking but very important long strip of land across the western sea (Doc C). With the help of the printing press, Columbus and the explorers who quickly followed were changing the face of the known world. That long strip of land turned out to be the Americas. Its discovery would lead to colonization, trade, destruction of local peoples, and the creation of new countries. For better or for worse, the printing press and exploration teamed up to be world changer.

While exploration was important, an even greater consequence of the printing press was the Protestant Reformation. When Martin Luther struck out against corruption and the sale of indulgences by the Catholic Church, he had a powerful ally in the printing press. His 95 Theses did not just appear on a church door in Wittenberg, Germany (Doc D). His letters and sermons and other writings were printed and sent out across the small German states and across Europe. In fact, Luther's writings made up one-third of all material published in Germany between 1518 and 1525. This totaled 300,000 copies (Doc D). The consequence of this is powerfully shown in the Reformation map in Document E. In 1500, western Europe was solidly Catholic. By 1560 Luther's Protestant reform movement had taken hold in many of the German states, Britain, Scandinavia, and parts of eastern Europe and southern France. The reason the Reformation was such a huge consequence of the printing press is because it broke the total domination of the Catholic Church and its hold on the Truth. Reform of the church would lead to freer expression of ideas in astronomy, medicine, geography and literature. While exploration opened the door to the physical world, the Reformation opened the door to an even greater world, the world of the mind and the spirit.

It is remarkable that an invention that pressed inked letters onto a sheet of paper could have such a huge effect on human society. Something as simple as reproducing a sea captain's 15-page letter, or printing copies of the protests of an angry priest, was enough to change the world.