Create a Research Book

Subject: Language Arts, Art, Social Studies

Grade Level: Adaptable for 3-12

Rationale or Purpose:
Students will create a research book in order to learn more about the production of manuscripts and books. Using a variety of media, the book will contain information, images, and original artwork and writings inspired by **The Invention** and **Books Before and After the Gutenberg Bible**. The research book also helps students organize, synthesize, and apply large amounts of information provided in the learning module

Materials:
Pages (suggested materials)
- White computer paper
- Sponge
- Tea bags
- Water
- Bowls

Cover
- Cardboard
- Masking tape
- Glue
- Rubber bands
- Scissors

Optional materials for decoration:
- Colorful scraps of paper
- Fabric
- Paints, markers, colored pencils, chalk
- String
- Beads
- Stamps & Ink

Activity Duration: Book construction – one to three class periods
Book use – for the length of the Gutenberg lessons

Objectives:
110.22 Language Arts
110.43 English
110.55 Humanities
113.22 Social Studies 6th
113.33 World History
113.55 AP World History
117.11 Art 3rd
117.52 Art 1

Activity:
Step 1: Introduce students to Gutenberg and his invention using **The Gutenberg Education Module.** Explain how you expect students to use the book they will make.

Students may use the book for the following (may vary): recording discoveries from the module topic pages; responding to thought questions; practicing rubricating and illuminating; tracking vocabulary; creating timelines and other graphic organizers. See *Ideas for Using the Research Book* below.

Step 2: Making the Book

> **Prepare your pages** – Students are reproducing the effect of old pages for the Research Book by staining paper with tea bags (optional). Remind students that pages in the Middle Ages and Gutenberg Era were made from a variety of materials: parchment and vellum (animal skins) and linen fibers.
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> Crumple up a sheet of white paper into a tight ball
> Open up and smooth out. Make it damp by sponging the page with water.
> Make a pot of tea with lots of tea bags in it. Allow tea bags and water to cool.
> Place tea bags on paper. Place a second sheet of paper on top and leave for a couple of hours.
> Remove tea bags, dry paper and (optional) iron flat. Fold pages in half to double the pages (and save time!).
> Experiment with square, round, triangular tea bags. Arrange them in patterns.
> Make watermarks by cutting cardboard shapes and laying them into the wet tea. Allow drying before removing.
>
> **Making the Cover** – Discuss the materials used to make authentic covers. What is the significance of ornate covers for manuscripts and books?
>
> Cut two sheets of stiff card, which are slightly bigger than the pages of the book.
> Lay the sheets out on a table leaving a 1cm wide space between them (or a space wide enough to accommodate all the pages).
> Cut a strip of thinner card and glue this across this 1cm space. This forms the folding spine of the cover. Or—leaving the space—use masking tape to create a flexible spine.
> Draw out a design on the front cover of the book. The design can be reasonably simple. Students can base designs on the artwork studied in the lessons.

Activity by:
Shelly Whitfield

Ideas for Using the Research Book

Students can use the book to collect:
- ⊐ vocabulary
- ⊐ important facts & observations
- ⊐ questions

Students can use the book to construct:
- various graphic organizers
- timelines
- cause & effect relationships
- comparisons between manuscripts and books, including other world media across the ages

Students can use the book to create original:
> artwork based on designs studied and explored in lessons
> stories

General:
> Students learn how artists and writers have long used research books as a way to collect and explore ideas.
> Students will explore the power of words and make connections between images and words.
> Students will have a better understanding of the technical processes involved in creating manuscripts and book.

Thought Questions: Grades: 9-12

Gutenberg – The Man

Was Gutenberg an innovator or profiteer? Both? Discuss.
Alternative: Bill Gates and Johann Gutenberg meet for lunch. Act out a portion of their conversation.

Reading & Literacy

Discuss access. What access did people have to texts in the Middle Ages? How did access change after Gutenberg's invention? What kind of access do modern civilizations have to the Internet?

Some scholars say Gutenberg's invention gave rise to the act of private reading. From what we've learned about the history of print and books, discuss public reading and private reading.

What do you think about the following statement?
Technology shapes how reading is done.

Are we a society of information-users rather than readers? Explain your response.

Writers & Printers

Research the history of copyright or the history of censorship.

Gutenberg's invention did not ignite immediate printings of living authors' works.
Instead people wanted to read classical texts. Discuss the rise of the author versus the
power of the printer.

Aspects of the Book

Compare and contrast a medieval manuscript and an early printed book.

Explore the meaning of the word 'illumination' as means of textual illumination and
visual illumination.

Although Gutenberg's invention had a revolutionary impact on western civilization, he
did not break with elements of the manuscript immediately. The 'book' transcended the
manuscript without rejecting it; building on it to make something new. Why are aspects
of manuscripts incorporated into those early books? What elements are still with us
today to some degree?

Technology

Innovations in print, like the Internet, created a tension between tradition and innovation.
How does society adapt to such changes? **Think:** How have e-mails and other electronic
communications gained legitimacy?

There is a finality to print. How has electronic print re-introduced the 'open' text?

Technology is not a modern concept in practice. Make connections between technologies
of the past with technology of the present.
Think about:
   a) Scrolls or scrolling
   b) Fancy covers
   c) Portable clay or wax tablets
   d) Chained book security
   e) Space – storage challenges
   f) Lectern/scribe system
   g) Slope

🌀 Idea adapted from the British Library's *Sacred Book: Drawing Inspiration from the
Lindisfarne Gospels* (http://www.bllearning.co.uk/live/sacredbook)