

What do you see? What do you think?

Subject: Language Arts, Social Studies

Grade Level: 6-10

Rationale or Purpose:

Using **The Invention** theme, students will learn to distinguish between making factual observations and personal interpretations when looking at objects. Analyzing and comparing a printed page from the Gutenberg Bible and a handwritten page from a 13th century manuscript Bible as objects will strengthen visual literacy as well as reveal the printer's model, marketing strategy, and consumer use, of Gutenberg's first major printing effort.

Materials:

Internet access

Object Comparison Worksheet

Interpretive Comparison Worksheet

Lesson Duration: One class period.

Objectives: World History 113.33

(23 A) examples of major technological innovations

Objectives: Social Studies 113.22

(2 A) explain the significance of groups from selected societies

(20 A) examples of technological innovations

Objectives: Language Arts 110.7

(9 A) recognize distinctive and shared characteristics of culture

(12 E) compare communication in different forms

Objectives: English II – 110.43

(9 A) recognize distinctive and shared characteristics of cultures through reading

(10 A,B) respond to aesthetic elements in text

(19 A) understand and interpret visual representations

Activity:

Step 1: Observation Exercise

Take students through a quick exercise in distinguishing between factual observation and personal interpretation. Ask them to look at an object in the classroom and write down three descriptions of what they see. Give students one minute to do this exercise and then write their comments on the board as you call on them.

Look at the list and ask students to think about the difference between comments that are factual observations and those that may be interpretive. Factual observations identify and describe what

can be seen. Interpretive observations are those that combine the factual evidence with personal experience and prior knowledge in order to explain the meaning and use of an object. Ask students to categorize the list they have made into factual observations and interpretive observations.

Step 2: Factual Comparison

Using **Image #1** from **A Familiar Format**, ask students to record factual observations comparing the Gutenberg Bible page with the 13th-century Bible page using the **Object Comparison Worksheet**. Because the Bibles are written in Latin, students will analyze them as objects rather than documents. Students may look at the image in a computer lab, as a color handout, or projected in the classroom from a computer or overhead transparency.

To help students notice details, you may want to ask a few of the following questions:

- What do you see in the background of the pages (will they see the guidelines drawn by the scribe for the manuscript Bible)?
- Can you read the text? (Latin, difficult Gothic script)
- Are the columns of text the same or do you see differences in the way the text begins or ends (will they notice the justified lines of the printed Bible)?
- Are any words crossed out in the text?
- What are the major differences you notice in the decorations?



Step 3: Interpretive Comparison

Ask students to make record interpretive observations on the *Interpretive Comparison Worksheet*, referring to their factual observations recorded on the *Object Comparison Worksheet* as evidence.

To help get students started, you could ask some of the following questions:

- What does the size of the two Bibles tell you about their intended use? Which would you prefer to read from and why?
- Who would buy Gutenberg's Bible and why?
- What do the decorations tell you about the artists who made them?
- Why were the Bible decorated?
- What do the lines in the background tell you about how the Bibles were made?
- What do the crossed-out words tell you about who (or how many people) used the Gutenberg Bible?

Step 4: Class Discussion

Lead the students in a discussion of their observations and interpretive comparisons. Ask students to discuss the evidence used to support their interpretive comments.

Step 5: Research

Direct students to **The Invention** topic pages for answers to the questions they generated on the two worksheets. Depending on the grade level, students could produce a short essay, chart, or small group Power Point, explaining their findings.

Closure:

See class discussion in Step 4 or presentation of student product from Step 5.

Activity by:

April Garner
Teacher Services
Ransom Center

Object Comparison Worksheet

Object #1 _____ Object #2 _____

What is its shape, size, and color?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What is it made of and what is its condition?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Describe the details you see, noticing differences and similarities in any decoration, text, or background.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What questions do you have about the objects? What would you like to learn more about?

Interpretive Comparison Worksheet

Object #1 _____ Object #2 _____

What does the object tell you about the times and technology of the people who made it?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What physical evidence supports these comments?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What does the object tell you about the life and times of the people who used it?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What physical evidence supports these comments?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What questions do you have about the makers and users of these objects?

Where could you find the answers to these questions?
