

# Exhibiting Your Knowledge

**Subject:** Language Arts, Social Studies, World Cultures, English

**Grade Level:** 6–10

## **Rationale or Purpose:**

Students will be introduced to museum functions by creating a traveling exhibition for their school on Gutenberg's invention and the first printed book. Museum exhibitions are the result of team efforts, and students will work in teams to research, design, and produce their exhibition.

## **Materials:**

Internet access

Poster board and glue for each Topic Team (8)

Image facsimile printouts

*Curatorial Research Worksheet*

*Label Writing Worksheet*

**Lesson Duration:** One-week collaborative team project.

## **Objectives: Social Studies 113.22**

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

(2 B) describe the influence of individual or group achievement on historical societies

(20 A) give examples of the scientific and technological innovations that have shaped the world

(20 B) explain how resources, belief systems, economic factors, and political decisions have affected the use of technology

## **Objectives: World History 113.33**

(1 B) identify changes that resulted from important turning points in world history such as the development of cities, the European age of exploration and colonization;

(1 C) apply chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods.

(4 A) identify the causes and characteristics of the European Renaissance and the Reformation eras

(4 B) identify the effects of the European Renaissance and the Reformation era

(23 A) examples of major mathematical and scientific discoveries and technological innovations, describe the changes produced by these discoveries and innovations

## **Objectives: English II – 110.43**

(6 A) expand vocabulary

(6 E) use reference material

(7 E) analyze for cause and effect, chronological ordering

(7 F) produce summaries of text

(7 G) draw inferences, conclusions, and generalizations

(12 B) evaluate credibility of sources

(15 A) listen and appropriately respond to presentations of peers

(16 C) prepare, organize, and present a clear message

(21 B) use a variety of media in communicating and presenting a message

(21 E) create, present, and text a project

**Activity:**

Step 1: Provide background information.

Give students an overview of Gutenberg by presenting the section: *Who was Johann Gutenberg and what do we know about him*, from the **Gutenberg Bible** page.

<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/education/modules/gutenberg>

Step 2: Discuss museum exhibitions.

Ask students about museums they have visited and the purpose of an exhibition. Compare differences and similarities of museum exhibitions and bulletin board or library exhibitions in their school. Present the following criteria for a traveling exhibition.

Traveling Exhibitions are created by museums, libraries, art centers, and cultural institutions to share objects from their collections with other museums, community cultural centers, and schools. These exhibitions often include actual objects housed in cases to protect them and require large spaces and budgets. Others exhibit facsimiles of objects and use only wall space. A facsimile is an exact copy of an original. Both types of exhibitions are intended to provide communities with engaging cultural experiences.

All traveling exhibitions are unique, reflecting the objects and the ideas of the team of people who produced them. As students take the roles of curator, designer, and educator, they will make creative choices to develop their interpretation of Gutenberg, his times, and his invention.

Step 3: Curatorial Research. Students research topic pages in **The Invention** and select the theme of the exhibition

Explain that a curator is the expert in charge of the acquisition, care, and exhibition of a collection in a museum or research library. Curators conduct research in order to interpret, evaluate, and categorize the objects in a collection.

- Divide the class into eight Topic Teams and assign each group a topic from *The Invention: Adapting Technology, Papermaking, Gutenberg's Printshop, Buying the Book, Familiar Format, Illuminations & Rubrications, Marginalia, Oops*
- Each Topic Team, using the **Curatorial Research Worksheet**, will read the assigned topic, taking notes on the information and objects they find most interesting.
- Have the teams present their information to the class following the same topic sequence as the website. After the team presentations, have students collaborate to propose an overall theme and title for the exhibition they will create. Explain that every Topic Team will create a poster on its topic to be a part of the story told by the exhibition. Write the title and theme in a prominent place in the classroom.

Step 4: Topic Teams design their section of the exhibition assuming the roles of curator, exhibition designer, and museum educator

Ask students to describe the audience they want to reach with this exhibition. Then have them visualize the final product and think like a visitor who will see it, react to it, and may have questions.

- Curator and Educator: Using the information collected on *Curatorial Research Worksheet*, teams will select the information and objects they want to present to the visitor.
- Designer: Print facsimiles of the selected objects to use for visual impact. Begin to arrange images (do not permanently adhere them yet) on the poster board, leaving room for labels. Think of ways to creatively use color, size, and display arrangement to direct visitor attention to the objects.
- Curator, designer, educator: Topic Teams will use the *Label Writing Worksheet* to write a title label, text label, and object labels.

#### Step 5: Editing the Labels

Have teams exchange the labels they have written. Have team members take turns reading the labels out loud to the others. Remind students that the intent is to present visitors with information that is correct, clear, and interesting. Ask them to take the visitors' point of view when reading the labels. After students make revisions, have them write or print the labels in a clear font that can be read from a distance.

#### Step 6: Exhibition Layout

- Have teams assemble the labels and facsimiles on the poster boards.
- Create a title label that is large and can be seen from a distance.
- Assist teams in hanging the exhibition in the classroom, library, or hallway they have selected.
- Have students stand back and critique the exhibition from a distance and from the visitor viewpoint, making any changes needed.

#### Step 7: Museum Educator

Ask teams to think of who will visit their exhibition. Ask each Topic Team to think of one or two questions to be included in an Exhibition Activity Guide they will give to visitors to the exhibition. This guide should be fun and colorful and help visitors observe different aspects of the exhibition. Assemble all the questions into a handout ready for visitors.

#### **Closure:**

Invite other classes to visit the exhibition.

#### **Extension:**

This traveling exhibition could be sent to other areas of your school or to another school. Share what you have learned with others.

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# Curatorial Research Worksheet

Curators are museum specialists who have knowledge of specific collections. They are also experts in the care and sharing of the objects in the museum collections. When curators prepare for an exhibition, they learn as much as they can about the objects they are working with so they can effectively interpret the object for the visitors.

You will be acting as curator for the objects in the Gutenberg topic assigned to your group. Use this worksheet to record your research.

## Topic \_\_\_\_\_

**What object or process do you find interesting?**

**Describe the object/process**

**Why is it important?**

What does the object tell us about technology of the time in which it was made and used?

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

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Do you use a similar object today?

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# Label Writing Worksheet

Answering the following questions will help you decide what information to include on your labels. Refer to the Gutenberg topic and the answers recorded on Worksheet #1 to help write your labels.

Remember to keep labels short. Visitors do not want to spend all their time reading. Think about space limitations. Both the labels and images need to fit in the space of the poster board.

**Title Label:** Think of a short and exciting title for this topic. Use large lettering for this label.

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**Object Label:** Provide a label for each object.

What is the object? \_\_\_\_\_

When was it made? \_\_\_\_\_

Who made it or used it? \_\_\_\_\_

Who owns the object? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any particular parts the visitor should pay attention to? Why are they significant or interesting? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Text Label:** Write one or two short paragraphs that explain the main ideas and historical background you want the visitor to learn.

What is the main idea of this topic? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why is this topic historically significant? How has it affected your life?

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