

World History One DBQ: The Printing Press



WOODCUT OF A PRINTING PRESS AND A COMPOSING ROOM FROM LA GRANDE DANSE MACABRE, PRINTED AT LYONS AND DATED 1568

The Following task is based on the accompanying documents 1-7. Some documents have been edited for this exercise. The task is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source and purpose of the documents and the author's point of view.

Directions:

1. Read the Historical Context & Answer the corresponding worksheet questions
2. Read the Documents & Answer the corresponding worksheet questions
3. Create a Thesis to answer the question presented in the "Task"
4. Write an Essay to answer the question (**The essay requires an outline, Introduction paragraph, 3 supporting body paragraphs and a Conclusion**)
-or- Create a project which will present an answer to the question – (**The Project must still integrate a thesis & three items supporting the thesis & a Conclusion**)

Task: Analyze the impact of the printing press.

Historical Context:

In the mid 1400's Johannes Gutenberg "invented" the printing press. (The technology had existed in China for centuries by that time). Before the printing press books were written out by hand. As a result books took a long time to produce and were both expensive and rare. Because of these factors few people in Europe had books and could read.

The printing press changed all of this. Books became plentiful, and were now being written in local languages such as German and English, not just Latin, which few people could read. This caused a chain reaction. More books led to more people reading, reading translates to literacy, literacy leads to education and education leads to more independent thinking. These books were both for entertainment and for practical purposes, exposing people to different philosophies and ways of thinking about things. William Shakespeare and Machiavelli are good examples of Renaissance era authors.

Document #1. Description of Book Making before the Printing Press

During the Middle Ages, manuscript books were produced by monks who worked with pen and ink in a copying room known as a scriptorium. Even a small book could take months to complete, and a book the size of the Bible could take several years.

www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/permanent/gutenberg/2a.html

Document #2 Image of a monk in a Monastery copying a book



www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/permanent/gutenberg/2a.html

Document #3 Description of the importance of Gutenberg's Printing Press

Gutenberg's methods spread with stunning rapidity. By 1500 an estimated half million printed books were in circulation: religious works, Greek and Roman classics, scientific texts, Columbus' report from the New World. An acceleration of the Renaissance was only the first by-product of the Gutenberg press. Without it, the Protestant movement might have been failed, as well as the subsequent political and industrial revolutions.

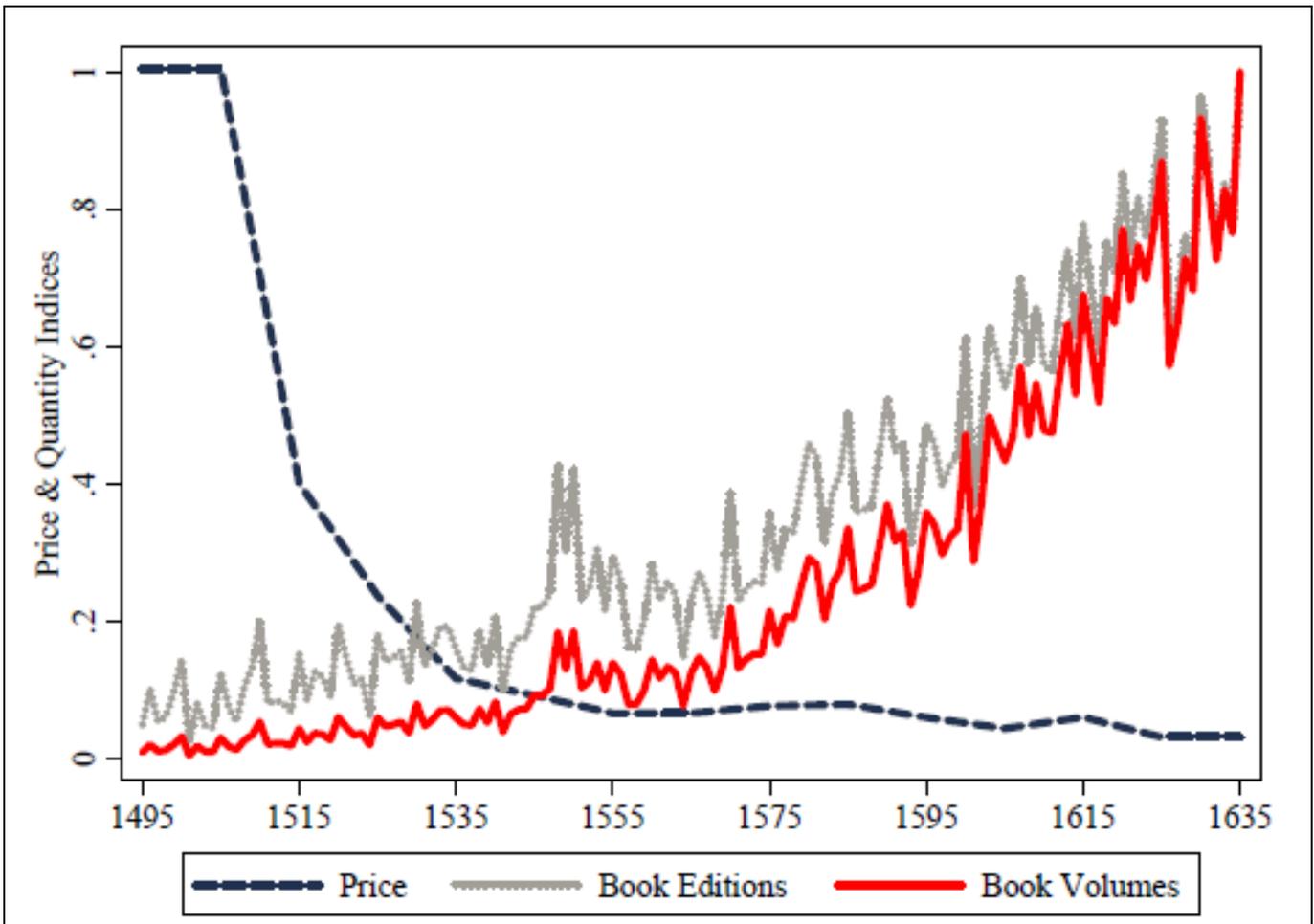
Text - Robert Friedman, ed., *The Life Millennium: The 100 Most Important Events & People of The Past 1,000 Years*, Time

Document #4 A Wood Engraving of a printer's workshop



<http://gds.parkland.edu>

Document #5 Prices and Quantities of Printed Books in England 1495-1639



The Welfare Impact of a New Good: The Printed Book. Jeremiah Dittmar 2011

Document #6 Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, 1833

He who first shortened the labor of copyists by device of movable types was disbanding hired armies, and cashiering most kings and senates, and creating a whole new democratic world: he had invented the art of printing.

Document # 7 The Printing Press and its Effects on Book Production – Revolution or Evolution?

The most important consequence of Gutenberg's invention, was the spread of printed books in medieval and early modern Europe. Classical, religious and scientific literature was printed in the vernacular and spread across Europe, increasing the level of literacy by providing readable texts to a growing reading public. These printed texts were sources of information for people of all political, social and economic strata [groups].

More and more, print became associated with the freedom of speech, religion, learning and the fight against old superstitions... One consequence of the printing press is that it allowed for the quick reproduction and widespread dissemination of religious and classical texts and ideas across Europe. By making book-production increasingly cheaper, the printed word spread far and wide to laymen across Europe, creating a larger reading public... Would the literature of the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Scientific Revolution have been spread as far and wide without the duplicative powers of print? Probably not. Similarly, would these movements have been as significant without their large audience? No.

The Printing Press and its Effects on Book Production – Revolution or Evolution by Eirik Jakobsen May 2005 University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education