

0. THE PRINTING PRESS - Story Preface
1. WHY FREE EXPRESSION?
2. FREE EXPRESSION IN BOOKS
3. THE DIAMOND SUTRA
4. THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS
5. THE PRECIOUS MANUSCRIPTS
6. JOHN WYCLIFFE'S BOOKS
7. JOHN HUS BURNS
8. TYNDALE WRITES, THEN BURNS
9. LUTHER'S TRANSLATIONS ARE BURNED
- 10. THE PRINTING PRESS**
11. BOOKS BURN IN THE NEW WORLD
12. CENSORSHIP CONTINUES
13. BURNING CONTINUES
14. CHERISHED RIGHTS
15. MORE COOL LINKS

Johannes Gutenberg had also published a Bible - the first book ever printed with movable metal type in the Western World - on his printing press.

Gutenberg's Bible was both beautiful and expensive. It cost about three year's pay for an average clerk.

Gutenberg's achievement changed the world. As Michael Inman, the curator of rare books at New York Public Library, puts it:

The mass printing of identical texts, which hadn't really been possible before Gutenberg, greatly facilitated the spread of knowledge. Over a period of several hundred years, language - spelling and grammar - was gradually codified. Literacy rates went up. More and more people were reading the same texts and discussing or debating the same ideas. This improvement in communication was one of the most important outcomes of printing.

The Gutenberg Bible was not burned because it was printed in Latin, not in the vernacular (everyday language of people). This was different from Luther's Bible translation which was published, in "high German," in 1534 (by Hans Lufft, in Wittenberg).

Many church officials were very displeased about Luther's translation since it gave German speakers the ability to read the Bible in their own language. If one had the ability to read, one also had the ability to interpret for oneself. This was not the preferred way of governments and the Catholic Church.

Book burning was not unique to Europe during the Middle Ages. As missionaries ventured to the "New World," they exported theological correctness.

Their zeal, in converting others, helped to destroy important aspects of ancient cultures, such as Mayan books.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-PRINTING-PRESS-Book-Burning-and-Censorship)

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Gutenberg at Work in His Shop

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Martin Luther - Bible Translation in German

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