

# **The Printing Revolution**

Economic, Renaissance, and Reformation Impacts

## **Rhys Balasuit**

Since this was my first year participating in The National History Day Competition, I wanted to work and study something that was significant and tremendous to the advancement in history. I knew that the Renaissance era and anything occurring near that time period fits into the theme of Breaking Barriers in History for its important breakthroughs and discoveries. There are so many crucial and substantial achievements made in the Renaissance time period. After examining through all the accomplishments made in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, I came across an invention that influenced several major events, discoveries, and historical figures: The Gutenberg Printing Press. I was unfamiliar with this topic but I found it interesting and intriguing that I wanted to make a website about it.

For my topic, the number of sources I came across were limited. Most of my primary sources were drawings, paintings, engravings, and carvings. Because the invention was created in such an early time period, finding primary sources was challenging. When considering sources, It is important to note that Johannes Gutenberg tried keeping his inventions and ideas a secret before it was eventually revealed. Most of my secondary sources were articles, documents and videos. Most of my gathered information was from Elizabeth Eisenstein, who was an American historian and made numerous books about Gutenberg's press and its impacts.

I chose the website category for my National History Day topic because I have experience designing websites, I wanted to work with something I was familiar and comfortable with. With the website, I was able to show my creativity and technical skills. Websites are easy to navigate as you can interact with links, music, videos, and other forms of multimedia. I also wanted to expand my knowledge about design software. Although, the website creator was not what I expected and many of the options presented were very limited, I was still able to work with it and share my information as I wanted.

My project relates to 'Breaking Barriers in History' because it has broken religious, educational, informational, and language barriers. The Printing Press proved to have a great impact in all of the Holy Roman Empire. The Christian unity was broken and so was the power of the church because of the Protestant Reformation. Protestantism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism were founded after Martin Luther published his works leading to the Reformation. Literacy and book production rates increased, supporting and promoting education with literacy. The communication of information and ideas were spreading quickly and efficiently. All of these are important advancements made in history that probably wouldn't have been possible without the printing press. Gutenberg's printing press isn't as good as the printers we have today, but without it, we wouldn't have made the growth and accomplishments that came from it.