

## ASSESS CONSEQUENCES

Assessing the consequences of an innovation requires us to consider the effects of the innovation on individuals and societies, not only when it was created but also over a longer time. To better understand the consequences, we can organize them into short term and long term, on the basis of how lasting the effects have been.

In this activity, you will identify the short-term and long-term consequences of the invention of the movable-type printing press.

1. **Analyze:** Analyze the sources to identify the consequences of the invention of the movable-type printing press.
2. **Consider:** Consider how the consequences affected the economy, politics, the environment, and social life.
3. **Identify:** Identify which consequences were short term and which were long term.
4. **Communicate:** Create a web diagram. Place the invention of the movable-type printing press in the centre. Record the consequences moving outward, from short term to long term.



“The movable type printing press was the great innovation in early modern information technology. The first printing press was established in Mainz, Germany, between 1446 and 1450. Over the next fifty years the technology diffused across Europe. Between 1450 and 1500, the price of books fell by two-thirds, transforming the ways ideas were disseminated and the conditions of intellectual work.”

– Jeremiah Dittmar, *economist*, 2011

## CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGES IN PRINTING METHODS

Like many innovations, the printing process developed over time in various parts of the world. During the 600s in China, woodblock printing was common. Woodblock printing involved carving raised characters and patterns into a block of wood. Ink was then applied, and the block of wood was pressed onto paper. By the 1000s, Chinese printers were using movable type. This involved creating individual characters that were put together to form words, which were then inked. The characters could be used again and again to create different words and documents.

In the 1440s, a German man named Johannes Gutenberg drew on older technologies to develop a new printing method. His method used movable metal type and a screw press. This enabled printers to assemble an entire page of text before inking and printing it.



This photo shows movable metal type stored in a type drawer.

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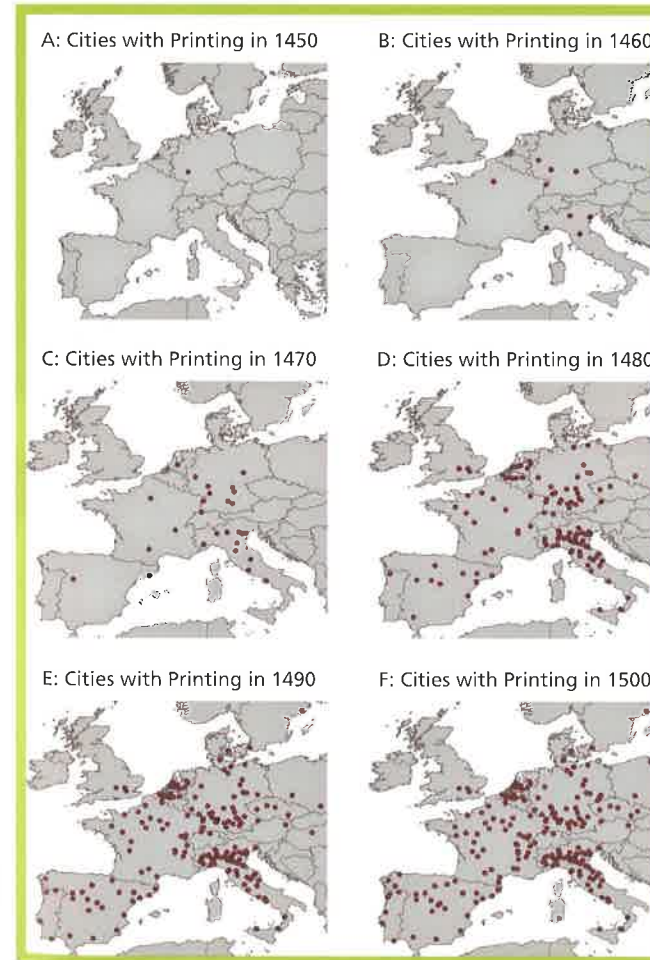


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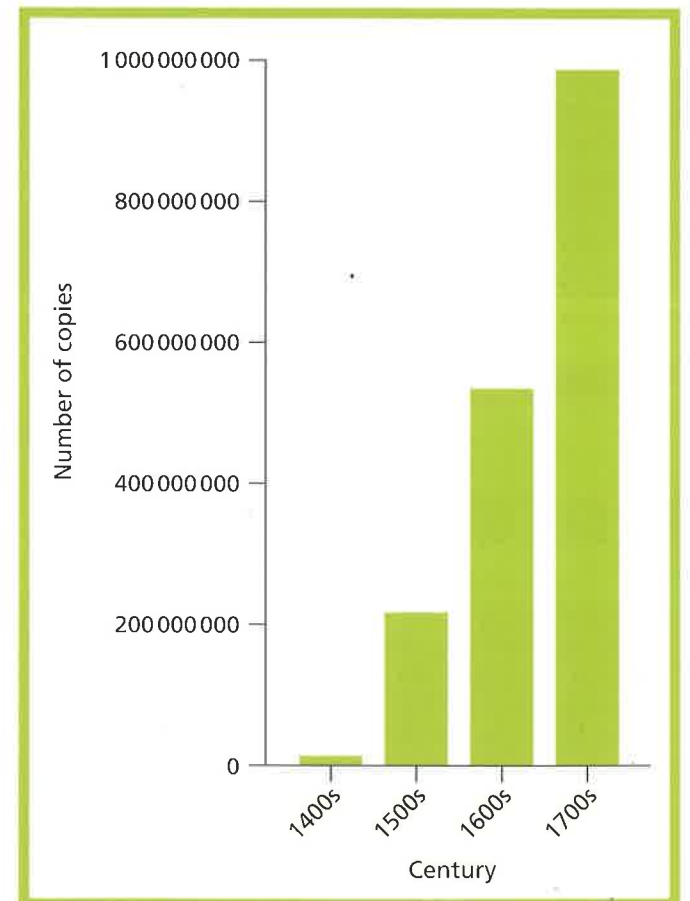


This drawing was created in 1877 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the first printed book in England. It depicts English printer William Caxton showing a printed page to King Edward IV. Edward's wife, Elizabeth, their children, and members of the royal court are watching. One of Caxton's helpers is using a screw press to print one page at a time.

The Spread of Movable-Type Printing Presses, 1450 to 1500



Books Printed in Europe,\* 1450 to 1800



\* excludes Russia and areas controlled by the Ottoman Empire