

Who was Johann Gutenberg?



NATIONAL
PRINT MUSEUM
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Johann Gutenberg was a very important man, often called the 'Father of Printing'. Before his inventions everything had to be copied out by hand over and over again, which wasn't much fun (a bit like doing lines if you've been naughty in school!). Old books that were copied out by hand were called manuscripts.

Can you think of a very famous manuscript?

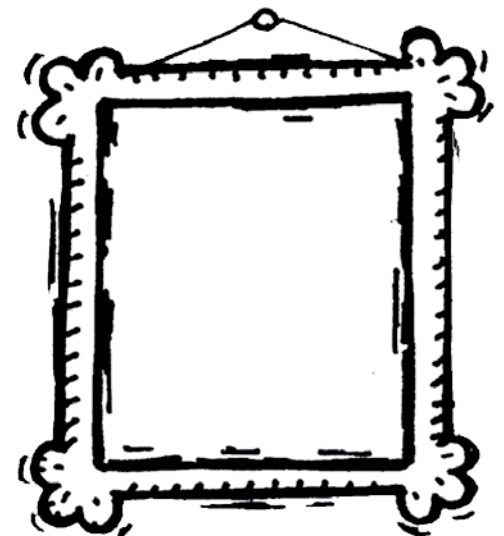
(If you don't know, ask an adult for help)

A really, really long time ago, in the 1440s, Johann Gutenberg invented two things which made it possible to produce lots of books very quickly. These two inventions were a wooden printing press and a mould of each letter of the alphabet, which were used to make metal stamps of all the letters. These inventions made him very famous, but not until after he died! Not very many people knew who he was when he was alive.

We don't even know what he looked like because there were no photographs in those days and no one painted any pictures of him. Do you think this might have been because he was really ugly?! Years after he died some artists painted pictures of what they thought he might have looked like. Use your imagination and draw a picture of what you think Johann Gutenberg might have looked like into the fancy frame.

Johann Gutenberg's real name was Johann Gensfleisch zur Laden (bet you can't say that quickly!)

Can you guess what country he might have been from?



Fact Alert!

The first book printed using Gutenberg's inventions was the 42-Line Bible.

Help Gutenberg find his way
through the maze to his printing press!

