

Expository Essay Outline

1. Introduction

1. Claim that the printing press marks the end of the Middle Ages.
2. Provide background on the low levels of literacy before the printing press.
3. Present the thesis statement: The invention of the printing press increased the circulation of information in Europe, paving the way for the Reformation.

2. Situation before the printing press

1. Discuss the very high levels of illiteracy in medieval Europe.
2. Describe how literacy and thus knowledge and education were mainly the domain of religious and political elites.
3. Indicate how this discouraged political and religious change.

3. Invention and spread of the printing press

1. Describe the invention of the printing press in 1440 by Johannes Gutenberg.
2. Show the implications of the new technology for book production.
3. Describe the rapid spread of technology and the printing of the Gutenberg Bible.
4. Link to the Reformation.

4. Printing press's influence on the Reformation

1. Discuss the trend for translating the Bible into vernacular languages during the years following the printing press's invention.
2. Describe Luther's own translation of the Bible during the Reformation.
3. Sketch out the large-scale effects the Reformation would have on religion and politics.

5. Conclusion

1. Summarize the history described.

2. Stress the significance of the printing press to the events of this period.