

DIRECTIONS: Read both accounts of the invention of the printing press.

The printing press was probably the most revolutionary invention every conceived. Not a single aspect of human life has been untouched by it. How do such ideas come about? In the case of the printing press, it is believed that several influences converged. The first is that Gutenberg knew how book covers were produced at the time. The title and author of the book were punched into a piece of leather, which was then wrapped around the manuscript. The second is that Gutenberg worked at the mint as a teenager. The mint is where money is produced, and it is believed that understanding how metal was pressed into coins in conjunction with how letters were pressed into a book cover may have started Gutenberg thinking about how metal letters might be used to press words onto a book's pages.

Towards the end of 1430, Johann Gutenberg was in dire

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financial straits, and was desperate to earn money. There was a trend at that time of attaching small mirrors to a hat or a piece of clothing, with the idea being that the mirrors would soak up healing powers when one visited holy places or icons. The significance of this to Gutenberg was that he realized that there was a great deal of money to be made in creating mass amounts of cheap products. Printing, at that time, was very primitive. It involved cutting letters or images into blocks of wood, dipping the block in ink, and then stamping the letter or image onto paper. Because he had experience working in a mint, which used machines to produce mass numbers of coins, he knew that if he could use cut blocks in a machine, he could print much faster, and be able to reproduce even more texts. But instead of using wooden blocks he used metal. Gutenberg's invention was called a "moveable type" machine since the same letters could be moved to different places on the page to create different sentences. The first book Gutenberg produced with his moveable type machine was the Bible.



Name _____ **Comparing Authors**



Compare and contrast how the authors present the invention of the printing press.
