

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD **+ -**

POWER TO THE PEOPLE: LUTHER, TYNDALE, AND THE ROAD TO DEMOCRACY

This segment comes from **EPISODE 2: RIGHTS + WRONGS**.

Modern Westerners take it for granted that every life is valuable. But ideas like equality before the law and the importance of caring for the vulnerable are by no means self-evident. So where did they come from? Why are we so attached to the idea of “inalienable human rights”? This segment looks at how the idea that everyone should be able to read the Bible had a huge impact on our world.

THEME QUESTION

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states: “Everyone has the right to education.” Why do you think education is recognised as a universal human right?

ENGAGE

1. Look at this graph of world literacy rates over time, from Our World in Data.

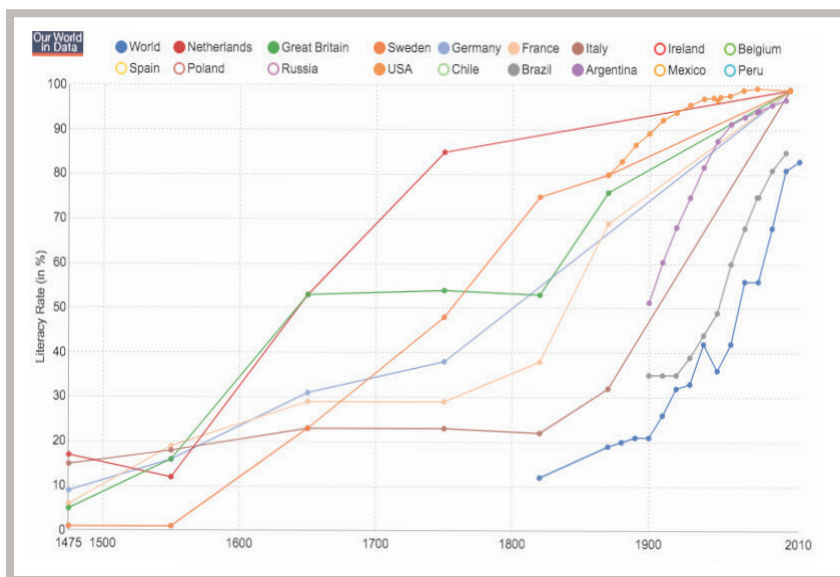
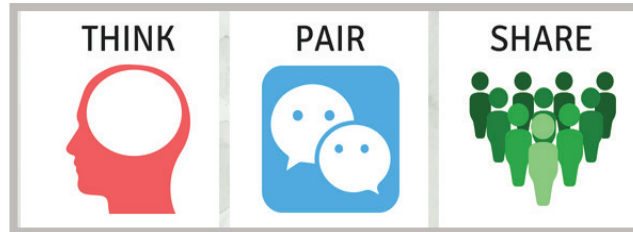


IMAGE: Literacy rates around the world from the 15th century to present by Max Roser, Our World in Data, available at <https://ourworldindata.org/literacy> under a Creative Commons BY-SA 4.0 Licence.

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- a. How have literacy rates around the world changed over time?
- b. Choose two things that you find interesting from the graph and share them with another student.

2.



- a. Why is reading such an important skill?
 - b. Why do you think all schools around the world teach children to read?
3. Imagine going about a regular day in your life without knowing how to read. How would you feel? What challenges would you face in different contexts (e.g. at home, on public transport, at school, eating out, etc)?



UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE



WATCH the segment: “Luther, Tyndale, and the road to democracy” (cpx.video/literacy)

1. Describe how medieval clergymen saw their role in relation to the Bible.
2. Outline some of the objections church authorities had regarding translating the Bible into local languages.
3. Describe the impact in Germany and abroad of Luther’s translation of the Bible in the 16th century.
4. What barriers did Tyndale face as he tried to produce an English Bible? What motivated him to continue?
5. Write a short dialogue of how the conversation between Tyndale and the clergyman might have gone, ending with Tyndale’s statement “If God allows me to live long enough, I will cause the boy who drives the plough to know more of the scriptures than you!”



6. How did the actions of Luther and Tyndale:
- Challenge the attitude that “the ordinary person is somehow unworthy of learning, or incapable of independent thought”?
 - Undermine political authoritarianism and promote democracy?
 - Impact worldwide literacy?

BIBLE FOCUS

READ Psalm 119:97-104.

- Describe the way the psalmist feels about God’s word.
- Make a list of the ways the psalmist gains value from God’s word.
- Which does the psalmist give higher authority to: his teachers and elders, or the word of God? Why?

READ 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

- Paul states that Scripture can make you “wise for salvation”. What do you think he means by this?
- Where does Paul say the Scriptures come from?
- In your own words, outline the ways that the Scriptures are considered to be useful.
- How might these verses have motivated Luther and Tyndale to translate the Bible?

APPLY

1. Imagine you are William Tyndale about to be tried for heresy and executed. Write a diary entry from the evening before the trial.
2. Martin Luther said:

“For some years now, I have read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant.”

- a. Why do you think reading the Bible was so important to Luther?
 - b. The culture in many churches today is for members to read the Bible by themselves on a regular basis. Explain why this practice might be valued.
3. In small groups, choose one of the following literacy projects from Bible Society Australia. Read the information on the web page and design a poster about the literacy project to display in the classroom.
 - a. [Young Refugees in Lebanon \(cpx.video/lebanon\)](http://cpx.video/lebanon)
 - b. [Egypt \(cpx.video/egypt\)](http://cpx.video/egypt)
 - c. [Pakistan \(cpx.video/pakistan\)](http://cpx.video/pakistan)

EXTEND

1. Read this article, “[How Martin Luther and ‘Christianity’s dangerous idea’ made the world we live in](http://cpx.video/dangerous)” (cpx.video/dangerous) by CPX’s Barney Zwartz. Explain why Luther’s actions could be considered dangerous.