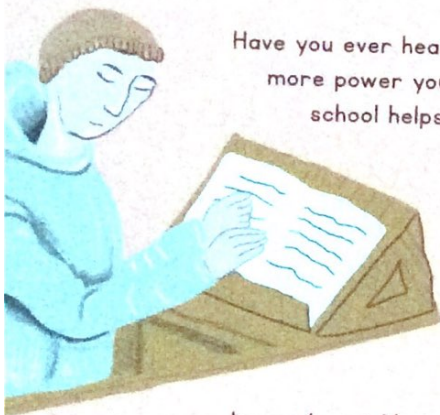


# WORD POWER

Words can change  
the world!



Have you ever heard the phrase 'knowledge is power'? It's true. The more you know, the more power you have to make good decisions. That is why learning and working hard at school helps you to do well in life when you are older.

Today, information is all around us – in books, on TV, websites and social media. But that wasn't always the case. In the Middle Ages, knowledge was only found in books, which were written out by hand. This meant they were rare and expensive, and no one except rich people and the powerful, wealthy church could afford them.

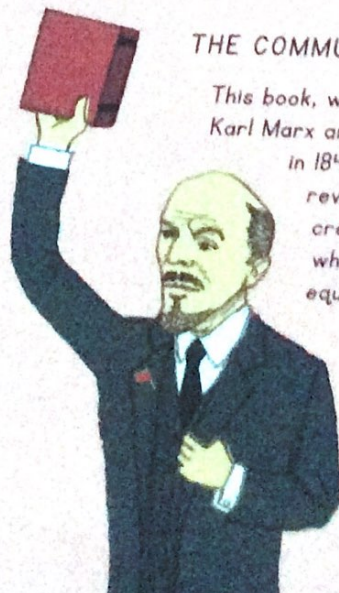
When the **printing press** was invented in Europe in the 15th century, everything changed. Suddenly, books could be made quickly and cheaply, and ordinary people could afford them. As more people learned to read, they began to question what they were being told by the people in charge. Over time, power moved away from rich people and the church towards ordinary people.

The words and ideas in some books have been so powerful that they have **changed the world**. Books have spread new ways of thinking, sparked violent revolutions and helped to bring about changes to society.



## UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

American Harriet Beecher Stowe's best-selling novel, published in 1852, told the story of Uncle Tom, a black slave. It helped to change attitudes and end slavery in the US.



## THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

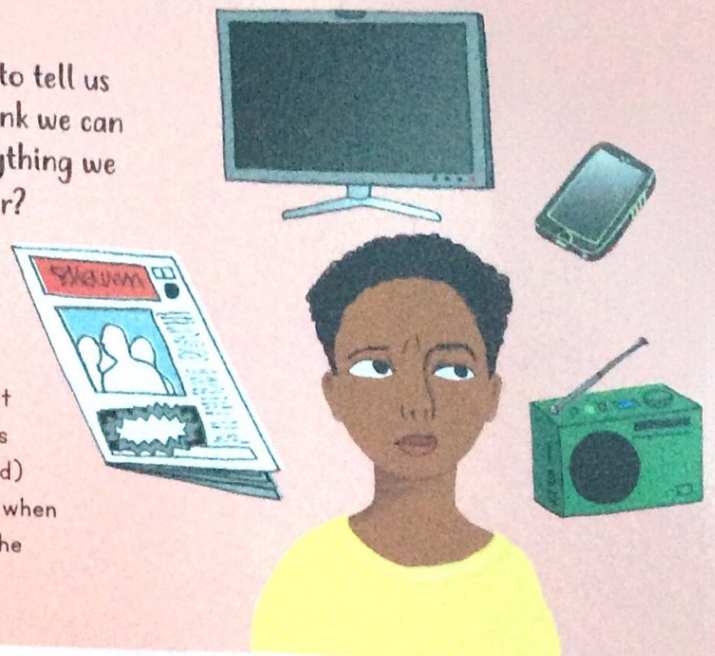
This book, written by Germans Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848, argued that revolution would create a society where everyone was equal. The ideas in it inspired the Russian Revolution of 1917 and have influenced people around the world.

Today, a lot of the information we read comes from the media (that's TV, newspapers, radio, websites, social media and adverts). What we read or listen to can have a big influence on what we think, which makes the media very powerful.

THINKING  
POINT

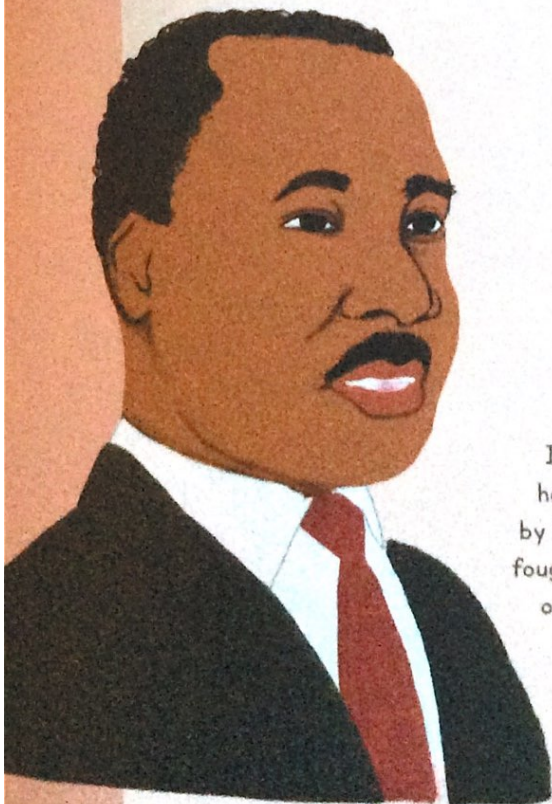
We trust the media to tell us the truth. Do you think we can always believe everything we read and hear?

Sometimes, a state can use the media to influence what people think by controlling what they read or hear. This can be through **propaganda**, which is biased (one-sided) information. Or it can be through **censorship**, which is when people aren't allowed to read or listen to things that the state doesn't want them to.



## THE MAN WHO HAD A DREAM

'I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.'



It's not just written words that have power. Spoken words can have power too. One of the most famous speeches ever made was by **Martin Luther King Jr.**, an African-American activist who fought to give people of all races the same rights. In 1963, he helped organise a huge demonstration, where he gave his great 'I have a dream' speech. His words and actions helped to bring about the Civil Rights Act the following year, which banned discrimination against people because of their race. King was assassinated in 1968, but his powerful words live on.