



The Written Word

Since time immemorial mankind has used language to try to persuade others of the rightness of their point of view. In early times, cave walls were painted to commemorate practices and exploits in hunting and ceremony. In time, writing systems developed in which one could record thoughts through impressions in clay. In the middle ages, learned men scribed humanity's written treasures one letter at a time to pass on to future generations.

However, such systems were cumbersome, leaving printing and book-making to select few, and ownership of printed works a rare and valuable privilege. All that changed in the 1450's when Gutenberg introduced moveable type to the west. Within 30 years, pamphlets had become a popular medium in which to publish everything from mathematical proofs to political diatribe.

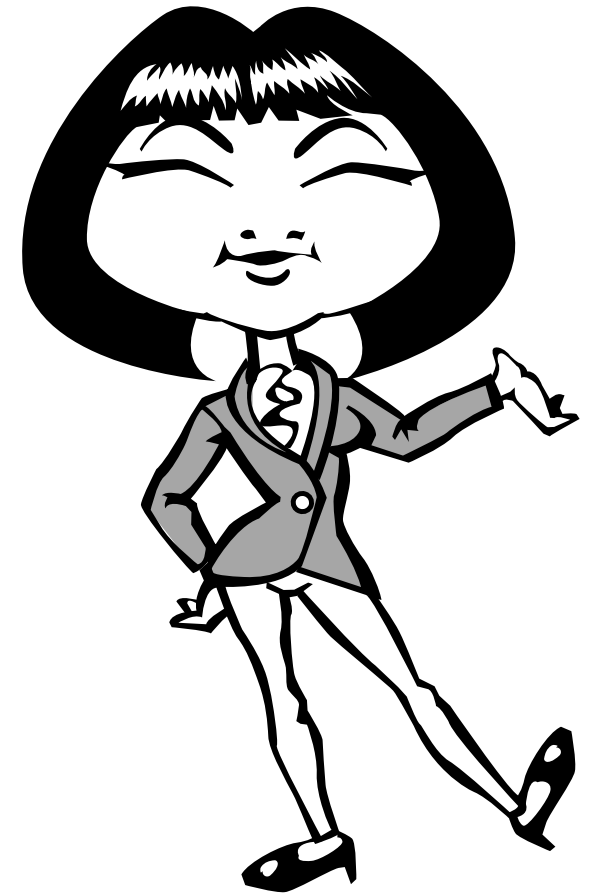
Today, if you've ever walked down a crowded street, or even stayed in your own home minding your own business, you will more than likely be offered pamphlets at some point. Although some can be educational, most are thrown away without even being looked at, and are worth less than the paper on which they're printed.

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SO YOU WANT
TO HAND ME A
PAMPHLET...

(Information You Should Know)





YOUR CRAZY RELIGIOUS STORY?

Or Just a Righteous Cause?

There are thousands of religions among the peoples of this world. Each one has many ideas and beliefs that they deem valuable, and many would like to share that value with others. Unfortunately, one man's God is another man's heresy, and most religious pamphlets end up, at best, ignored.

Other people belong to important political or social movements, and need popular support in order to further their causes. For such people, a pamphlet may seem a cheap and quick method to disseminate their information. Unfortunately, no known successful popular uprising can be directly traced back to that organization's pamphlet-distributing activities.

The most successful pamphlets appear to be ones that convey factual information rather than opinions or beliefs, and impart on the reader warnings, ideas, or knowledge. Pamphlets such as "Chlamydia-- What's It Going To Cost You?" and similar ones available from the Oregon Health Services, STD, HIV, TB Program, 800 NE Oregon St Suite 1105 Portland, OR 97232, are good examples of pamphlets that contain both facts and warnings.

Great Pamphlets In History

| When | What |
|-------------|---|
| 1470's | Pamphlets on Algorithmus likely the earliest pamphlets on arithmetic. |
| 1556 | Earliest pamphlets on Nostrodamus in France |
| 1645 | Blaise Pascal pamphlet on "adding machine" |
| 1870 | Marx uses pamphlets to promote Commune |
| 1876 | Pamphlets describe cooking new recipes, starting with Chocolate |
| late 1800's | Wells-Barnett espouses militant action against racial lynchings |
| 1991 | Millions of pamphlets drop in Kuwait to warn Iraqi soldiers of imminent fiery death |

Other Suggested Approaches

Handing out pamphlets is not your only option. Other approaches might include:

- Standing on a soap-box shouting loudly to passer-bys
- Calling in to talk radio shows and regaling the host with your "information"
- Reserving time on public access cable channels
- Writing stern letters to your favorite magazine, congressperson, or journal
- Stickers on biology textbooks
- Minding your own business

