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MARTIN LUTHER

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A Re-creation of His 1521 Trial for Heresy





MARTIN LUTHER

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ALLYSON STELLA, the author of MARTIN LUTHER, has written three other simulations for **Interact** in the American Health series: CIGARETTE ON TRIAL, CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON MARIJUANA USE, and SCHOOL BOARD HEARING ON TEENAGE ALCOHOL ABUSE. She received her B.S. degree in health science and a supplementary credential in social studies from Cal State Long Beach and teaches American History at East Middle School. She serves as the social studies mentor teacher for the Downey Unified School District in Downey, California. In her spare time Allyson enjoys American history, antique shopping and spending time with her husband Rick and daughter Markie Ann.

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10200 Jefferson Boulevard

P.O. Box 802

Culver City, CA 90232

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Martin Luther

In the history of the United States, we as Americans have enjoyed the freedom to challenge the philosophies and ideas of our government and, through our Constitution's amending process, to make changes in our government.

In other countries and in other times, freedoms haven't always been granted. During the 15th and 16th centuries Europeans lived under the Catholic Church doctrine. At that time many Christians lost confidence in the church's ability to provide leadership. Many church leaders became interested in world affairs and especially Italian politics. Some even led questionable lives, charging Christians large fees for baptism, marriages, and funerals, and then also selling indulgences for past sins. At this historical time many of the faithful began clamoring for reform.

In this context, Martin Luther, father of the Reformation, appeared and ignited the fiery controversies over controversial church teachings. In his 95 Theses, Luther attacked church practices as well as its leaders. For his efforts Martin Luther was excommunicated from the church and charged with heresy.

Your students will re-create Martin Luther's debate with Johann "John" Maler von Eck at Leipzig and his trial in Worms in 1521. During the preparation, the trial itself, and the follow-up students will learn the issues that confronted Luther and other Christians in the 16th century. Some students will assume roles such as Emperor Charles V, members of the Diet, Luther himself, and various townspeople or spectators inside the Bishop's Hall in Worms, Germany. This re-creation's purpose goes beyond understanding the 1521 trial. Your students will also understand Martin Luther's impact on later generations and the reforms that were made in church teachings and practices. Specifically your students will experience the following:

Knowledge

1. Understand the teachings, practices and influences of the Catholic Church on European Christian society in the 1520s.
2. Identify Martin Luther's contribution to the Reformation.
3. Know how one person can fight against unsavory practices and have a major impact on history.
4. Understand how a religious trial of the 16th century was conducted.



PURPOSE - 2

Skills

1. Outline major issues discussed in the trial.
2. Utilize oral skills to sway opinion toward one side or the other.

Feelings

1. Try to do one's best while playing a role which prosecutes or defends Martin Luther.
2. Take a stand for or against Martin Luther in his battle against Catholic Church doctrine.
3. Sense what it was like to live in the 1520s and deal with a dangerous issue such as religious heresy when the outcome could mean reform, banishment, or death.



OVERVIEW

The trial of Martin Luther is given but a few paragraphs in most history books. He and the battle he fought—reforming of the Catholic Church—deserve more study. For Martin Luther symbolizes the split within Christianity between Protestantism and Catholicism. This split affected all nations in Europe in their political, social, and economic development. Martin Luther also continues to be the source of strong influence in Christian thinking, and, in doing so, he has bequeathed to many Americans a rich and colorful religious heritage.

The trial of Martin Luther took place in the Bishop’s Palace in Worms, Germany, from April 17 to April 26, 1521. The actual questioning and the speeches were made on April 17 and 18. Between April 18 and the day his fate was announced on April 26, Luther was counseled many times to take back at least a few of the statements he wrote in his books and pamphlets. Each time, he stood his ground and refused.

In this interactive activity, your students will participate first in a re-creation of the debate between Martin Luther and John Eck at Leipzig, which occurred two years prior to Luther’s trial in Worms. Here, Luther and Eck will debate the theological issues stated in Luther’s 95 Theses. On the following day (or the same day) your students will stage a re-creation of Martin Luther’s trial before the Diet of Worms. A debriefing will follow the trial as townspeople (audience members) of Worms will be interviewed on the information discussed during the trial.

As a teacher you may want to add your own creative ideas to enhance this re-creation. The more you strive to make the trial seem realistic, the more your students will respond and play their roles with dramatic flair.



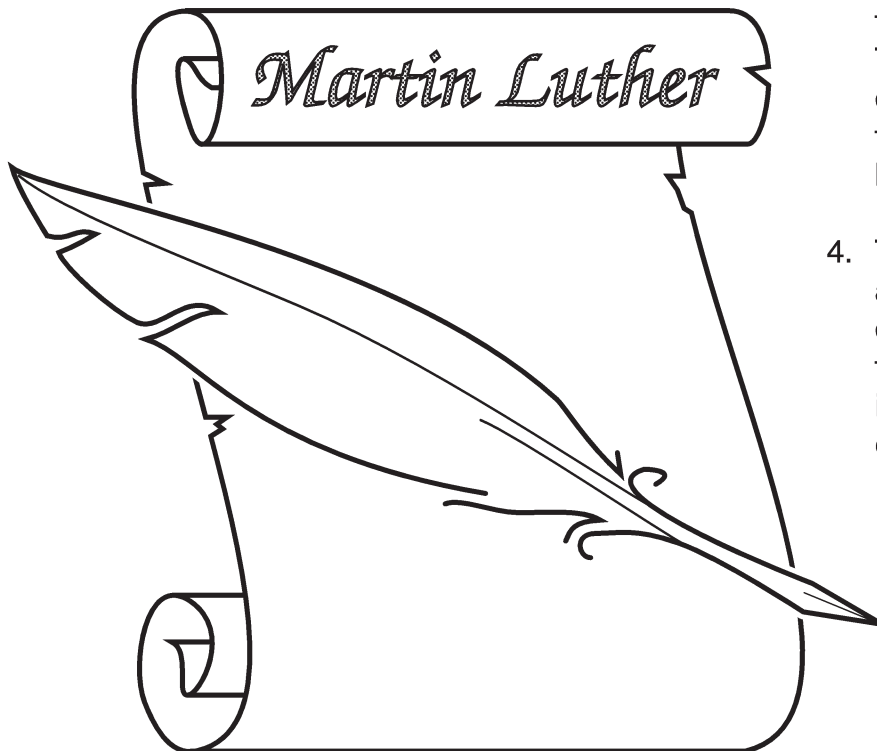
Teaching about religion will require care and tact on your part, but students do need opportunity during their identity crisis years to discuss the impact of religious beliefs upon history.





HISTORICAL ACCURACY

1. In the debate between Martin Luther and John Eck, your students will re-create this event the day before or on the same day of the trial. In actuality the debate occurred about two years prior to the trial. You may want to have a student pose as a stagehand who walks across the room with a sign that reads ***“Two years later!”***
2. Some of the persons serving on the Diet of Worms are fictitious. For educational purposes questions were created in order to extract Luther’s theological beliefs. In the real trial Luther was asked few questions; he then responded with lengthy speeches.



3. In the actual trial in Worms, Luther was primarily questioned by the archbishop of Trier. To involve more students who are members of the Diet, the questioning has been divided among the Diet.
4. The Edict of Worms was actually issued a couple of days after the trial, but for time’s sake, the emperor will issue Luther’s fate at the end of the trial that day.



SETUP/TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1

Before the debate

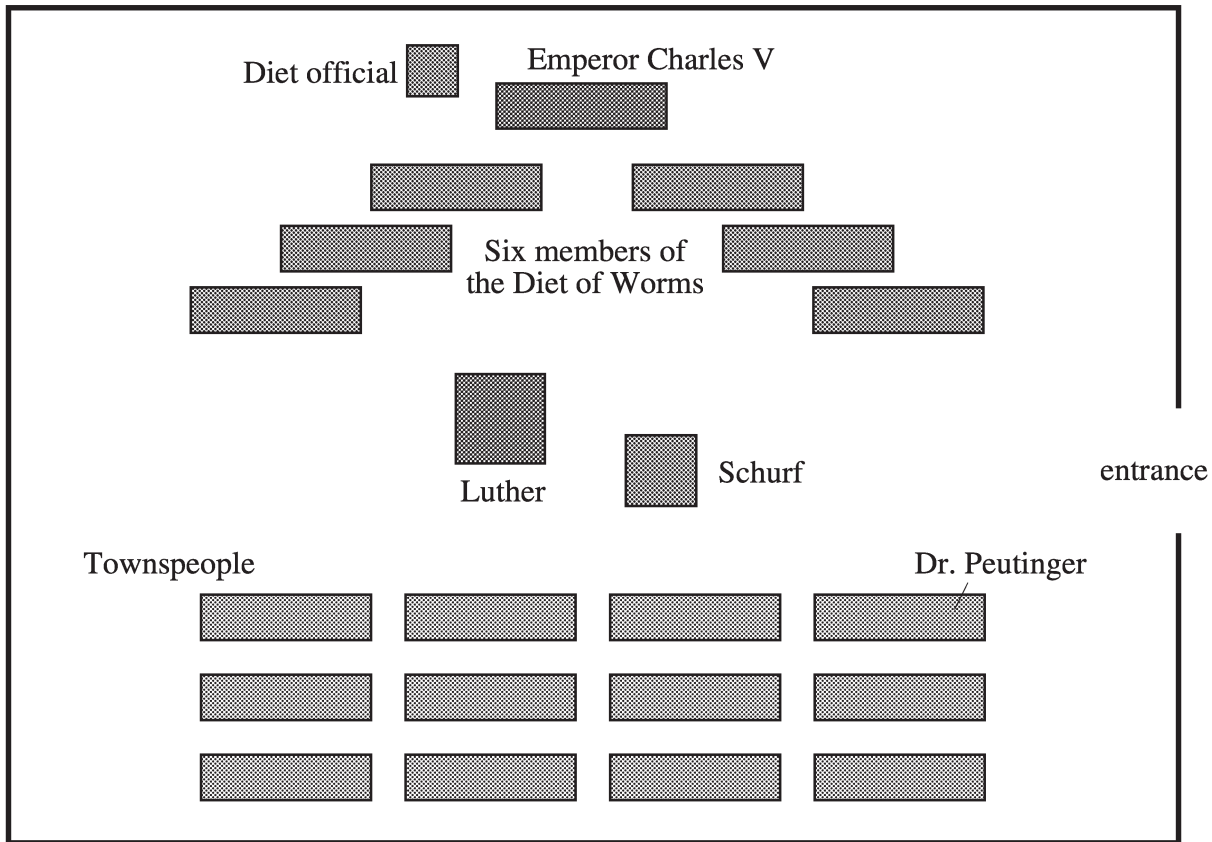
1. About a week before the debate, duplicate the following items in the quantities designated for each class:
 - ROLE SHEET FOR MARTIN LUTHER (1)
 - ROLE SHEET FOR JOHN ECK (1)
 - ROLE SHEET FOR MODERATOR/INTERVIEWER (1)
2. About four days before the debate is scheduled to begin, select students to assume the above roles. You may want to ask for volunteers.
3. If you wish to use the VOCABULARY and the CROSSWORD PUZZLE activities during your study, duplicate these items in the quantities designated for each class:
 - VOCABULARY (class set)
 - CROSSWORD PUZZLE (class set)

Before the trial

1. About one week before the trial is to begin, duplicate the following items in the quantities designated for each class:
 - TRIAL SEQUENCE AND PROCEDURE SHEET (20)
 - ROLE SHEET FOR MARTIN LUTHER (1)
 - ROLE SHEET FOR EMPEROR CHARLES V (1)
 - SUPPORTING ROLES 1 (7); 2 (3); 3 (2); 4 (2); 5 (2); 6 (2); 7 (1).
2. At least four days before the trial is to begin, assign roles for participants in the trial. You may want to ask for volunteers; however, it is suggested that you dictate the major roles of responsibility and allow volunteers to assume the minor roles.
3. Three days before the trial and debate is to begin, start leaving quotes on the chalkboard. (See Optional Creative Ideas.)
4. At least one day before the debate/trial, make sure that the members of the Diet and Luther have the opportunity to meet with each other to secure their plans.
5. Prepare lessons prior to the debate/trial which deal with the Reformation. (A film, video, filmstrip, or lecture would be appropriate.)
 - If you wish to use the VOCABULARY and CROSSWORD PUZZLE activities, hand them out and establish due dates. Both these activities are appropriate for cooperative learning. Consider pairing students to do these activities together.
6. The afternoon before the debate/trial begins, try to set up your class meeting hall. A suggested room arrangement appears at the top of the next page.



SETUP/TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



- Use folded sheets of paper or posterboard to make individual name sheets to place on the long table or desks where the Diet members will sit.

Archbishop of Trier

- Consider the Optional Creative Ideas on page 10.
- Ask if any student involved in the trial has any questions.

Day 1

- Introduce the whole class to the Reformation with a lecture, video segment, filmstrip, or some selected reading.
- Pass out the BACKGROUND ESSAY. After the class has read the essay, go over its contents *carefully* so that those students who won't be actively participating in the debate/trial will mentally be ready. You may want to make a study guide with



SETUP/TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3

questions about the reading. *Encourage students to learn how to use felt marking pens that college students are using so effectively in today's college classes.*

3. Allow 10-15 minutes for participants to meet with each other to take care of any last-minute questions.
4. Encourage role-players to dress up for their roles.
5. If you plan to use risers, have them delivered to your room.

Day 2: Martin Luther/John Eck debate

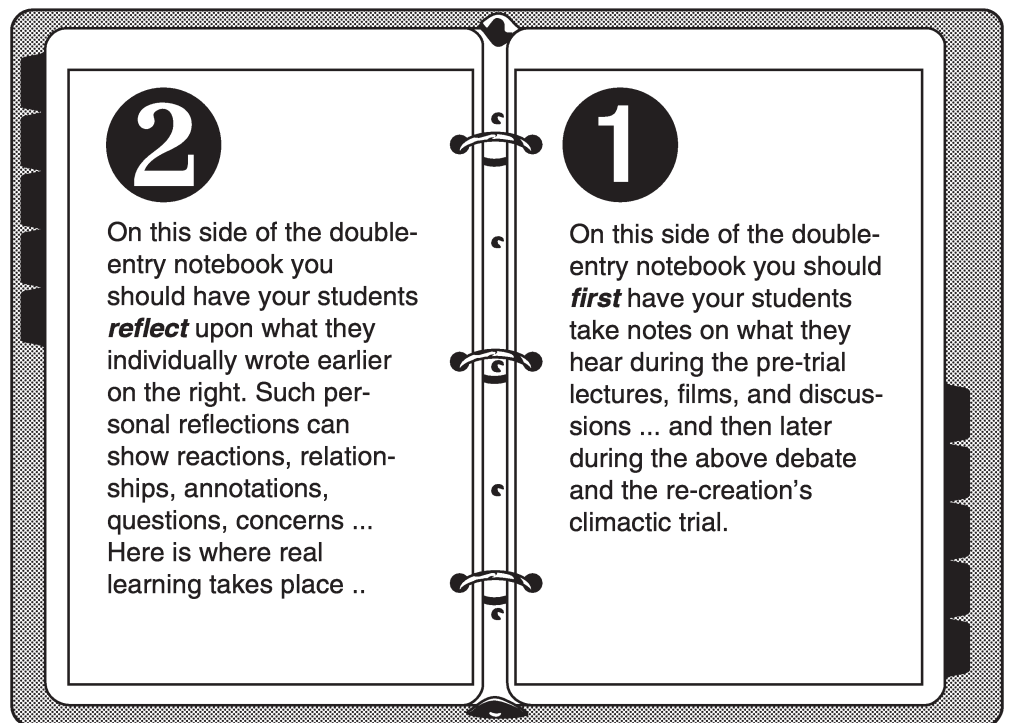
1. Make sure role-players are in their correct positions.
2. Just before the moderator begins the debate, ask if there are any questions about the material you handed out and discussed.
3. Remind the spectators observing the debate of their responsibility to take notes on the major issues of the debate. You may wish to use a variation of Interact's RESPONDING cross-disciplinary writing program that is partially demonstrated below and at the left.
4. Get the class quiet and allow the moderator to begin with the interview of Luther and follow with the debate.
5. If time permits, go over with the class the major issues brought up in the debate.

Research shows that the process of writing in the classroom is as important as the product...

*If you are serious about helping your students learn more through the writing process, please contact **Interact** about our powerful RESPONDING cross-disciplinary writing program. Hints about Responding's power can be found at the right under*

1
and

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SETUP/TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 4

Day 3 (or the same day) **The trial of Martin Luther**

1. Make sure all role-players are dressed in costume and in their correct positions.
2. Just before Emperor Charles V begins the trial, ask if there are any questions.
3. Remind the observers in the Bishop's palace of their responsibility to take notes on the trial's procedures, the issues discussed, and the trial's outcome.
4. Get the class quiet and allow the trial to begin, following the TRIAL SEQUENCE sheet.
5. Hold the debriefing (Interviews with the townspeople).

OPTION



*Students today rarely **listen** to anything approximating the spoken word on radio. Giving them this experience could allow you to open up an interesting discussion on how the various media are affecting the way we gather and process information in a free society.*

Day 4

1. To inform the students of what happened to Martin Luther after the trial, you may duplicate the HISTORICAL AFTERMATH sheet and have students read it before a general discussion. Here is a recommended variation: The author has found it fun to audio tape record the HISTORICAL AFTERMATH as if Martin Luther were telling his fate. *Record a mature male voice with a German accent if possible.*