This thesis examines constructions of what we might call popular readerships in early print. Focusing mainly on the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, it explores the ways in which a constituency of readers variously imagined as, for example, 'mean', 'common', or 'simple' are represented, instructed and discussed. As such, it is less an attempt to recover the reading habits of a particular social grouping, as rather an effort to trace contemporary attitudes towards that group's engagement with textual productions, and, more particularly, the anxieties that the perception of that engagement provoked. In doing so, I discuss the treatment of books and reading in an early printed conduct book, trace the attitudes of two particularly influential humanist writers, Desiderius Erasmus and Juan Luis Vives to reading, concentrating on their engagement with Bible-reading and women's reading respectively, before examining the importance of real and imagined 'common' readers in the religious disputes surrounding the production of vernacular Scripture. Here, I focus on the polemical disputations between English reformists-in-exile, and their conservative opponents, through the analysis of texts by Thomas More, William Tyndale, and, particularly, William Roye and Jerome Barlowe.

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The earliest books were written on tablets of wood or pieces of bark. In Greece and Rome the tablets were covered with wax and writing was. ... and Ivan Fyodorov in Russia. The more people could read the more books appeared. That led to opening more libraries. Now most countries have their own national libraries, for example, the British museum Library in London, ... ... the Library of Congress in the United States (which is the largest library with 90 million items), ... ... Bibliotheque Nationale in France ... ... the Beijing Library in China, ... ... the State Public Library in Moscow. Modern libraries do their best to help people get information. Printing is a process for reproducing text and images using a master form or template. The earliest non-paper products involving printing include cylinder seals and objects such as the Cyrus Cylinder and the Cylinders of Nabonidus. The earliest known form of printing as applied to paper was woodblock printing, which appeared in China before 220 AD. Later developments in printing technology include the movable type invented by Bi Sheng around 1040 AD and the printing press invented by Johannes The earliest books of the ancient world were written on papyrus and skins of young animals. These books took the form of a long strip, rolled from one cylinder to another. Though paper has been known in China since the first century, the secret of papermaking came to Europe much later. Early libraries were used only by scientists but later they were used by the public. In the 19th century a proper system of public libraries appeared. Now most countries have their own national libraries. Many old university libraries have rich collections of books: Oxford and Cambridge in England, Harvard and Yale in the United States.