

Renaissance and Reformation

*The Emergence of the First
Global Age (1450–1750)*



The Renaissance

The Reformation

Protestantism spreads

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Religion and thought



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will have learned about the Renaissance in Italy and Northern Europe, and be able to answer the following key questions:

- What was the Renaissance?
- How did the Renaissance begin and spread?
- Who were some key Renaissance thinkers?



In order to contextualize the Renaissance and Reformation, use this timeline to recap previous key historical events.

Either press on a date or drag the pointer along the timeline to find out information about what happened in each year.

Press **start** to begin.

start





What was the Renaissance?



The **Renaissance**, meaning “rebirth,” was a philosophical and artistic movement that began in Italy in the 14th century.

Italian scholars sought to revive ancient Greek and Roman culture. They studied classical literature, history, philosophy and art.



These scholars were known as **humanists**. They celebrated human achievement and potential. Unlike medieval thinkers, who had focused on the afterlife, humanists believed that pleasure and fulfilment could be achieved in the present.

Why do you think the Renaissance began?



Humanists exalted the ideal of the “universal man” who is skilled at everything from poetry to dancing to athletics.

This ideal was described in Baldassare Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* (1528).

For Castiglione, the perfect courtier should be “bold, stern, and always among the first, where the enemy are to be seen; and in every other place, gentle, modest, reserved... well versed in the poets, and not less in the orators and historians, and also proficient in writing verse and prose.”

What do you think was the Renaissance ideal of womanhood?



Examine these two images. On the left is an illustration from The *Rothschild Canticles*, a medieval prayer book. On the right is a painting by Jan van Eyck, a Northern Renaissance artist. Describe how the pictures differ. Then press the buttons to learn how artistic styles changed during the Renaissance.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Two of the greatest Italian Renaissance artists were **Leonardo da Vinci** and **Michelangelo Buonarroti**.

Leonardo was a painter, sculptor, architect, musician, scientist and inventor. Perhaps his most famous painting is the *Mona Lisa*, a portrait so realistic that it continues to inspire and captivate people today.

During his lifetime, Michelangelo was called *Il Divino* (“the divine one”). He painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and worked as an architect on St. Peter’s Basilica. His statue of David is inspired by Greek and Roman statues.



How did these two men exemplify humanist values?



Most medieval texts were written in Latin and focused on religion. By contrast, Renaissance writers discussed secular issues, often using the **vernacular** instead of Latin.

Francesco Petrararch (1304–1374), wrote angst-filled love sonnets to an ideal woman named Laura. His lyrical style influenced poets for hundreds of years.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1525) wrote *The Prince*, a guidebook for leaders. Unlike Castiglione, Machiavelli believed that most humans are selfish and corrupt. Because of this, he argued that it is more important for a ruler to be feared than loved.

Is it better for a leader to be feared or loved?



The Northern Renaissance



In the 1450s, Europe began to recover from the Black Death and the Hundred Years' War. A population boom contributed to the rise of a wealthy middle class eager to offer **patronage** to Italian artists. Northern Europeans soon integrated Renaissance ideas into their own cultures. The result was the **Northern Renaissance**. Press the highlighted regions to read about major Renaissance thinkers from that country.

Press **start** to begin.

start

