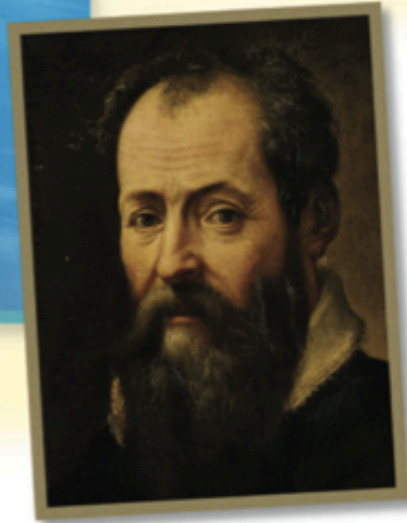


SECTION
1



Vasari designed the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, which houses his self-portrait.

A detail from the Uffizi



WITNESS HISTORY  AUDIO

An Artist Becomes a Biographer

In 1546, a young artist named Giorgio Vasari dined at the Cardinal's residence in Rome. The conversation turned to the amazing artistic achievement of Renaissance Italy. Vasari decided to record a tribute to all the important Italian artists who had contributed to this remarkably creative time period. Four years later, Vasari published his book *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. A true "Renaissance man"—he was an able painter and architect as well as a writer—Vasari also became a biographer and historian of his era.

Focus Question What were the ideals of the Renaissance, and how did Italian artists and writers reflect these ideals?

The Renaissance in Italy

Objectives

- Describe the characteristics of the Renaissance and understand why it began in Italy.
- Identify Renaissance artists and explain how new ideas affected the arts of the period.
- Understand how writers of the time addressed Renaissance themes.

Terms, People, and Places

humanism	Leonardo
humanities	Michelangelo
Petrarch	Raphael
Florence	Baldassare Castiglione
patron	Niccolò Machiavelli
perspective	

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas As you read, create an outline like the one below to record main ideas about the Italian Renaissance.

<p>I. What was the Renaissance?</p> <p>A. A changing worldview</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>B. A spirit of adventure</p>
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A new age had dawned in Western Europe, given expression by remarkable artists and thinkers. Europeans called this age the Renaissance, meaning "rebirth." It began in the 1300s and reached its peak around 1500. The Renaissance marked the transition from medieval times to the early modern world.

What Was the Renaissance?

The Renaissance was a time of creativity and great change in many areas—political, social, economic, and cultural. It marked a slow shift from an agricultural to an urban society, in which trade assumed greater importance than in the past. It was also a time when creative thinking and new technology let people comprehend and describe their world more accurately.

A New Worldview Evolves During the Renaissance, creative minds set out to transform their own age. Their era, they felt, was a time of rebirth after what they saw as the disorder and disunity of the medieval world.

Renaissance thinkers had a reawakened interest in the classical learning of Greece and Rome, which medieval scholars had preserved. They continued to use Latin as the language of the Church as well as for scholarship. Yet they produced new attitudes toward culture and learning. Medieval scholars had focused more on religious beliefs and spirituality. In contrast, Renaissance thinkers explored the richness and variety of human experience in

the here and now. At the same time, society placed a new emphasis on individual achievement. Indeed, the Renaissance ideal was a person with talents in many fields.

A Spirit of Adventure The Renaissance supported a spirit of adventure and a wide-ranging curiosity that led people to explore new worlds or to reexamine old ones. Navigators who sailed across the ocean, scientists who looked at the universe in new ways, and writers and artists who experimented with new forms and techniques all shared that spirit. In part, that spirit of adventure came from a new view of man himself. As Italian thinker Pico della Mirandola asserted in 1486: “To [man] it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills.”

Expressing Humanism At the heart of the Italian Renaissance was an intellectual movement known as **humanism**. Humanists studied the classical culture of Greece and Rome, but used that study to increase their understanding of their own times. Though most humanists were pious Christians, they focused on worldly subjects rather than on the religious issues that had occupied medieval thinkers. Humanists believed that education should stimulate the individual’s creative powers. They emphasized the **humanities**—subjects such as grammar, rhetoric (the study of using language effectively), poetry, and history—that had been taught in ancient Greek and Roman schools.

Francesco **Petrarch** (PEE trahrk), a Florentine who lived in the 1300s, was an early Renaissance humanist, poet, and scholar. He assembled a library of Greek and Roman manuscripts in monasteries and churches. In later years his efforts and those of others encouraged by his example enabled the works of Cicero, Homer, and Virgil to again become known to Western Europeans.

✔ **Checkpoint** What were the main characteristics of the Renaissance?

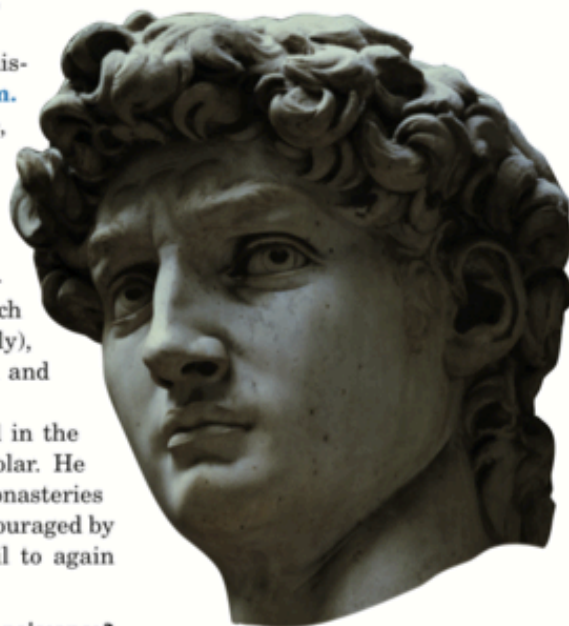
Italy: Cradle of the Renaissance

The Renaissance began in Italy. Over the next hundred years it spread to the rest of Europe, eventually transforming the entire Western world. Italy was the place where the Renaissance **emerged** for several reasons.

Italy’s History and Geography Renaissance thinkers had a new interest in ancient Rome. Italy had been the center of the Roman empire, and people could study its art and architecture. The Roman Catholic Church, based in Rome, supported many artists and scholars.

Italy’s location on the Mediterranean Sea also encouraged trade with the Muslim world just across the sea. Ships carrying a variety of goods docked at Italy’s many ports. Banking, manufacturing, and merchant networks developed to support trade. Italian merchants led the growth of trade across Europe during the late Middle Ages. Trade provided the wealth that fueled Italy’s Renaissance.

Trade routes also carried new ideas that were important in shaping the Renaissance. Muslim scholars had preserved and developed the scientific and technical knowledge of ancient Greece and Rome, which had been forgotten in medieval Europe. Contact through trade gave Italy access to the Muslim world’s wealth of knowledge.



Michelangelo’s David
Michelangelo sculpted his masterpiece *David* out of a block of marble left over from another sculpture. Completed in 1504, the statue was commissioned to express the power and strength of Florence.

Vocabulary Builder

comprehend—(kahn pree HEND) *v.* understand; take in
emerge—(ee MURJ) *v.* develop; rise from; become known



Italian Bankers


This painting from the 1400s depicts a typical scene in an Italian banking house. *How is the wealth of the banker shown in this image?*

Italy's Vibrant City-States Unlike the kingdoms of most of the rest of Europe, Italy was divided into many small city-states. Each Italian city-state was controlled by a powerful family and dominated by a wealthy and powerful merchant class. These merchant families exerted both political and economic leadership, and their interest in art and emphasis on personal achievement helped to shape the Italian Renaissance.

The Medici (MED uh chee) family of **Florence**, for example, ranked among the richest merchants and bankers in Europe. Cosimo de' Medici gained control of the Florentine government in 1434, and the family continued as uncrowned rulers of the city for many years. Cosimo's grandson Lorenzo, known as "the Magnificent," represented the Renaissance ideal. A clever politician, he held Florence together during difficult times in the late 1400s. He was also a generous **patron**, or financial supporter, of the arts. At Lorenzo's invitation, poets and philosophers frequently visited the Medici palace. Artists learned their craft by sketching ancient Roman statues displayed in the Medici gardens.

The Medicis' great wealth and influence transformed Florence. Perhaps more than any other city, it came to symbolize the energy and brilliance of the Italian Renaissance.

Like the ancient city of Athens, it produced a dazzling number of gifted poets, artists, architects, scholars, and scientists in a relatively short span of time.

 **Checkpoint** Why was Italy a favorable setting for the Renaissance?

Renaissance Art Flowers

The Renaissance attained its most glorious expression in its paintings, sculpture, and architecture. Wealthy patrons, popes, and princes played a major role in this artistic flowering. Ordinary people—who were beginning to appreciate human experiences not related to the Church—also played a role.

Reflecting Humanist Thought Renaissance art reflected the ideas of humanism. Like artists of the Middle Ages, Renaissance artists portrayed religious themes. However, they often set religious figures such as Jesus and Mary against classical Greek or Roman backgrounds. Painters also produced portraits of well-known figures of the day, reflecting the humanist interest in individual achievement. Renaissance artists studied ancient Greek and Roman works and revived many classical forms. The sculptor Donatello, for example, created a life-size statue of a soldier on horseback. It was the first such figure done since ancient times.

Using New Artistic Techniques Roman art had been very realistic, but in medieval times art became much more stylized. Renaissance painters returned to the realism of classical times by developing new techniques for representing both humans and landscapes. In particular, the rules of **perspective** allowed Renaissance artists to create realistic art. By making distant objects smaller than those close to the viewer, artists could paint scenes that appeared three-dimensional.

Political Europe About 1500

Geography Interactive
For Audio guided tour
Web Code: nap-1311



Other techniques enabled Renaissance artists to give their work energy and realism. Renaissance painters used shading to make objects look round and real, and new oil paints to reflect light. Painters and sculptors also studied human anatomy and drew from observing live models. As a result, they were able to portray the human body much more accurately than medieval artists had done.

Architecture: A "Social Art" Architecture was transformed in Renaissance Italy. Architect Leon Alberti described architecture as a "social art," meant to blend beauty with utility and improvement of society. Architects rejected the Gothic style of the late Middle Ages as disorderly. Instead, they adopted the columns, arches, and domes that had been favored by the Greeks and Romans. For the cathedral in Florence, Filippo Brunelleschi (broo may LAYS kee) created a majestic dome, which he modeled on the dome of the Pantheon in Rome. Like other Renaissance artists, Brunelleschi was multitalented. He studied art and sculpture with Donatello and was an accomplished engineer, inventing many of the machines used to construct his dome.

Map Skills The states and kingdoms of Italy lay at the center of Europe's sea trade.

- Locate** (a) Florence (b) Palermo (c) Crete
- Identify** Which republic controlled Corsica? Which kingdom controlled Sicily?
- Apply Information** Why were so many banking centers located in Italy?



Leonardo da Vinci Artist **Leonardo** da Vinci (duh VIN chee) (1452–1519) had an endless curiosity that fed a genius for invention. He made sketches of nature and of models in his studio, and dissected corpses to learn how bones and muscles work. As a result, Leonardo's paintings grip people with their realism. The *Mona Lisa* is a portrait of a woman whose mysterious smile has baffled viewers for centuries. *The Last Supper*, showing Jesus and his apostles on the night before the crucifixion, is both a moving religious painting and a masterpiece of perspective. Because Leonardo experimented with a new type of paint, much of *The Last Supper* decayed over the years. However, it has recently been restored.

Leonardo thought of himself as an artist. Yet his talents and accomplishments ranged over many areas, including botany, anatomy, optics, music, architecture, and engineering. He made sketches for flying machines and undersea boats centuries before the first airplane or submarine was actually built. Though most of his paintings are lost today, his many notebooks survive as a testament to his genius and creativity.

Michelangelo Artist **Michelangelo** Buonarroti (1475–1564), like Leonardo, had many talents—he was a sculptor, engineer, painter, architect, and poet. Michelangelo has been called a “melancholy genius” because his work reflects his many life-long spiritual and artistic struggles. In his twenties, he created marble masterpieces such as *David* and the

INFOGRAPHIC

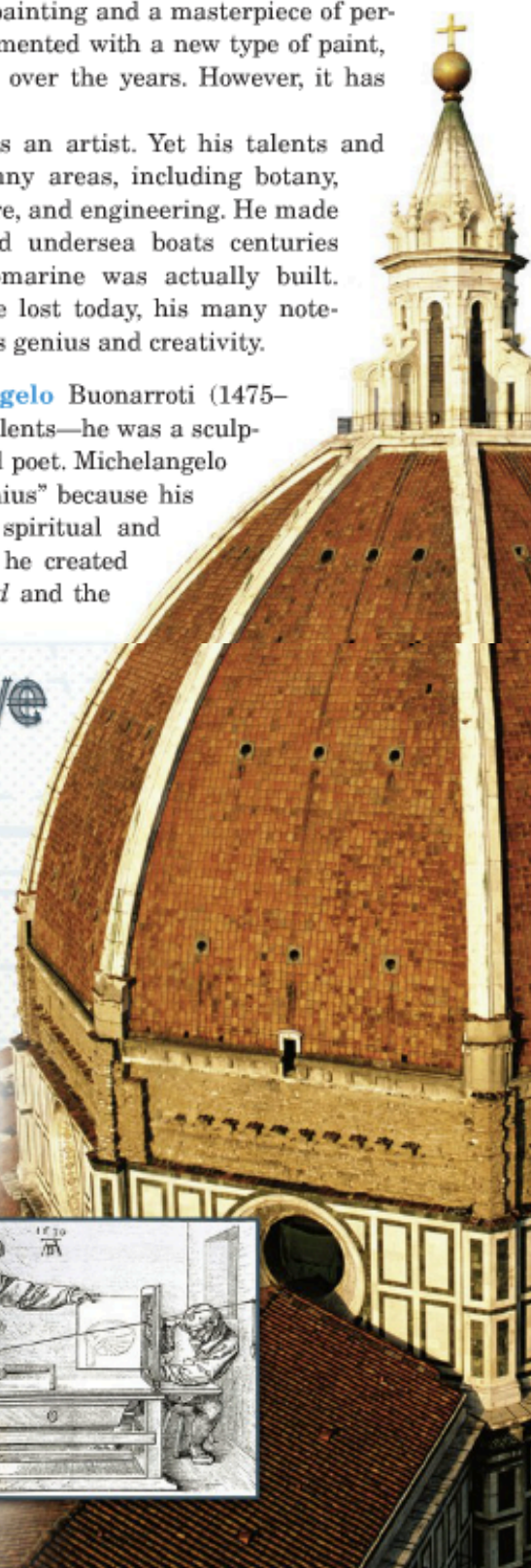
The Discovery of Perspective

Before the 1400s, artists did not know how to create perspective, or the technique of showing distant objects on flat surfaces the way the eye actually sees them. The discovery of perspective revolutionized art. Using simple geometry, Renaissance artists could for the first time reproduce what their eyes actually saw.



Brunelleschi is credited with inventing perspective. His many studies (left) helped him design Florence's Duomo, completed in 1436. At 185 feet (56 m) high, it was the largest domed structure built since A.D. 125. ▶

Artist Leon Alberti refined Brunelleschi's ideas. ▶ He wrote books explaining the rules of perspective, and developed the “perspective net” (right). To show perspective, the artist looks over an eyepiece and through the net at a model (far right). Then he reproduces the outlines of the model on paper with grids corresponding to those on the net.






Pietà. The *Pietà* captures the sorrow of the Biblical Mary as she cradles her dead son Jesus on her knees. Michelangelo's heroic statue of *David*, the Biblical shepherd who killed the giant Goliath, recalls the harmony and grace of ancient Greek tradition.

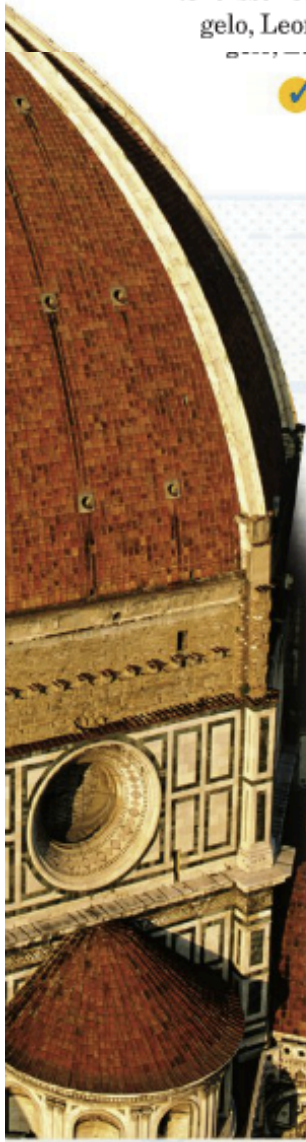
One of Michelangelo's greatest projects was painting a series of huge murals to decorate the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. The enormous task, which took four years to complete and left the artist partially crippled, depicted the biblical history of the world from the Creation to the Flood. Michelangelo was also a talented architect. His most famous design was for the dome of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. It served as a model for many later structures, including the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C.

Raphael A few years younger than Michelangelo, **Raphael** (rah fah EL) (1483–1520) was widely admired both for his artistic talent and “his sweet and gracious nature.” Raphael studied the works of the great masters but developed his own style of painting that blended Christian and classical styles. He is probably best known for his tender portrayals of the Madonna, the mother of Jesus. In *The School of Athens*, Raphael pictured an imaginary gathering of great thinkers and scientists, including Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and the Arab philosopher Averroës. With typical Renaissance self-confidence, Raphael included the faces of Michelangelo, Leonardo—and himself.

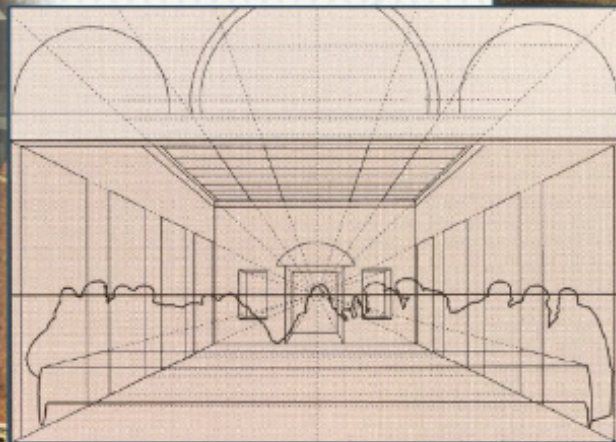
 **Checkpoint** How were Renaissance ideals reflected in the arts?

History Interactive

For: Interactive *The Last Supper*
Web Code: nap-1312



Leonardo eagerly explored perspective in his mural *The Last Supper*. He uses converging lines, like those shown below, to create a vanishing point. This vanishing point draws the viewer's eye to the space above Jesus, and gives the painting the illusion of space and depth. ▶



Thinking Critically

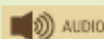
- 1. Apply Information** Why was the invention of perspective necessary for artists to achieve realism in painting?
- 2. Analyze Visuals** What other techniques bring the eye to the central figure of Jesus in *The Last Supper*?



In the mid-1500s, Giorgio Vasari wrote a biography of Leonardo da Vinci, whose self-portrait is shown here. Why is Leonardo da Vinci described today as an ideal “Renaissance man”?

Primary Source

“Sometimes, in supernatural fashion, beauty, grace, and talent are united beyond measure in one single person. . . . This was seen by all mankind in Leonardo da Vinci . . . so great was his genius, and such its growth, that to whatever difficulties he turned his mind, he solved them with ease. In him was great bodily strength . . . with a spirit and courage ever royal and magnanimous; and the fame of his name so increased, that not only in his lifetime was he held in esteem, but his reputation became even greater among posterity after his death.”



AUDIO

Writing for a New Society



Italian writers reflected the trademark Renaissance curiosity and interest in the humanities. Humanists and historians wrote works of philosophy and scholarship. Other writers developed a literature of guidebooks to help ambitious men and women who wanted to achieve success in the Renaissance world.

Castiglione’s Ideal Courtier The most widely read of these handbooks was *The Book of the Courtier*. Its author, **Baldassare Castiglione** (kahn teal YOH nay), describes the manners, skills, learning, and virtues that a member of the court should have. Castiglione’s ideal courtier was a well-educated, well-mannered aristocrat who mastered many fields, from poetry to music to sports.

Castiglione’s ideal differed for men and women. The ideal man, he wrote, is athletic but not overactive. He is good at games, but not a gambler. He plays a musical instrument and knows literature and history but is not arrogant. The ideal woman offers a balance to men. She is graceful and kind, lively but reserved. She is beautiful, “for outer beauty,” wrote Castiglione, “is the true sign of inner goodness.”

Machiavelli’s Successful Prince **Niccolò Machiavelli** (mahk ee uh VEL ee) wrote a guide for rulers on how to gain and maintain power. Unlike ancient writers such as Plato, Machiavelli did not discuss leadership in terms of high ideals. Instead, his book *The Prince* looked at real rulers in an age of ruthless power politics. Machiavelli stressed that the end justifies the means. He urged rulers to use whatever methods were necessary to achieve their goals.

Machiavelli saw himself as an enemy of oppression and corruption, but critics attacked his cynical advice. (In fact, the term “Machiavellian” came to refer to the use of deceit in politics.) Later students of government, however, argued that Machiavelli provided a realistic look at politics. His work continues to spark debate because it raises important ethical questions about the nature of government and the use of power.

Checkpoint How did Renaissance writings express realism?

SECTION

1

Assessment



Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1311

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas** Use your completed outline to answer the Focus Question: What were the ideals of the Renaissance, and how did Italian artists and writers reflect these ideals?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Make Generalizations** How was the Renaissance worldview different from that of the Middle Ages?
4. **Summarize** In what ways did Italian city-states encourage the Renaissance?
5. **Synthesize Information** How did humanism influence Renaissance painting and sculpture?
6. **Recognize Ideologies** Why were nature and human nature important to Renaissance artists and writers?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Generate Arguments

Consider the following thesis statement for a persuasive essay: Renaissance Italy produced some of the greatest writers and thinkers that the world has ever known. Next, generate a number of arguments that support that thesis. Rank your arguments in order of importance.