

Works of Michelangelo

Michelangelo used themes from the Bible in many of his art works. Above is his sculpture of Moses. As an architect, Michelangelo worked on the dome of St. Peter's, the church of the Pope, in Rome. **Compare and Contrast** Compare the

photo of St. Peter's with that of Notre Dame on page 44. How are they alike? How are they different?

Glories of the Renaissance

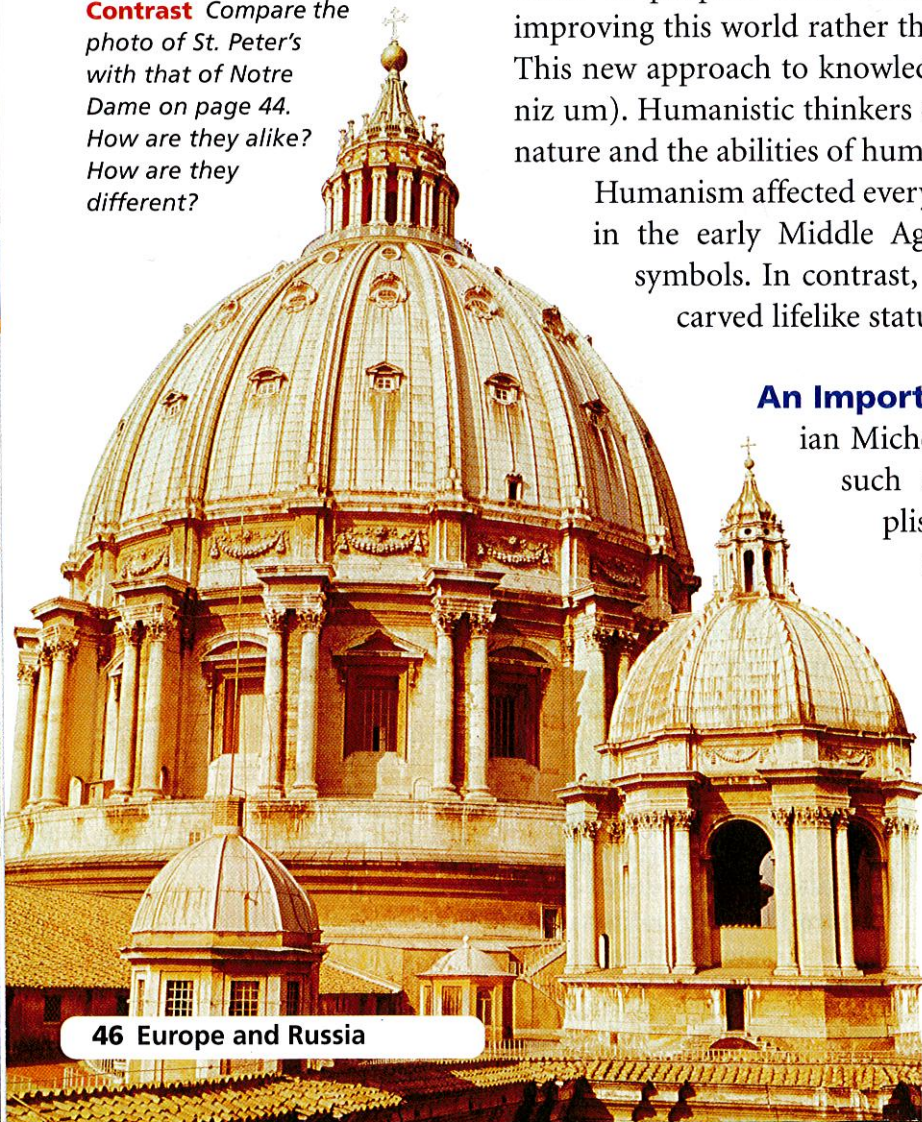
Columbus's search for a new route to the riches of the East was only one example of the movement sweeping Europe. The changes began in Italy in the 1300s and spread over the continent. Traders bought and sold goods across the region. The rich grew even richer. They had the time to enjoy art and learning—and the money to support artists and scholars. This period is called the **Renaissance** (REN uh sahns), or the rebirth of interest in learning and art. The Renaissance reached its peak in the 1500s.

Looking to the Past In trying to understand the world around them, Renaissance thinkers re-examined, or looked at once again, the ideas of Greek and Roman thinkers. People learned again about the ancient world's great poetry, plays, ideas, buildings, and sculpture. What they learned changed them. Writers began writing fresh, powerful poetry. The wealthy built glorious new buildings and filled them with breathtaking paintings.

Humanism: A New View Recall that during the Middle Ages much of Europe was in chaos, and religion was a way to bring order to people's lives. Renaissance thinkers began to focus on improving this world rather than hoping for a better life after death. This new approach to knowledge was called humanism (HYOO muh niz um). Humanistic thinkers emphasized the importance of human nature and the abilities of human beings to change the world.

Humanism affected every part of Renaissance life. For example, in the early Middle Ages, statues had been carved as stiff symbols. In contrast, during the Renaissance period artists carved lifelike statues.

An Important Renaissance Artist The Italian Michelangelo (my kul AN juh loh) was one such artist. Michelangelo was an accomplished painter, poet, architect, and sculptor. His lifelike statues were remarkably realistic and detailed. In some, you can see veins bulging in the hands. Or the drape of a cloak across the sculpted person looks so real that it appears to be made of cloth rather than of marble. Like other Renaissance artists, Michelangelo's work gave art a new importance. During the Renaissance, the role of art changed.



Art came to be seen as an important way to understand man, God, and nature. You can read about another important Renaissance figure, Leonardo da Vinci (lee uh NAHR doh duh VIN chee) in the box below.

Printing Spreads the Renaissance An important invention encouraged the spread of the Renaissance. Around 1450, the printing press was invented in Germany. Before printed books, books were made by carefully copying them by hand—a process that took a very long time. With the printing press, books could be made quickly.

Printed books made in large quantities could reach far more people than could books copied by hand. For that reason, the spread of printing had two important effects. First, it increased literacy, or the ability of people to read and write. Second, it allowed ideas of the Renaissance, written in books, to spread to large numbers of people. To understand the difference that the printing press made, consider this example. Before the printing press, there were a few thousand hand-copied books in Europe. Within 50 years after the printing press was invented, there were about 9 million books in Europe.

✓ Reading Check What is literacy?

Leonardo da Vinci: Renaissance Man



◀ Painting

Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* (1503–1506) is one of the most famous paintings in the world. The lady is believed to have been a merchant's wife. The style of her portrait and the misty background behind her continue to influence artists today.

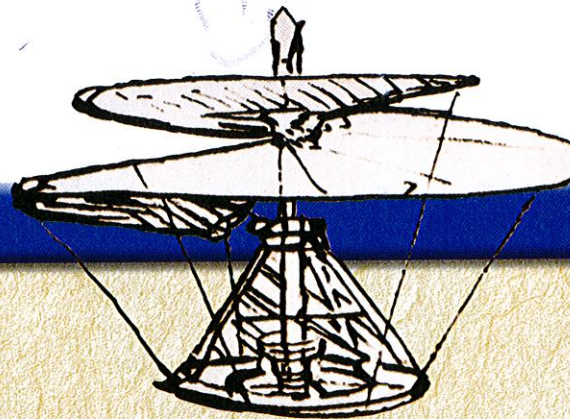
Science ▶

Leonardo studied the anatomy of the living and the dead to learn how the human body works. He often referred to his studies, like this one done in 1510, to make his paintings more realistic.



Inventions ▶

Leonardo built machines of all kinds, but was especially interested in the possibility of human flight. He studied birds and drew imaginary flying machines. This helicopter-like machine, designed in 1487, was inspired by a child's toy.



Mirror Writing ▶

Leonardo used "mirror writing"—writing from right to left—in his journals. No one is sure why, but some believe that because he was left-handed, he found it easier to write from right to left. This signature says "Io, Lionardo" or "I, Leonardo."

