

# The Renaissance

In the 1300s, a new age began in Western Europe. Europeans called it the Renaissance, which means “rebirth.” After years of war and plague, the Renaissance began in Italy. Then, it spread through the rest of Europe. Lasting until the 1600s, it was a time of creativity, invention, and education. The new ideas of the Renaissance had an effect on art, literature, and politics.

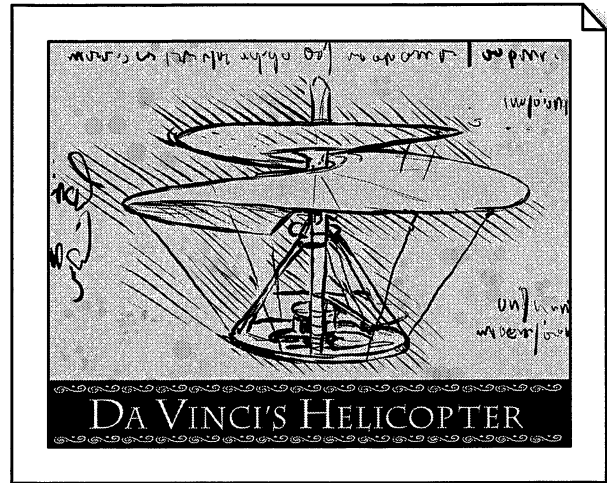
During the Renaissance, people took a new interest in ancient Rome and Greece. Scholars paid attention to classical culture and worldly subjects instead of religious issues. These scholars, called humanists, studied subjects taught in ancient Greek and Roman schools. They learned about grammar, poetry, literature, drama, philosophy, and history.

Individual ability became important. People looked up to those who were well-rounded and could do well in many areas. For example, the famous painter Leonardo da Vinci was also a sculptor, architect, inventor, and mathematician. He is best known for his paintings the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*. But he also made sketches for inventions like submarines and flying machines and studied the human body. In addition to da Vinci, the Renaissance produced famous painters and sculptors like Michelangelo and Raphael.

Famous works of literature were written during the Renaissance. Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales*, and the Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*. One of the most important writers of the Renaissance was William Shakespeare, the English poet and playwright. He wrote 37 plays between 1590 and 1613, including *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Hamlet*.

In politics, Niccolò Machiavelli wrote one of the most influential works on political power, *The Prince*. Unlike the political writers before him, Machiavelli talked about reality instead of the ideal. Machiavelli’s ideas influenced political leaders for many years.

The development of the printing press in Europe made producing books much easier. Before the printing press, books were difficult to make. Because they were expensive, most people could not afford to buy them. Now, books were more available. Printed books allowed Europeans to be exposed to the new ideas of the Renaissance. As the Renaissance spread through Europe, the Western world enjoyed a golden age.





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## Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

1. The new ideas of the Renaissance influenced \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. politics
  - B. art
  - C. literature
  - D. all of the above

2. The Renaissance began in \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. England
  - B. Germany
  - C. Italy
  - D. France

3. One of the most important writers of the Renaissance was \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. Michelangelo
  - B. Shakespeare
  - C. da Vinci
  - D. Gutenberg

4. During the Renaissance, people looked up to those who could do well in \_\_\_\_\_ area(s).
- A. one
  - B. two
  - C. many
  - D. few

5. Before the development of the printing press in Europe, books were \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. inexpensive
  - B. difficult to make
  - C. available to everyone
  - D. easy to make



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## Time Line – Publishing During the Renaissance

Use the time line to answer the following questions. Write the answers in complete sentences.

<b>1300</b>	• The Renaissance begins in Italian city-states.
<b>1456</b>	• Johann Gutenberg prints the first complete edition of the Bible using a printing press.
<b>1513</b>	• Niccolò Machiavelli publishes <i>The Prince</i> .
<b>1590–1613</b>	• William Shakespeare writes 37 plays.
<b>1605</b>	• <i>Don Quixote</i> , Part I, written by Miguel de Cervantes, is published.
<b>1615</b>	• <i>Don Quixote</i> , Part II is published.

1. How many plays did William Shakespeare write?

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2. How many years passed between the publication of Part I and Part II of *Don Quixote*?

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3. What book did Gutenberg publish on his printing press in 1456?

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