Feudal castles were designed for defense against enemy attacks. Many included the following defensive features:
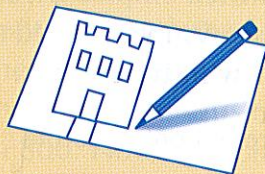
- Moats **A**, filled with water, prevented attackers from getting too close.
- Watchtowers **B** allowed guards to fire on approaching enemies from a protected position.
- Thick stone walls **C** kept enemies out of the castle's inner courtyard.
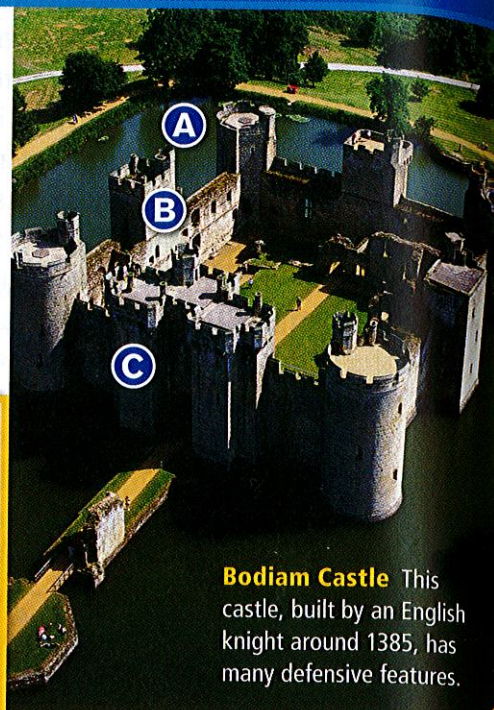
Activity

Design a Castle Floor Plan

Materials
- paper
- pencil
- ruler

1. Be sure your castle has these features: walls, windows, and moat.

2. Research and add one other defensive feature to your castle.

Bodiam Castle This castle, built by an English knight around 1385, has many defensive features.

The Renaissance

▼ **KEY QUESTION** How did the Renaissance change Europe?

Peace and stability were returning to Europe. Merchants again felt safe traveling on the roads. Trade began again. Towns grew. Travel spread new ideas, which set the stage for change.

Forces of Change At the end of the 11th century, thousands of western European Christians took part in the Crusades, a series of military expeditions to take back the Holy Land, Palestine, from the Muslims. The Crusades led to centuries of mistrust between Christians and Muslims and imposed economic burdens on many Europeans. However, they resulted in economic growth, increasing trade between towns on the Mediterranean Sea and in the Middle East.

The importance of towns increased during the Crusades, when towns were needed to supply armies. As towns grew into cities and serfs left manors to find better work, feudal lords lost power. In the 1300s, the deadly plague, known as the Black Death, swept through Europe. About one-third of Europe's population died. The high death rate led to a labor shortage, which further weakened feudal ties.

All these forces helped bring about the Renaissance. The **Renaissance** (REHN•ih•SAHNS) was a 300-year period of renewed interest in learning and art from about 1300 to 1600. The rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman knowledge influenced the Renaissance. Europeans developed new ideas about art, science, and humanity.

The Rebirth of Europe The Renaissance began in the city-states of the Italian Peninsula. Increased trade between Italian towns and the Middle East after the Crusades had made many Italian merchants and bankers wealthy. They used their new wealth to build and furnish beautiful palaces. Some became **patrons** of the arts, supporting painters and writers. They showed their pride in their city by hiring architects to build churches, public fountains, and sculptures. City-states like Florence, Rome, and Venice competed to display the talents of Italy's finest artists, such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci.

Renaissance art reflected the beliefs of the period. Many scholars began to study humanity, prompting a new interest in the individual and in **secular**, or worldly, concerns. Many Renaissance paintings still had religious themes, but others depicted contemporary people instead of biblical figures. Painters also found new ways to create more lifelike portraits and realistic landscapes. The technique known as **perspective** gave objects in a painting the appearance of depth and distance. The Renaissance also produced notable writers. Many wrote in their national languages, rather than Latin, which was the practice before the Renaissance. For example, the poet Dante wrote his finest works in Italian.

Mona Lisa Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* is one of the most famous paintings of the Renaissance.

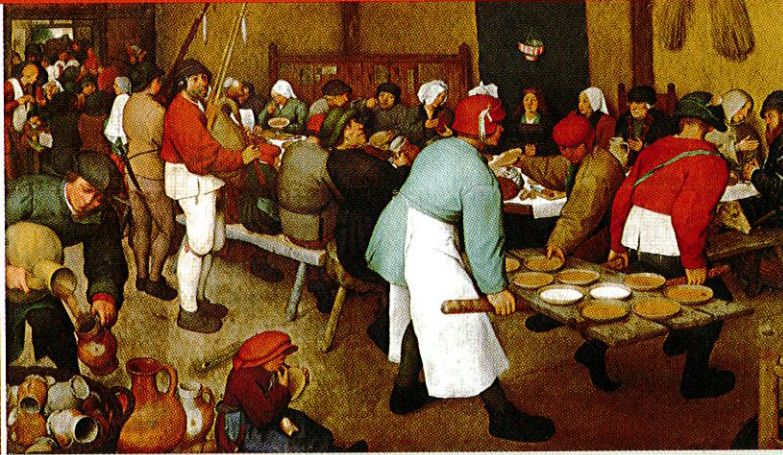*Click here* to see more works by Renaissance artists @ ClassZone.com

COMPARING ◀ Medieval and Renaissance Art

MEDIEVAL

Madonna Enthroned by Duccio di Buoninsegna

- Created art with religious themes, especially scenes from the Bible
- Created flat, two-dimensional art

RENAISSANCE

Peasant Wedding by Pieter Brueghel

- Created art about secular as well as religious themes, with more emphasis on the individual and daily life
- Created lifelike, realistic sculptures and paintings

CRITICAL THINKING
Form and Support Opinions Which artistic style seems more lifelike? Why?