

Read and annotate the following.

A key component of the Renaissance was the intellectual movement known as Humanism. Humanism was based on the study of classical Greek and Roman cultures.

End of the Middle Ages

People in the Middle Ages did not find life beautiful or intriguing. Peasants and serfs lived in miserable conditions, hardly better than livestock, with little hope of improving their social station. If you were born a peasant, you would most likely die a peasant, as would your children and grandchildren. Their main goal in life was finding eternal salvation—getting to Heaven. Life on Earth was a journey to suffer through, in order to reach Heaven. The Black Death and the Crusades helped bring an end to the Middle Ages. As Western Europe slowly emerged from the Middle Ages, new ideas and beliefs about life and its purpose began to spread. People began to wonder if their life on earth could have more meaning than just trying to assure getting to Heaven; it did not have to be a miserable layover on the way to Heaven. According to humanists, life was full of beauty, waiting to be enjoyed...

A New Outlook on Life

The attitude of humanists focused on individual merit. It is not what you are born (serf, peasant, lord) but rather what you accomplish in life that is important and defines you. This idea appealed greatly to the new merchant class, who were tired of being considered less important than ruling nobles.

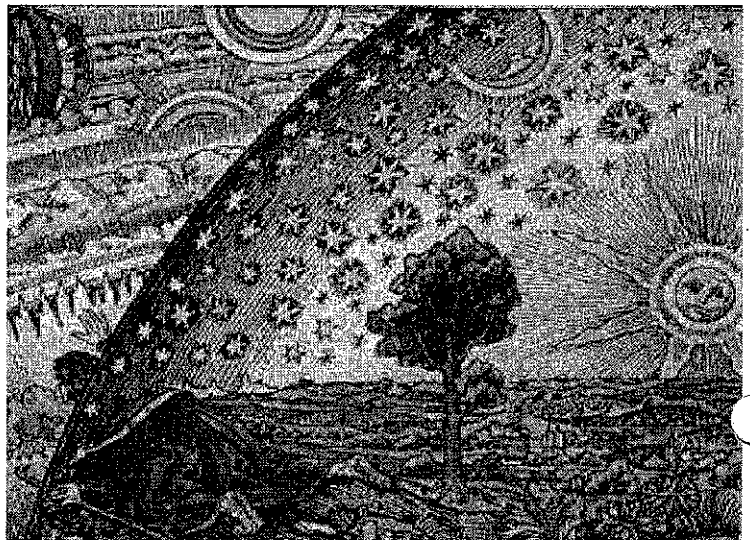
Education

Humanists had great interests in history, philosophy, art and literature. They looked backwards, at the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome for inspiration. Scholars embraced the humanist philosophy, and soon wealthy merchants and nobles began educating their children in accordance with a humanist curriculum. According to Humanism, education should stimulate student's creative powers. Students were taught poetry, history, and rhetoric (public speaking). They also studied the works of Homer, Virgil, Petrarch, and Cicero.

Humanism and Art

New techniques in art were employed with astounding results. Perspective, making distant objects in a painting small than those close to the viewer, made scenes appear three dimensional. Careful shading make objects look round and real, rather than flat. Using human models helped artists portray the human body far more accurately than in Medieval art. In fact, Renaissance art glorified the human body, again emphasizing the importance of the individual. Oil paints were also introduced at this time. Because oil paint take much longer to dry than water based paint, artists could play with the color and shading, creating incredibly realistic pieces.

The works of the four great masters, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Donatello set the standard for Renaissance art. Each of these men were a student of humanism, and their works reflect the ideals of the time, especially focus on the individual. Leonardo's most famous painting, the Mona Lisa, does not portray a famous queen or religious figure (that we know of); she is a simple woman, wearing a simple smile. Five hundred years later, she still fascinates the world. Leonardo recognized the allure of the plain and ordinary. He found the beauty in everyday life.



Instructions:

1. Read and annotate
2. Do numbers one and two on this page
3. Insert on the right side, page _____
4. On the left side, create a cartoon, image, collage that represents HUMANISM

Ancient Greece and Romans

500 BCE-400 AD

Celebrated human life, potential and knowledge.
Tried to improve life through thought, invention and culture.

The Renaissance

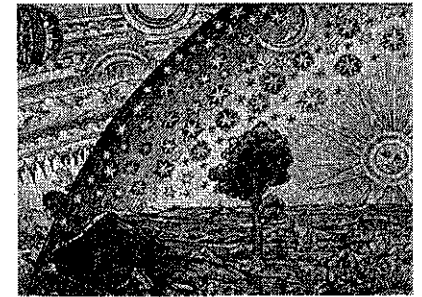
1300-1600

Europe

People of the Renaissance were **reawakened** when they rediscovered the works of the Ancient Greeks and Romans.

People again believed in the importance of life on earth.

- Based on the teachings of ancient Greece & Rome.
- Humanists focused on worldly subjects rather than religious issues.
- Explored individuality and duties to society.
- Believed humans had free will and did not have a religious predestination.
- Art celebrated human body and became more lifelike.
- Search for truth and proof



←Humanism→

The people of the Renaissance were inspired and connected to the people of Ancient Greece and Rome through Humanism!

Humanism

A humanist trend began to develop. While God was at the heart of medieval thought, the Renaissance made man the centre of its concerns. People asked questions about the world around them. Humanists were thinkers, writers and scholars. They learned languages so that they could accurately translate the ancient texts. They were passionate about Antiquity (the Classical Age) and wanted to change the position of man in society. In Holland the thinker Erasmus (c. 1467-1536) recommended education and reading texts to develop a critical mind. Humanists believed in God but criticized the Church's influence on thought and the clergy's abuse of power. They believed that man was free and responsible. The German monk Luther (1483-1546) was against indulgences (pardons given to the faithful by the church in exchange for money). He thought that only faith could ensure salvation. He wanted to reform religion and create the Protestant Church which did not recognize the authority of the Pope.

Humanism:

A system of thought that is based on the values, characteristics, and behavior that are believed to be best in human beings, rather than on any supernatural authority. **NON-RELIGIOUS**

The belief that LIFE ON EARTH MATTERED!

1. Individual worth- humans could improve themselves through study
2. Strong commitment to public service
3. Development of skills & knowledge

1. Use the information on this handout to explain the IMAGES at the right in your own words:
2. How do you think the concept of HUMANISM helped propel Europe out of the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance?

