

THE RENAISSANCE

TASK 1:

Read the following quotes. What do they reveal about the Renaissance?

Now may every reflecting spirit thank God he has chosen to live in this new age, so full of hope and promise, which already exults in a greater array of nobly-gifted souls than the world has seen in the thousand years before.

(Matteo Palmieri, 1435)

Whatever was done by man with genius and with a certain grace he held to be almost divine.

(L.B.Alberti, 1460)

Origins of the Renaissance

- The Renaissance means **rebirth**. It originated in **Italy (esp. in Florence)** – inspired by **classical tradition** (= ancient Greece and Rome)
- **Italy in 14th C** – politically divided, city states in the north (signorias, eg. Florence, Genoa, Venice etc.), Kingdom of Naples, Kingdom of Sicily, the Papal States. In Florence the Renaissance spread very quickly thanks to the patronage of the **Medici family** (Cosimo and Lorenzo de Medici).

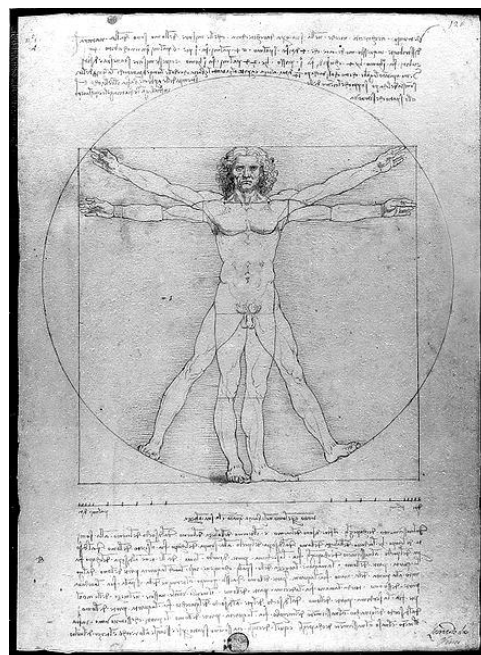
TASK 2: Using your knowledge, can you suggest why Florence was an important city?

- Western civilization **re-discovered** the long-forgotten ancient writings thanks to the **Arabs** who kept and studied them and through the assimilation of culture in **Spain** these texts were re-introduced to Christian Europe. Another route of restoration of the knowledge of the classical culture was through the **Byzantine Empire**, esp. Constantinople.
- The era of Renaissance is divided into three specific periods:
 - **trecento** (14th C)
 - **quattrocento** (15thC)
 - **cinquecento** (16thC)
- The Renaissance is also a significant period in literature (see your literature lesson notes):
 - **Dante Alighieri** (1265-1321) – *The Divine Comedy*
 - **Francesco Petrarca** (1304-1374) – *Sonnets for Laura*, he admired the revolutionary **Cola di Rienzo**

Characteristics of the Renaissance

- inspiration by **classical culture (ancient Greece and Rome)**
- Study of the divine was replaced with **study of the human** - the philosophy of **humanism** → new approach to **nudity**

TASK 3: Study the picture on the right. Where can we find this symbol today?



The Vitruvian Man by Leonardo da Vinci

- The Renaissance did not exclude faith in God but it started to question the “monopoly” of the Church to interpret the faith and, therefore, authority of the Church itself. However, the Renaissance did not turn against religion. Moreover, it often served as an instrument to **glorify God** and the Church **through art**, e.g. in the Sistine Chapel.
- inspiration by **nature**
- **harmony** – *calocagathia* - What did this Greek word mean?

Architecture

- used knowledge from science (physics, mathematics) – e.g. **geometry, symmetry**
- characteristic features – **columns (Roman, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian), domes, painted ceilings, details of great precision, light structures**
- appealing to the eye but comfortable to live in
- **Filippo Brunelleschi** (architect, Florence)

TASK 4:

Can you find any Renaissance features on these buildings?

Chapel of San Agostino, Rome



Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome



Sculpture

- sculptures used to decorate buildings, gardens, squares etc.
- themes – religion, mythology, portraits
- **Donatello** (1386-1466) – the first to show naked human body (*David*)

Painting

- **Sandro Botticelli** (1445-1510) – *The Birth of Venus*



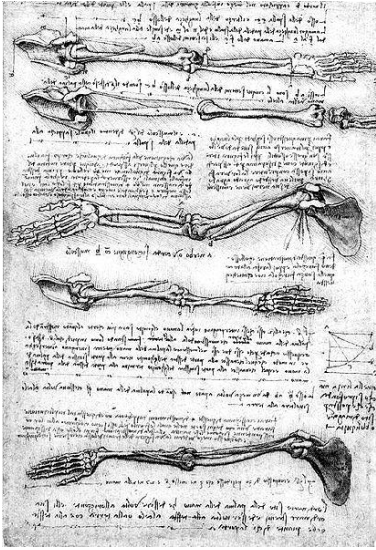
Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)

- universal, versatile genius (painter, architect, musician, mathematician, engineer, inventor)
- the “**Renaissance Man**” =
- *Last Supper, Mona Lisa (La Gioconda), Lady with an Ermine*
- worked in Florence, Milan and later in exile at the French court of Louis XII and Francis I
- invented the idea of a flying machine, war machines, a parachute etc.
- studied and drew human anatomy



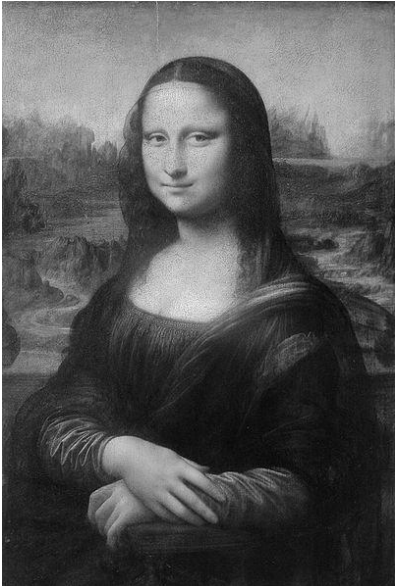
Leonardo da Vinci's self-portrait

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Leonardo da Vinci's study of the arm

*Leonardo da Vinci's idea of a flying machine
(What does it remind you of?)*



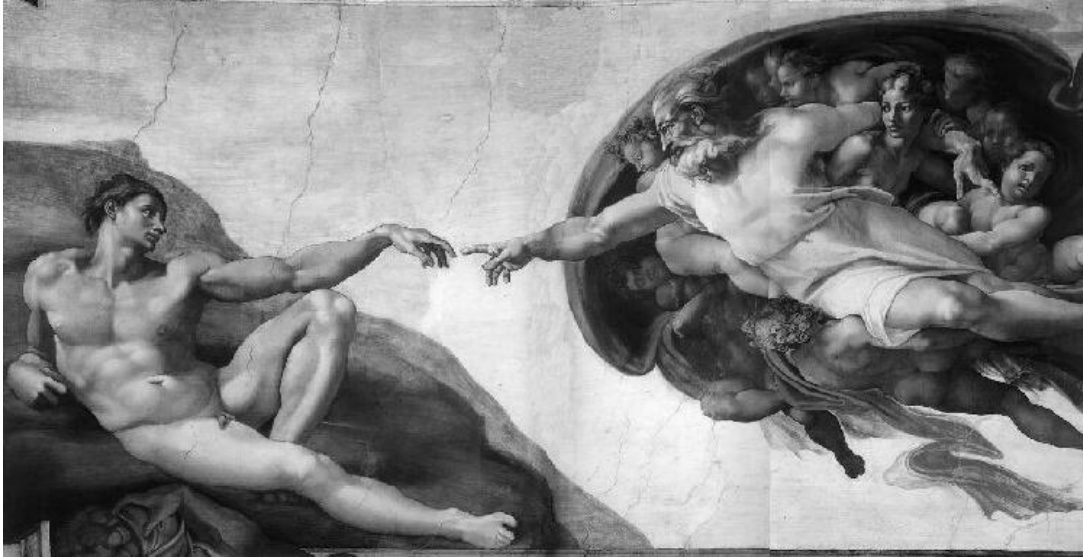
TASK 5: Do you know the names of these two pictures by Leonardo da Vinci?

What makes them so special?



Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564)

- painter, sculptor, architect, poet
- Florence
- decorated the ceiling of the **Sistine Chapel** in Rome - frescos (*The Creation of Adam*)

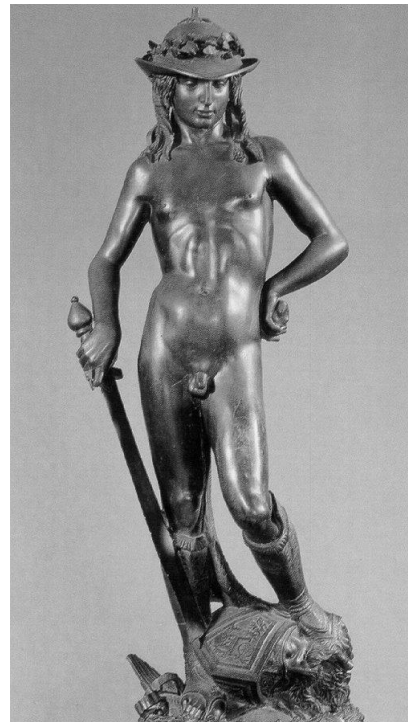
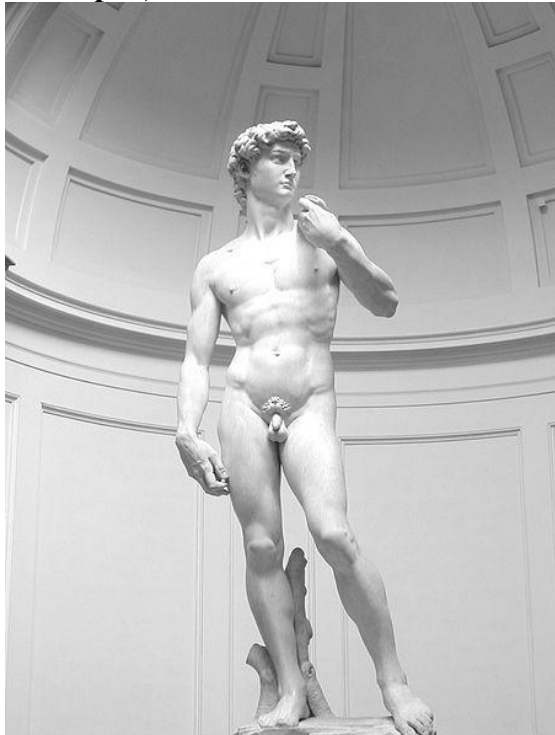


The Creation of Adam

TASK 6: Which motif from this picture is the most widely used in our culture today?

- statue of *David*

TASK 7: Compare these two statues of *David* – one by an early Renaissance artist Donatello and one by a High Renaissance artist Michelangelo Buonarroti. Decide which was sculpted by whom and explain your answer (look for the typical features of the Renaissance and how they are developed)





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Raffael Santi (1483-1520)

- painter (madonnas), architect
- influenced by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarrotti

Northern Renaissance

- after 1500 Renaissance spread north of Italy – north of the Alps – Central Europe, Western Europe, Britain
- **Francois Rabelais, Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare**
- Renaissance in **Central Europe**

TASK 8: Can you suggest how the Renaissance north of the Alps would differ from the Italian Renaissance? (think of the aspects such as the climate, philosophy, religion, politics etc.)

Humanism

- humanism = concerning humans and humanity
- the idea “ad fontes”= back to the sources
- study of classical Latin (Cicero) and the works of Greek and Roman authors
- letters, autobiography, travelogues, dictionaries, translations, textbooks
- **Giovanni Boccaccio** (*Decameron*), **F. Petrarca**, **Thomas More**
- **Niccolo Machiavelli** – politician and political writer (*The Prince*)

A wise ruler cannot and should not keep his word if that would be to his disadvantage...If men were all good, this rule would not be good; but since men are a sorry lot and will not keep their promises, you likewise need not keep yours to them.
(N. Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 1517)

- **Desiderius Erasmus** (Erasmus of Rotterdam) = “the prince of Christian humanists”
- **Nicholas Copernicus** (1473-1543) – Polish clergyman formulated the idea of **heliocentrism**
- **Giordano Bruno** – believed in heliocentrism and that the universe is endless – he was burnt for it
- **Galileo Galilei** – supported Bruno’s ideas and saved his life by renouncing his ideas
- Humanism **made way for the Reformation** to come



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REVISION:

TASK 9:

Explain the great change in thinking between the medieval and the Renaissance eras, especially with regard to man and human body.

TASK10:

Choose one of the Renaissance artists. Present his impact on the era and his contribution to our cultural heritage.