

# The Renaissance

## Rebirth

During the Black Death, when 1 out of every 3 people were dying, people were simply worried about survival. But by 1450 A.D., the threat of the Black Death was gone from Europe, so people were willing to start thinking about the future again. The Renaissance is the result, where people started to show an increased interest in art, literature, religion, and science.

## Western Civilization

During the Renaissance, people in Europe began to trace a lot of their ideas back to the Greek and Roman Empires that had existed over 1000 years earlier.



*The influence of ancient Greek architecture on Western civilization is evident in US government buildings. Compare this building (the US Capitol Building) to the picture of the Parthenon (seen below)*

They started to build their buildings like the ancient Romans and Greeks, started studying philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, and even started to look at the government models that were used in the Greek and Roman civilizations. While it would still be 300-400 more years before a true democratic system of government would exist, the old Feudal system started to give way to monarchies, where kings had more power, lords started to participate in making laws and enforcing laws for an entire

country by voting in legislative branches, and the middle class began to grow.

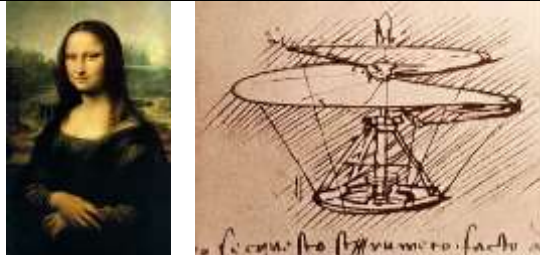



Western Civilization refers to the culture and beliefs that are connected to European culture, and includes those areas colonized largely by people of European descent (including the US, Canada, Australia, and much of South and Central America). The Renaissance was the beginning of real globalization, which is simply the world becoming more connected.



*The Parthenon was a temple where people in Athens would offer sacrifices to Athena, their goddess of wisdom, law, and culture.*

# Renaissance Art

The Renaissance is best known for its artwork. The easiest way to remember the important artists of the Renaissance is to remember the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, since they were named for these famous artists. Renaissance art typically focused on Christian topics, and valued perfection rather than realism (draw people as perfect, rather than how they might actually look). In Greek and Roman traditions, sculptures frequently lacked detail of eyes, which is why many statues didn't have detailed eyes.

Artist	Famous For...	Example of Artwork
Leonardo da Vinci	*"Mona Lisa" *Inventions *"The Last Supper"  <i>Paintings and sketches. Good at all artistic disciplines</i>	
Michelangelo	*Sistine Chapel *"The David"  <i>Paintings and statues.</i>	
Donatello	*"St. Mark" *"The Feast of Herod"  <i>Detail in bronze statues.</i>	
Rafael	*"The School of Athens" *"The Transfiguration"  <i>Detail of paintings.</i>	

## Reading comprehension questions

1. From whom or what did Renaissance writers, painters, and architects get their ideas?
2. What were the normal themes of Renaissance paintings?
3. The word *Renaissance* means "rebirth." Why would historians call this period of time a rebirth?

Write about it: In the Renaissance, they were copying the ideas of the Roman and Greek Civilizations from 1000 years earlier. Think about what would happen if our society today started using ideas of people who have been dead for over 1000 years. Would it be a good thing, or a bad thing? Why?