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The Renaissance

As we continue to travel through history, we enter a time known as the Renaissance. This word is French for “rebirth.” Remember, the Middle Ages was a time in Europe when trade, travel and learning declined. Many ideas and inventions of the ancient Greeks and Romans had long been forgotten. The Renaissance was the time between 14th and 16th centuries when historians say there was a tremendous new interest in learning about the arts, science and more.

Can you remember some historical events that helped bring an end to the Middle Ages and sparked an interest in learning about the world? If you answered the Crusades, you are exactly right! Crusaders and pilgrims returned with stories of the people they met and their customs, clothing, foods and inventions. Also, ancient Greek and Roman ideas, mostly forgotten after barbaric tribes swept through Europe, were rediscovered.

Another event that helped bring about the Renaissance was the journey of Marco Polo to China in 1271. He returned from his travels 24 years later and wrote a book, “The Travels of Marco Polo.” His stories about the Chinese people and their way of life encouraged others to venture out and explore new places. Johannes Gutenberg’s printing press played a big part in shaping the Renaissance, as well. The printing press allowed books to be printed faster and at a lower cost, making them available to more people—not just the wealthy. More and more people began learning to read.

A movement called humanism began. Based on ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, humanists placed great value in individuals and believed that people should be free to think and discuss their ideas with others. Humanists were interested in astronomy, biology, math, botany and the human body. Like the ancient Greeks and Romans, people in the Renaissance believed that laws should be made—and changed when necessary—by the people. They believed art and literature could be done for enjoyment and not just for religious purposes. Such thinking brought many Renaissance people into conflict with the church. As we have read, the church was very powerful in the Middle Ages and taught that since God made the laws, they could not be changed. According to the church, questioning laws was going against God’s will.

Who were some of the individuals that we think of when we think of the Renaissance? How did they make an impact on the world today? Let’s turn the page and find out!



Use any color to circle or highlight three sentences in which the author used punctuation to separate parenthetical or nonrestrictive information. (CC ELA L.6.2)



Rebirth of Learning

The renaissance began in the country of Italy. Why Italy? Many of the crusaders returned from the Holy Lands to cities such as Venice, Florence, Milan and Genoa. It was Italy whose ancient history had been “rediscovered,” and where Marco Polo came from and returned to after his travels in China. Cities in Italy competed with one another to build more beautiful palaces, bridges, statues and more. This competition encouraged and promoted artisans of the time to create masterpieces that have endured throughout history.

Italy also had many wealthy merchants from the trading they established during and after the Crusades. Having more money to spend, many merchants became patrons, or supporters, of the arts. These wealthy patrons commissioned, or hired, people like Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Filippo Brunelleschi and others to create new works of art.

Artists

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564): The dome of St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City, the Pietà sculpture and the Sistine Chapel paintings are just three works of this great Italian Renaissance artist. Michelangelo preferred sculpting to painting. He once said that statues are already inside selected pieces of stone and that it was his task to set the statues free. Michelangelo took four years to paint the biblical scenes on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, which is 44 feet wide and 132 feet long. Another one of his most famous works is the statue of David, which is more than 13 feet tall.

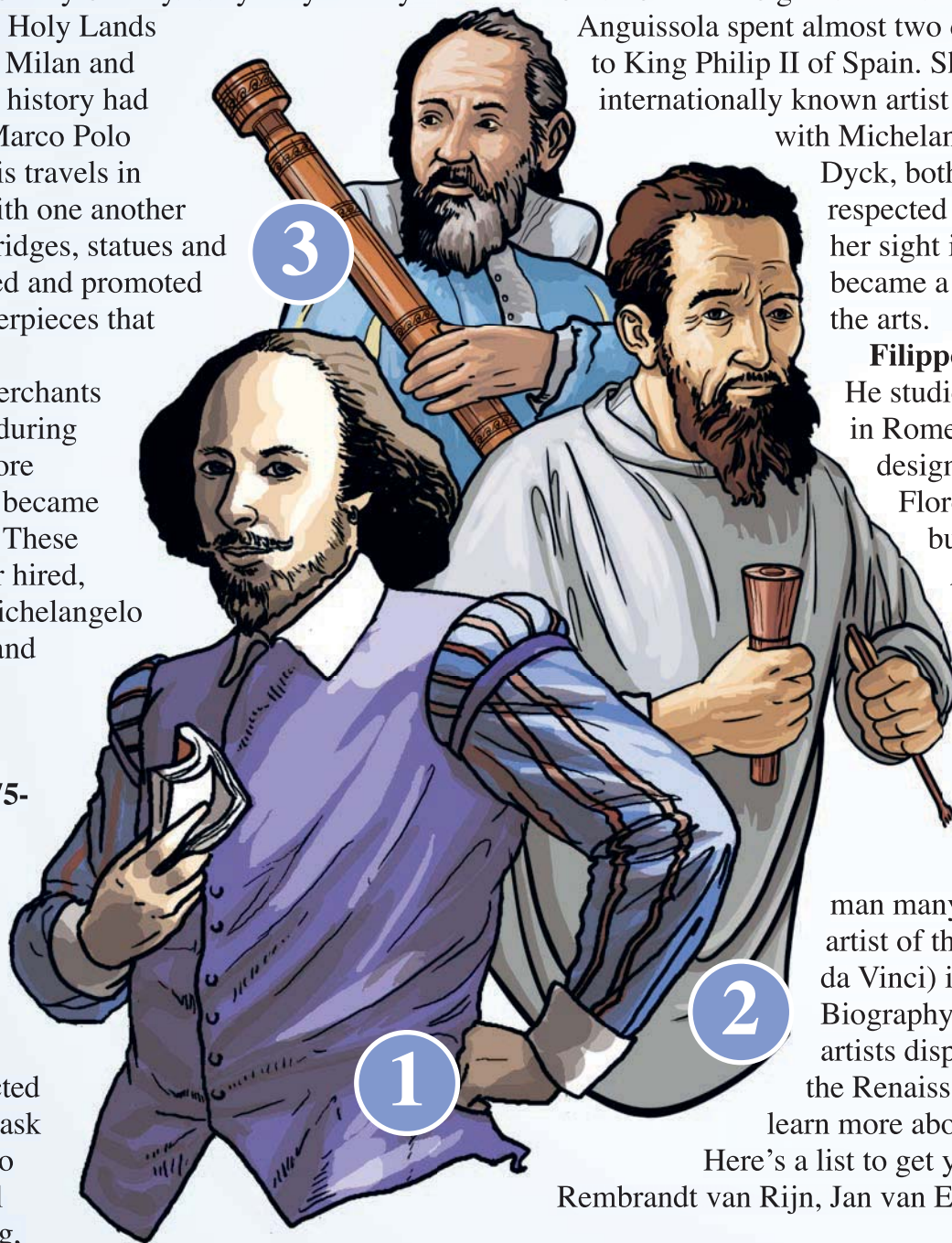
Sofonisba Anguissola (1532-1625): She was an Italian

noblewoman who gained fame as a portrait painter. Anguissola spent almost two decades as court painter to King Philip II of Spain. She was the first female internationally known artist and was well acquainted with Michelangelo and Anthony van Dyck, both of whom recognized and respected her talent. After losing her sight in her older age, Sofonisba became a strong financial supporter of the arts.

Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446): He studied the dome of the Parthenon in Rome and won a competition to design a dome for the Cathedral of Florence—the first major dome built during the Renaissance. As Greek and Roman architecture regained popularity, Brunelleschi and other European architects designed and built structures with columns, arches and domes.

You’ll read about the man many consider the greatest artist of the Renaissance (Leonardo da Vinci) in this week’s “World Biography” article. Many other artists displayed their talent during the Renaissance, and you might like to learn more about some of them as well.

Here’s a list to get you started: Raphael Sanzio, Rembrandt van Rijn, Jan van Eyck and Albrecht Durer.



1. William Shakespeare
2. Michelangelo Buonarroti
3. Galileo Galilei

Writers

Francesco Petrarca “Petrarch” (1304-1374): Many call him the father of Humanism. Petrarch is credited with sparking an interest in people to learn new things. An Italian poet and scholar, Petrarch sought out books from people who traveled. He eventually

Renaissance Man: Leonardo da Vinci

Scientist, inventor, painter, sculptor—Leonardo da Vinci did it all. Born in 1452 in the village of Vinci (where he got his last name), da Vinci became one of the greatest painters of the Italian Renaissance. Two of his most famous paintings are the “Last Supper” and the “Mona Lisa.”

Da Vinci was an impatient young man and a perfectionist, always thinking he could improve his works of art. Interested in the world around him, da Vinci kept a notebook tucked in his belt so that when he observed something or had an idea he could write it down. To make sure others didn’t copy his ideas, da Vinci wrote backwards! (Try writing a sentence



A self-portrait of Leonardo da Vinci.

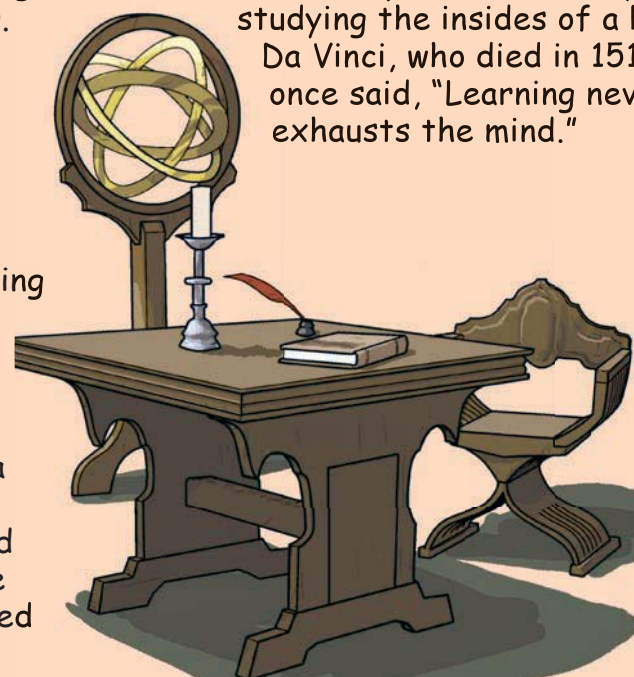
backwards. It’s not easy.) To read his writings, one needs to hold the pages in front of a mirror. Some of the ideas in his 5,000-page notebook include: a flying machine, an alarm clock, a helicopter, a parachute and a diving suit. Da Vinci also sketched what looks like

an early automobile! Two huge springs helped power da Vinci’s vehicle, and one could steer it with a tiller attached to wheels. To learn about the human body, da Vinci dissected human cadavers to study the

World Biography

workings of the muscles and other body organs. He did this during a time when authorities put to death anyone caught studying the insides of a body.

Da Vinci, who died in 1519, once said, “Learning never exhausts the mind.”



built a library where people could come and study all the books he collected.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616): This famous English playwright wrote “Romeo and Juliet,” “Hamlet,” “Macbeth,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “Much Ado About Nothing” and many more. Shakespeare was known as the Bard of Avon, since he was born and lived in Stratford-upon-Avon in England. Actors performed many of his plays in London’s Globe Theater. Perhaps you have heard the following quotes of Shakespeare: “To be or not to be” or “Parting is such sweet sorrow.”

Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1343-1400): He was a famous English writer and poet whose most famous work is “The Canterbury Tales,” a story of 29 pilgrims on their way to the city of Canterbury to worship at the shrine of St. Thomas á Becket.

Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616): Cervantes was a Spanish writer whose most famous work is “Don Quixote,” a tale about a near-sighted Spanish nobleman who goes out to fight the injustices of his time. He died on exactly the same day as Shakespeare, April 23, 1616.

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321): This Italian poet from the city of Florence is most famous for the “Divine Comedy” (more than 14,000 lines of poetry). Before the Renaissance, authors wrote mostly about religion and mostly in Latin. Writers like Dante took on new topics including comedy, drama and adventure. Dante was also one of the first to write his work in the vernacular, or the everyday language of his people, instead of Latin.

Scientists

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473- 1543): He was a famous Polish astronomer who published a new, shocking theory that the Earth moves around the sun. People at the time believed the sun moved around the Earth and did not want to believe Copernicus.

Isaac Newton (1642-1727): This English mathematician and physicist made many scientific discoveries. Newton’s most famous discovery was probably the law of universal gravitation. Newton determined that gravity is the force that draws objects toward each other. Gravity explains why planets orbit the sun and why things fall to the earth. Historians say Newton developed the idea after sitting under an apple tree reading a book, when an apple fell to the ground near him.

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642): He was a famous Italian astronomer and mathematician who built one of the first telescopes, saw the phases of the moon (proving that the universe changes) and stated that the Milky Way is made up of individual stars. He also confirmed Copernicus’ theory of the solar system, proved that objects fall at the same speed regardless of weight and much more.

World Geography

Ah, Venice!

When Attila the Hun invaded Italy during the fifth century, fleeing Italians ran to a nearby, watery lagoon to avoid the attacking Huns. That lagoon eventually became the city of Venice. By the ninth century, Venice was an independent state, and it became a trading center for all of Europe around the 1200s. By the time the Renaissance began, Venice had a large navy with hundreds of merchant ships and was a very wealthy and powerful city-state. When the people of Venice heard about Johannes Gutenberg’s printing press in 1454, they couldn’t wait to get this new technology. By 1482, Venice was the printing capital of the world.



Because it lies on the northern coast of the Adriatic Sea, Venice is often called the “Queen of the Adriatic.” People know it as one of the most beautiful cities in the world, in part because it is an island city amid water. Venice consists of 118 islands with buildings constructed on wooden pilings. Except for narrow walkways throughout the city, people use boats to travel Venice’s 160 canals. The narrow boats of Venice are called gondolas and are very popular, especially among tourists. Rowers compete in more than 100 races each year, and you can buy gondola-shaped pasta in shops. More than 400 arched bridges link the city’s walkways and enable boats to glide underneath. Barely above sea level, Venice has had serious problems at times with flooding from high tides. Many of the buildings’ foundations have eroded and sunk into the Adriatic Sea, especially after people began digging wells in the 20th century. Today, many lower levels of the old homes in Venice have flooded, forcing owners to live on the upper floors.

Did You Know?

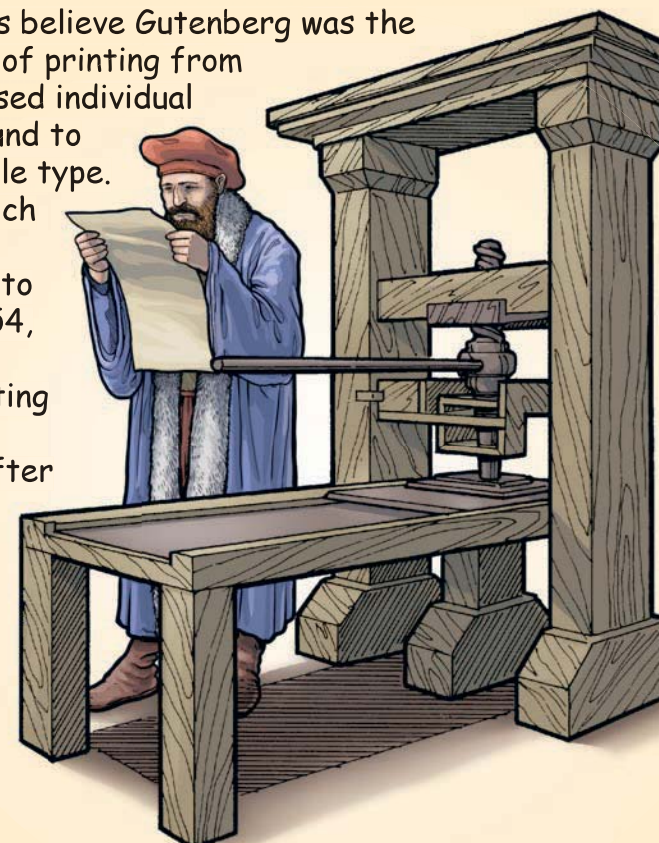
- During the Renaissance, everyone over the age of 12 had to wear a hat in public.
- People of the Renaissance liked playing a game similar to football. They used a “ball” made from a pig’s bladder stuffed with peas! (Later the bladder was inflated.)
- People knew forks, mostly two-tined, as “split spoons.” Although there are examples of four- and five-tined forks from before the 1600s, the four-tined fork didn’t become popular until the late 1800s.
- The Lord of Florence, Piero de’ Medici, commissioned 19-year-old Michelangelo to construct a snowman after a rare snowstorm in 1494.
- People in the Renaissance bought “pilgrim-mirrors,” small mirrors attached to a pin that they stuck in their hats. People believed that if you looked at religious objects, the mirrors captured the objects’ powers and would benefit friends and family back home.

Trades & Technology

Gutenberg’s Printing Press

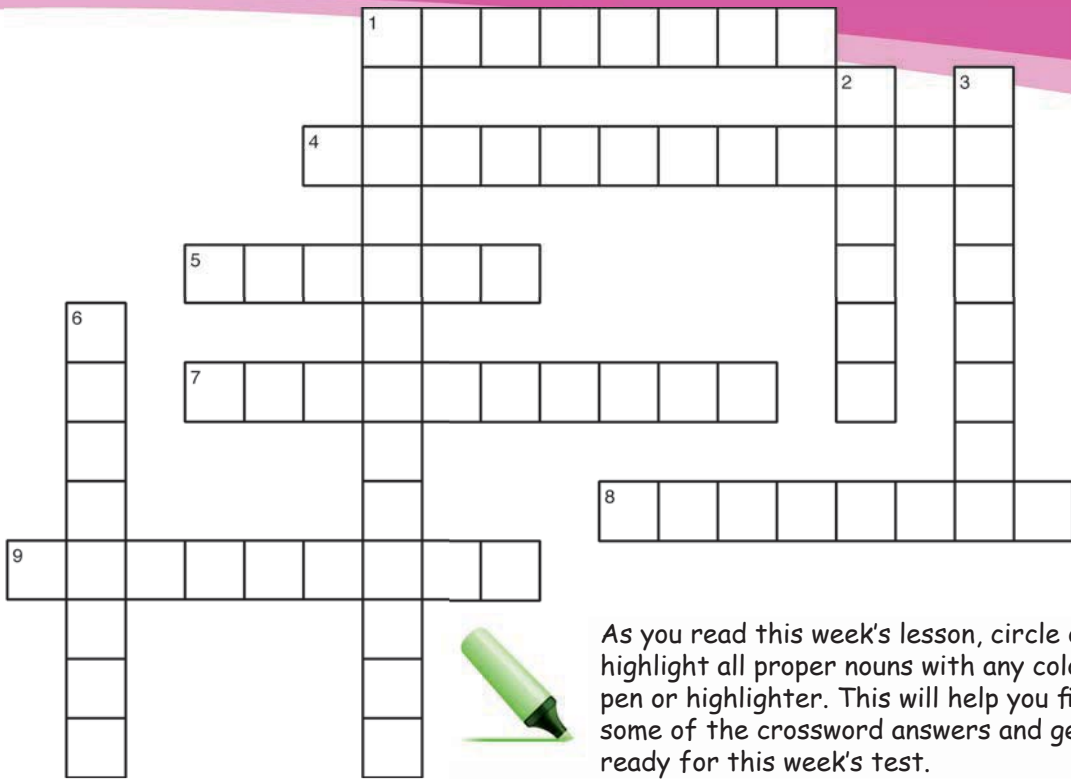
Communication increased rapidly after the invention of the printing press by a German man named Johannes Gutenberg. He based his invention on the ancient Chinese idea of block printing, and historians believe Gutenberg was the first European to develop this idea. Instead of printing from a carved wooden block of text, Gutenberg used individual letters that could be reused and moved around to form new words. Printers called this moveable type. Also, instead of carving letters on wood, which could warp, Gutenberg made metal blocks. Gutenberg’s printing press enabled printers to produce books faster and cheaper. Until 1454, people had duplicated books by hand.

Historians estimate that before the printing press there were only about 30,000 books, which were very expensive. Just 50 years after Gutenberg invented the printing press, there were more than 9 million books. The first book printed on Gutenberg’s printing press was the Bible. Historians believe printers manufactured about 200 copies and that parts of 48 copies of the Gutenberg Bible still exist today.





Name _____



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

ACROSS

1. the father of Humanism
4. Renaissance artist who sculpted David and the Pietà
5. discovered the law of universal gravitation
7. the everyday language of the people
8. Renaissance movement based on ancient Greek and Roman philosophy
9. the way Leonardo da Vinci wrote in his notebook

DOWN

1. invention that made producing books faster and cheaper
2. "Queen of the Adriatic"
3. narrow boats popular among tourists in Venice
6. major events that led to the Renaissance

American Civics

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Agility of Mind: Teddy Roosevelt Wins Nobel Peace Prize

agile (adjective): able to move quickly and easily; ex.: as agile as a monkey, an agile mind.

Teddy Roosevelt was president of the United States from 1901 to 1909. He was also a great hunter, explorer, author, outdoorsman and soldier.

As a child Teddy was often sick and could not play sports. But he became a good problem solver. He wasn't afraid to put his thoughts into action or think of different solutions. If his first idea didn't work, he had the mental agility to change his mind quickly.

When Roosevelt was president, Japan and Russia were at war. He invited diplomats (official representatives) from Russia and Japan to Portsmouth, New Hampshire to talk about peace. At first, he didn't know how their problems could be solved but he acted quickly to get the diplomats together. He helped them compromise. After a lot of discussion, they worked out their differences and signed the Portsmouth Peace Treaty, an agreement that ended the war and saved many lives. President Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize for helping end the war. His way of helping others solve problems is still used today.

Teddy Roosevelt had an important power skill—an agile mind. You can use this power skill when you act on your good ideas. Remember that an idea can be good without being perfect. People with agile minds often fail before they succeed. The ability to think on your feet, or think while doing, can help you find solutions that will benefit others.

Theodore Roosevelt and the Portsmouth Peace Treaty

This Week's Question

What was bloodletting?

In the Middle Ages, people believed the body had four main fluids. Blood was one of these.

People thought illness resulted from these fluids being polluted or out of balance. Doctors believed that bleeding a person would remove impurities and help balance their fluids. Doctors would open a vein in a person's arm and let the blood fill a shallow bowl in an effort to cure many diseases. The practice was believed to be a reliable cure for many hundreds of years. It is still practiced in some cultures today. Modern doctors think U.S. President George Washington might have died prematurely from too much blood being taken during a bloodletting. However, doctors also suspect that bloodletting may actually have helped in some cases. Once blood is lost, the body kicks into overdrive and works to produce more blood, a process that can have positive effects.



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Let's Write

Pretend you are the Mona Lisa portrait hanging in the Louvre in Paris, France.

What do you notice as thousands of people crowd around to see you up-close? What do you hear? Do you smell anything funny? Are people taking lots of videos and pictures of you? Write about a day in your life as a famous painting, protected from air, flash photography and theft behind protective glass. Remember to write in the first person and check your writing for proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.