# “Unit 8: The Renaissance Era (+ Inquisitiveness)”

## 1st Cycle




Grades 0-6

History & Social Studies

# History & Social Studies (Grades 0-6)

# "The Renaissance Era (+ Inquisitiveness)"

**SUMMARY:**

This History and Social Studies course takes students on a journey through the Renaissance and the beginnings of the Reformation, exploring how thoughtful questions, rediscovered knowledge and new ways of communicating ideas helped reshape Europe. Through the lives of Petrarch, Filippo Brunelleschi, Leonardo da Vinci, Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, Michelangelo, Johannes Gutenberg, Desiderius Erasmus and Martin Luther, students investigate the people, places and events of the era. History is integrated with Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business as students examine Florence and other important European centres, trade and resources, guilds and apprenticeships, banking and patronage, printing networks, political power, religious authority and the movement of ideas across Europe.

The character focus of **Inquisitiveness** encourages students to ask thoughtful questions, examine evidence, compare perspectives and seek truthful answers rather than accepting easy assumptions. Differentiated learning experiences for Foundation–Year 2, Years 3–4 and Years 5–6 progressively develop narration, historical questioning, source analysis, geographical and economic understanding, and evidence-based conclusions. Throughout the course, students consider the Renaissance within **God's Big Story**, recognising both the remarkable creativity and learning of the period and the effects of human fallenness upon wealth, power, institutions and ideas. Students are encouraged to use inquisitiveness with wisdom, humility and discernment as they seek truth and consider how knowledge, influence and authority may be used in faithful service to God and others.

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**RESOURCES:**

All the information you need is included within the informational story in each lesson plan. The hands-on or creative activities are designed to use materials you will likely have already in your home, but you should maintain some **art and craft materials.**

Each child will also need a **History Journal** (i.e., a lined exercise book for writing responses to questions and writing activities).

It is also helpful to have a good **dictionary** and a **Timeline or 'Book of Centuries'.**

To enjoy a richer learning experience, you could **supplement the lessons with extra books** about the topics in this unit, from your local library.

Some suggestions for extra reading include but are not limited to...

**Prior to starting each week, review the recommended resources.**

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|---|---|

# Lesson 1.1 – Petrarch: The Boy Who Loved Forgotten Books

## Character Focus

**Inquisitiveness**

*"The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out."*
**Proverbs 18:15**

## Theme

Sometimes one curious person can help change the course of history.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- describe who Petrarch was and why he is remembered today;
- explain why people became interested in rediscovering ancient books and learning during the Renaissance;
- recognise that asking thoughtful questions is an important part of learning;
- identify ways that good citizenship includes preserving knowledge and learning from the past;
- reflect on how inquisitiveness can be used wisely within God's Big Story.

## Key Vocabulary

**Ancient** – belonging to a very long time ago.

**Manuscript** – a book or document written by hand before printing was invented.

**Monastery** – a place where monks lived, worked and often copied and cared for books.

**Scholar** – a person who studies and learns carefully.

**Renaissance** – a period of renewed interest in learning, art, science and discovery that began in Italy about 700 years ago.

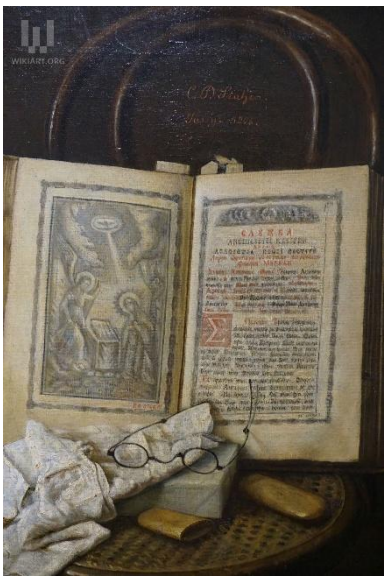
**Humanist** – during the Renaissance, a scholar who studied the writings of ancient Greek and Roman authors, believing they contained valuable wisdom about language, history and human life. Renaissance humanists did not all share the same beliefs, and Christians should thoughtfully evaluate their ideas alongside the truth of God's Word.

**Inquisitiveness** – eagerly wanting to learn by asking thoughtful questions and seeking truthful answers.

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# Introduction

Have you ever found something that everyone else had forgotten?



Perhaps it was an old family photograph tucked inside a book.

Maybe it was a dusty toy hidden in the back of a cupboard.

Or perhaps you discovered a fascinating story that nobody else in your family had ever read.

Sometimes the greatest treasures are not made of gold or jewels.

Sometimes they are ideas.

Sometimes they are books.

Sometimes they are the wisdom of people who lived hundreds of years before us.

Today's story is about a young man who believed forgotten books were treasures worth searching for.



His name was **Francesco Petrarch**.

Most people simply call him **Petrarch**.

Without realising it, he helped begin one of the most remarkable periods in history – the Renaissance.

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# Living Historical Story

The monastery stood on a hill above the little town, its stone walls pale in the early morning light. A bell had rung before sunrise, and now the air was still except for the sound of sandals on the stone floor and the faint rustle of robes as the monks moved quietly through their work.

Inside one of the long, cool rooms, shelves of old books lined the walls. Some were thick and heavy, bound in worn leather. Others were tied with cords to keep their pages safe. Many had been copied by hand long

ago, letter by letter, by patient monks bent over desks by candlelight. Dust lay on some of the shelves, and a faint smell of parchment, ink and age filled the room.



A young scholar stood near the doorway, looking at the shelves with shining eyes.

His name was **Francesco Petrarch**.

Most people today simply call him **Petrarch**.

To the monks, he probably looked rather ordinary – just another man with a love of books. He was not a knight with armour or a merchant with bags of money. He was not a king or a bishop. But inside his mind burned a question that would help change Europe.

**What wisdom had been forgotten?**

Petrarch stepped carefully between the tables, his fingers brushing the spines of old manuscripts. He had travelled to monasteries and libraries like this one many times before. Wherever he went, he asked the same sorts of questions.

“Do you have any old writings from Rome?”

“Have you ever found letters by Cicero?”

“Are there any books here that no one has read for years?”

Some people thought these were strange questions. Why should anyone spend so much time hunting for old books written by men who had been dead for more than a thousand years? Why not read only the books that people already knew well? Why go peering into dusty cupboards and forgotten shelves?

But Petrarch could not stop wondering.

He believed the past still had something to teach the present.

At one table a monk looked up from his copying. His quill scratched to a halt.

“Can I help you?” he asked.

Petrarch smiled. “I hope so. I am searching for old Latin writings – especially the works of Cicero and other Roman authors. I have heard that your monastery keeps many ancient manuscripts.”

The monk nodded slowly. “We do have old books, though I cannot promise they are the ones you seek. Some have not been touched in many years.”

Petrarch’s face lit up. “May I see them?”



The monk studied him for a moment, perhaps amused by his eagerness. “Come,” he said at last.

He led Petrarch through a narrow passage into a smaller room where a wooden chest sat beneath a window. Dust floated in the thin beam of sunlight that fell across it. The monk knelt, lifted the lid, and began moving aside several bundles of parchment.

“There are sermons, old church writings, some legal documents…” he murmured. “And here – some pages from ancient authors. I am afraid I do not know exactly what all of them are.”

Petrarch knelt beside him, hardly breathing. To most people, the papers might have looked like little more than faded sheets of old handwriting. But to Petrarch they were like buried treasure.



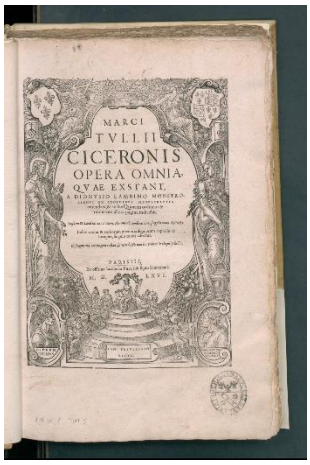
He picked up one bundle and gently untied the cord. The Latin letters ran across the page in careful lines. He scanned them quickly, then more slowly. His eyes widened.

“Do you know what this is?” he whispered.

The monk leaned closer. “No.”

Petrarch looked up, hardly able to contain his delight.

“It is a work by Cicero!”




Now, if you had been standing in that little room, you might have wondered why this mattered so much. After all, Cicero had lived long before Petrarch – back in the days of ancient Rome. He was not a Christian writer. He was a Roman statesman, speaker and author. Why should a Christian scholar living in medieval Europe care so deeply about finding an old Roman book?

To understand that, we need to understand something about the world Petrarch lived in.

For many centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire, Europe had gone through difficult times. Wars, invasions and political troubles had damaged cities and disrupted learning. Books were precious because every copy had to be written by hand. There were no printing presses yet. If a book was lost, burned, neglected or allowed to rot, its words might disappear for generations.

Yet God, in His providence, had not allowed all learning to vanish. In monasteries across Europe, monks carefully copied manuscripts and preserved books. They often copied the Bible, commentaries, sermons and other Christian writings. But sometimes they also copied older Greek and Roman texts – works of history, speeches, poetry and philosophy. Many of these books sat quietly on monastery shelves for years, waiting for someone to recognise their value.

Petrarch was one of the people who did recognise it.

He loved the Scriptures, and he knew that God’s Word was the highest authority and the truest source of wisdom. But he also believed that people could learn useful things from the writings of the past – especially about language, history, leadership and the human experience. He thought many people of his own day had become careless in their writing and lazy in their learning. He wanted to recover a love for careful reading, beautiful language and thoughtful study.

So, when Petrarch found an old manuscript, he did not simply see ink on parchment. He saw a voice from the past speaking again.

He turned the pages reverently.

“Listen to this,” he said to the monk, reading a few lines aloud in Latin.

The monk smiled politely, though he probably did not share Petrarch's excitement.

"You truly love these old writings," he said.

"I do," Petrarch replied. "It's not just because they are old, but because they may help us think more carefully and write more beautifully. We should not be content to know only a little when God has allowed so much to be preserved."

That was one of the things that made Petrarch so unusual. He was not satisfied with easy answers or shallow learning. He wanted to dig deeper. He wanted to ask questions. He wanted to compare old writings, understand history and learn from people who had gone before him.

That quality – wanting to know more, asking good questions, searching carefully for truth – is called **inquisitiveness**.

Petrarch had it in abundance.

He had been born in 1304, in a time when Italy was full of bustling towns, traders, church leaders, students and scholars. Unlike some parts of Europe, northern and central Italy had wealthy cities that traded with many other places. Merchants brought goods, money and ideas from one city to another. Florence, Venice and other Italian cities were growing busy and prosperous.
www.freepick.com



Petrarch travelled widely through this world. He studied, wrote letters, copied manuscripts and made friends with other scholars. He admired the ancient Roman writer Cicero so much that he even wrote letters to him – as though Cicero were still alive! Of course, Cicero had been dead for centuries, but Petrarch felt that reading an author carefully was a kind of friendship across time.

That is a beautiful idea, and one worth remembering.

When you read a great book carefully, you are not merely collecting facts. In a sense, you are listening to another mind. You are making the acquaintance of someone who lived before you. Sometimes that person may be wise. Sometimes that person may be wrong. Sometimes they may be a mixture of both. But reading carefully helps you think, compare and grow.

Petrarch wanted the people of his own day to rediscover that kind of learning.

He began searching for old manuscripts in monasteries and libraries wherever he travelled. Sometimes he found speeches by Cicero. Sometimes letters. Sometimes works of Roman history. He copied passages, compared versions and shared his discoveries with other scholars. He wrote his own poems and letters too, often in beautiful Latin. Gradually, his love of learning began to influence others.

More and more scholars started asking the kinds of questions Petrarch asked.

What did the ancient writers say?

How did people in the past write so well?

What can we learn from history?

How can we become more thoughtful readers and clearer writers?

This growing interest in recovering the learning of the ancient world helped prepare the way for the **Renaissance**.

The word *Renaissance* means **rebirth**. It does not mean that the world was being born again in the same way a Christian is spiritually born again through faith in Christ. Rather, historians use the word to describe a period when many people in Europe became newly interested in art, learning, language, history and discovery. They studied ancient Greek and Roman writings, experimented with new artistic techniques, built remarkable buildings and asked fresh questions about the world around them.

Petrarch lived at the very beginning of this movement. That is why some people call him **the Father of Humanism**.

Now, when you hear the word *humanism*, you need to be careful. Today the word is often used for belief systems that leave God out and place human beings at the centre of everything. That is not what Petrarch meant. Renaissance humanists were scholars who studied the literature, history and language of ancient Greece and Rome. They believed these writings could help people become more educated and thoughtful.



Some of the things they studied were useful and good. Christians can certainly learn from history, language and careful scholarship. But Christians must also remember that all human learning needs to be tested by God's truth. Ancient writers, brilliant as they may have been, were not the final authority. God's Word is.

Petrarch himself was a complex man. He admired ancient learning, yet he also wrestled with spiritual questions. He lived in a world where the Church was powerful, where politics could be messy, and where people were often torn between loving God and loving human praise. Like all of us, he was not perfect. But God used his inquisitive mind to help Europe recover a love for learning.

Back in the monastery room, Petrarch carefully wrapped the manuscript again and looked at the monk with gratitude.

“Thank you,” he said. “You may not realise it, but this chest holds riches.”

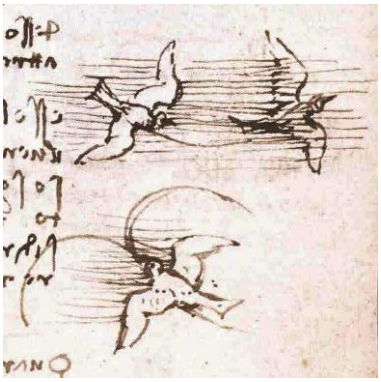
The monk laughed softly. “Most visitors ask about food or lodging. You ask about old books.”

Petrarch smiled. “Books can feed the mind. And if they help us seek wisdom, they can strengthen much more than the mind.”

The monk nodded, and for a moment both men looked at the chest of manuscripts. One saw old parchments that had sat there for years. The other saw voices waiting to be heard.

Perhaps that is one of the lessons Petrarch teaches us.

Inquisitiveness means more than being curious about random things. It means caring enough to ask good questions. It means searching for wisdom. It means refusing to be satisfied with laziness of mind. It means looking carefully at the world, at books, at history and at ideas, and asking, “What can I learn? What is true? What has God allowed others to discover that might help me serve Him more faithfully?”



That kind of inquisitiveness can be a great blessing.

It can lead a child to ask how a bird flies, how a poem works, why a city grew wealthy, why a bridge stands, or why people believe what they believe.

It can lead a scientist to investigate God's creation.

It can lead an artist to observe beauty more carefully.

It can lead a historian to search for forgotten stories.

It can lead a Christian to study God's Word more deeply.

And sometimes, as in Petrarch's case, it can even help change the course of history.

Long after Petrarch left the monastery, the manuscripts remained. But now they had been seen with fresh eyes. Their words would be copied, read and shared again. Other scholars would be inspired to search for more. Learning would spread. New questions would be asked. Old ideas would be tested and discussed. Artists, writers and thinkers would build on the work of those who came before them.

The Renaissance did not begin in a single day, and Petrarch did not cause it by himself. But God used one scholar's love of learning, one man's search for forgotten books, to help awaken a new hunger for knowledge.

And it all began, in a sense, with a question.

**What wisdom has been forgotten – and what treasures might still be waiting to be found?**

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# Narration

### Foundation–Year 2

Tell the story of Petrarch to a parent, teacher or sibling. What was he searching for, and why were the old books important to him?

### Years 3–4

Retell Petrarch's visit to the monastery library. Explain what he found and why it mattered.

### Years 5–6

Imagine you are Petrarch writing a letter to a friend after discovering an old manuscript by Cicero. Write or tell what you found, why you were excited, and why you think forgotten books are worth searching for.

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# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the thinking questions and activities.]**



### 1. Who was Petrarch?

**Francesco Petrarch** (1304–1374) was an Italian scholar, poet and writer who loved learning. He searched for ancient Greek and Roman writings, copied old manuscripts and encouraged people to study language, history and literature carefully.

Because he helped spark renewed interest in ancient learning, many historians describe him as one of the important early figures of the Renaissance.

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## 2. Why were books so precious in Petrarch's day?



Lipnice Bible from 1421AD

In Petrarch's time there were **no printing presses** yet in Europe. Every book had to be copied by hand, often on parchment. This made books expensive, rare and precious.

Monasteries were some of the places where books were carefully copied and preserved. Without the work of many monks and scholars, countless writings from the ancient and medieval world would have been lost.

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## 3. What was the Renaissance?

The **Renaissance** was a period of renewed interest in learning, art, history and discovery that began in Italy and later spread across Europe. People studied ancient writings, developed new artistic techniques, designed remarkable buildings and began asking new questions about the world.

The Renaissance brought many achievements, but like every period of history it included both wisdom and folly. Christians can appreciate the creativity and learning of the Renaissance while also evaluating it carefully according to God's Word.

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## 4. What does Petrarch have to do with civics and citizenship?

Civics is not only about governments and laws. It is also about how people contribute to the life of their society.

Petrarch's story reminds us that good citizens help preserve and pass on knowledge. A society flourishes when people care about truth, learning, wisdom, books, libraries, education and history.

People serve their communities not only by building roads or leading governments, but also by teaching, writing, preserving knowledge and helping others learn.

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## 5. What is inquisitiveness?

**Inquisitiveness** is the habit of asking thoughtful questions and searching for truthful answers. It is not the same as being nosy or restless. Godly inquisitiveness is guided by wisdom, humility and a desire to learn what is true and good.

Petrarch's inquisitiveness led him to search for forgotten books and learn from the past. Our inquisitiveness should lead us to ask wise questions, study carefully and seek truth under God's authority.

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# Did You Notice?

While reading today's story, did you notice that Petrarch:

- cared about books that other people had forgotten;
- asked questions instead of being satisfied with easy answers;
- travelled and searched because he believed the past still had something to teach the present;
- used his love of learning to help other people rediscover important knowledge?

That is one picture of **inquisitiveness**.

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# Thinking Questions

### Foundation–Year 2

1. Who was Petrarch?
2. What was Petrarch looking for?
3. Why were books precious in Petrarch's day?
4. What does it mean to be inquisitive?
5. Can you think of something you would like to learn more about?

### Years 3–4

1. Why did Petrarch care so much about finding old books?
2. Why were monasteries important in preserving knowledge?
3. How did Petrarch help prepare the way for the Renaissance?
4. What is the difference between wise inquisitiveness and just being curious about everything?
5. Why is it important for a society to care about books, learning and history?

### Years 5–6

1. Why do you think Petrarch believed ancient writings were worth recovering?
2. In what ways did monasteries help preserve knowledge during the medieval period?
3. Why might historians call Petrarch one of the early figures of the Renaissance?
4. How should Christians think carefully about the good and bad aspects of Renaissance humanism?
5. In what ways can inquisitiveness help a person serve God and other people wisely?

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# Activities

## Foundation–Year 2

**1. Draw the Monastery Library**
Draw Petrarch in a dusty monastery library discovering an old manuscript. Add shelves, scrolls, books and a monk.



**2. Treasure Hunt for Words**
Hide several "manuscripts" (pieces of paper with words or short quotations) around the room. Let the student search for them like Petrarch searching for forgotten books.

**3. Tell About a Treasure**
Ask the student to bring a favourite book and explain why books can be treasures.

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## Years 3–4



**1. Make a Mini-Manuscript**
Fold paper into a small booklet and copy a short quotation or Bible verse into it carefully by hand. Decorate the first page like an old manuscript.



**2. Petrarch's Notebook**
Write five things Petrarch might have written in his notebook about why old books matter.

**3. Timeline Start**
Use your “Book of Centuries” or begin a Renaissance timeline and place Petrarch on it with his dates and a short caption.

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## Years 5–6

**1. Compare Then and Now**
Create a table comparing books in Petrarch's time with books today. Include:

- how books were made;
- who had access to them;
- how easily knowledge could spread;
- why books were valuable.

**2. Letter from the Library**
Write a one-page letter from Petrarch to a friend describing the discovery of an ancient manuscript and explaining why recovering forgotten books matters.

**3. Research Extension**
Find out more about Cicero or another ancient Roman writer Petrarch admired. Write a short paragraph explaining why Petrarch may have wanted to read his works.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

God created people with minds capable of learning, remembering, reading and asking questions. That is part of His good design. Petrarch's love of books and learning reminds us that curiosity can be a gift from God when it is used wisely.

But the story also reminds us that not every idea from the past is true. Because we live in a fallen world, human thinking is mixed with both wisdom and error. We should be grateful for the books, knowledge and learning God has allowed people to preserve, but we must always test every idea against the truth of God's Word.

As you think about Petrarch this week, ask yourself:

- What good questions has God given me to ask?
- Am I willing to work hard to learn?
- How can I use inquisitiveness to know God, serve others and understand His world more faithfully?

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# Lesson 1.2 – Geography & Economics

# Why Florence Became the Birthplace of the Renaissance

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## Character Focus

**Inquisitiveness**

*"The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps."*
**Proverbs 14:15**

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## Theme

Places matter. Geography, trade and wealth helped create the conditions in which the Renaissance could begin.

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- locate **Italy** and **Florence** on a map and describe their place in Europe;
- explain some of the geographical reasons why Italian city-states became wealthy and influential;
- describe how trade, banking and growing cities helped support learning, art and new ideas;
- recognise that people, places and resources influence how societies develop;
- reflect on how God uses places, resources and human decisions within history.

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## Key Vocabulary

**Geography** – the study of places, land, people and how they are connected.

**Economics** – the study of how people use money, resources, goods and services.

**Trade** – buying, selling or exchanging goods.

**Merchant** – a person who buys and sells goods.

**City-state** – a city that governed itself like a small country.

**Banking** – the work of storing, lending and managing money.

**Port** – a place where ships load and unload goods.

**Mediterranean Sea** – the large sea between Europe, Africa and Asia that was important for trade.

**Florence** – a powerful city in Italy that became one of the centres of the Renaissance.

**Resources** – useful things people can use, such as money, land, water, skills, tools or materials.

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# Introduction

If Petrarch helped awaken people's curiosity, why did that curiosity bloom most strongly in **Italy**?

And why do historians so often point to **Florence** as one of the most important cities of the Renaissance?

After all, ideas do not float around in the air by themselves. People live in **places**. They travel on roads and ships. They buy and sell goods. They build homes, churches, workshops and libraries. They need food, money, safety and opportunities to learn.

In other words, history happens in real places.

Today's lesson helps us understand why the Renaissance did not begin just anywhere. It began in a part of the world where geography, trade, money, city life and human ambition all came together in powerful ways.

To understand Petrarch's world, we need to understand **Italy** – and especially **Florence**.

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# Living Historical Story

The market square was already noisy by the time the sun climbed above the rooftops of Florence.

A boy carrying a basket of cloth hurried past a stall piled high with spices. A merchant in a dark robe argued cheerfully with another trader over the price of fine wool. Somewhere nearby a hammer rang against metal. Donkeys clattered over the cobblestones, their packs loaded with goods. The smell of bread drifted from a baker's shop. Above it all rose the towers and church buildings of the city, watching over the busy streets like stone guardians.

If you had stood in Florence during the early years of the Renaissance, you would not have seen a sleepy village tucked away in the countryside. You would have seen a city alive with movement – people buying, selling, weaving, carrying, building, discussing, calculating and dreaming.

A father and his daughter made their way through the crowd, weaving between carts and market stalls. The girl held tightly to her father's hand, trying not to be jostled by the bustling crowd.



“Papa,” she asked, looking up at the tall buildings around her, “why are there always so many people here?”

Her father smiled. “Because Florence is a place where many things come together.”

The girl frowned slightly. “What do you mean?”

He stopped beside a stall where bolts of dyed wool hung in bright colours – deep red, rich blue and golden yellow. “Look around you,” he said. “What do you see?”



She looked.

“People,” she said first. “Lots of people.”

He laughed. “Yes, that is certainly true.”

“And cloth,” she added. “And bread. And wagons. And men shouting.”

“Good. What else?”

She thought for a moment. “Money?”



“Exactly,” said her father. “Florence is full of trade. And where there is trade, there is often money. Where there is money, there are often new buildings, new businesses, and sometimes new ideas.”

The girl wasn't sure how ideas had anything to do with cloth or money, but she kept listening.

Her father led her toward a bridge over the **Arno River**, the river that ran through Florence. The water below moved steadily beneath the stone arches, carrying reflections of houses and shops along its surface.



“Long ago,” he said, resting his hands on the bridge wall, “people began settling here because this was a good place to live. There was river water. There was fertile land nearby. Roads connected Florence to other places. Traders could travel north into Europe and south toward Rome and the Mediterranean. Goods could move. News could move. People could move.”

The girl peered down into the water. “So, the river helped the city grow?”

“Yes,” said her father. “A city does not grow by magic. It grows because people can live there, work there, trade there and travel from there.”

That was one of the secrets of Florence.

To understand it properly, we need to imagine a map.

Italy is a long, narrow peninsula stretching down into the **Mediterranean Sea**. On a map it looks a little like a boot. During the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Italy sat in a very important position. It was close to sea routes linking Europe with parts of Asia, North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean. Goods such as spices, silk, dyes and precious materials moved through these trading networks. Merchants who could buy and sell such goods often became wealthy.

Florence itself was not a seaport like Venice, but it was still in an excellent position. It sat in **northern-central Italy**, connected by land routes to other important cities and trade regions. It was close enough to benefit from wider Mediterranean trade, while also becoming a centre for its own industries – especially the wool and cloth trade.

As the father and daughter left the bridge, they passed a workshop where men were sorting and stretching wool. The girl stopped to watch.

“Is all this cloth really so important?” she asked.

“Very important,” said her father. “Florence became famous for making and selling fine cloth. Wool came in, was cleaned, dyed, spun and woven, and then sold again. Many families earned their living from it. Merchants made money. Workers found jobs. The city grew richer.”

“Is that why the buildings are so grand?” she asked, glancing toward a large church.

“In part, yes,” he said. “Money can build many things. It can build houses, churches, bridges and public buildings. It can also pay for books, teachers, artists and scholars.”

Now the girl's eyes widened. “So, money helped the Renaissance?”

“In some ways, yes,” her father replied. “Not by itself. Money does not create wisdom. But it can create opportunities.”

That was another secret of Florence.

The Renaissance did not grow only because a few clever people had good ideas. It also grew because there were cities wealthy enough to support learning, art and building. If every family is struggling simply to survive, it is difficult to spend money on libraries, paintings, cathedrals or scholars searching for old manuscripts. But when a city becomes prosperous through trade and industry, some of its people have more time and resources to support these things.

As they walked on, the father pointed to a large building with strong stone walls and elegant windows.

“Do you know what happens in places like that?” he asked.

The girl shook her head.

“Banking.”




She blinked. “What is banking?”

“It is the work of storing, lending and managing money. Merchants need places to keep money safe, transfer money, and borrow money for business. Florence became famous not only for cloth and trade, but also for banking families who helped manage wealth.”

The girl thought about this. “So, Florence had trade, cloth and banks?”

“Yes,” said her father. “And all of those things made the city stronger and richer.”

He paused, then added, “But wealth can be used in different ways.”

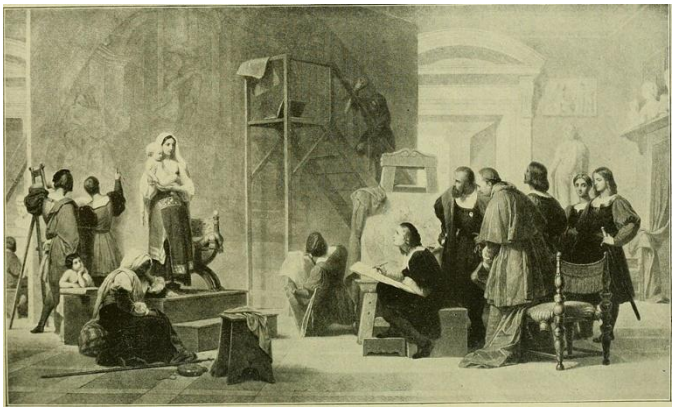
That was an important lesson.

Money can be used selfishly – to gain power, show off or control others. But money can also be used to build hospitals, support learning, care for the poor, commission art, improve cities and create opportunities for others. In Florence, wealth was used in both wise and foolish ways, because Florence was filled with sinners just like every other city in history.

Still, God used even the mixed motives of human beings to shape history.

In Florence, wealthy families and merchants helped support churches, libraries, public buildings, scholars and artists. They paid for apprenticeships and workshops. They funded education. They created spaces where people could discuss ideas, read old books and train in painting, architecture and business.

The father and daughter now reached a busy square where several men were in animated discussion. One was reading aloud from a document. Another was arguing about taxes. Nearby, a messenger hurried past carrying sealed papers.



"Is this a government meeting?" the girl asked.

"Not exactly," said her father, "but Florence is not ruled by a king the way some lands are. Florence is a **city-state**. That means it governs itself."

The girl frowned. "A city can be like a country?"

"In a way, yes. It has leaders, laws and councils. Different groups in the city try to influence decisions. Merchants, guilds, powerful families and church leaders all care about what happens here."

This was yet another reason that Florence was significant.

Many parts of Europe during the Middle Ages were ruled by kings, princes or feudal lords. But parts of Italy developed as **city-states** – independent cities with their own governments, laws and rivalries. Florence, Venice, Milan and others competed with one another in trade, politics and culture. They wanted to be wealthy, impressive and influential. Sometimes this rivalry led to pride and conflict. But it also pushed cities to build, create and improve.



If one city built a magnificent church, another city wanted to build something even more impressive. If one family supported artists and scholars, another family might want to do the same. Competition is not always good, but in God's providence even rivalry sometimes led to the support of architecture, art and learning.

The father lowered his voice slightly. "Cities are not just made of buildings," he said. "They are made of choices. The way a city uses its money, governs its people and values learning shapes what kind of place it becomes."

The girl nodded slowly.

"So, Florence became important because it was in a good place, had trade, made money, and governed itself?"

Her father smiled. "That is an excellent summary."

"But Papa," she asked, "why Florence and not some other city?"

"A fair question," he said. "And the answer is that Florence was not the only important city. Venice was powerful. Milan was powerful. Rome was important. But Florence became especially famous because many of these things came together there at just the right time – wealth from trade, strong industries, banking, active civic life, competition, and a growing interest in learning, art and ancient books."

They passed a school where boys were reciting Latin.



Not far away, a painter's workshop stood open to the street, with sketches hanging on the wall and pigments laid out on a table.

Across the square, a scribe bent over a document. A mason walked by with stone dust on his clothes.

Everywhere there were signs of work, skill and learning.

“Do you see?” said the father.

The girl looked around. “I think so.”

“Florence was not only a place where people sold things,” he said. “It was a place where people made things, learned things, argued about things and imagined things.”

In a city like that, a young scholar such as Petrarch could find listeners. A family could pay for a child's education. A merchant could fund a library. A patron could support an artist. A workshop could train an apprentice. A banker could lend money for building projects. A church leader could commission a painting. A writer could share new ideas.

None of this meant Florence was perfect. It was not. It had greed, pride, injustice, rivalry and political trouble, just like every human city. Yet God, who rules over all history, used even imperfect cities and imperfect people to prepare the way for remarkable developments in art, scholarship and culture.

As the sun moved westward, the father and daughter turned back toward home. The market was still busy, though some stalls were beginning to close.



The girl looked over her shoulder at the city one more time.

“I used to think history was mostly about famous people,” she said.

“It often includes famous people,” her father replied.

“But now I think places matter too.”

He smiled.

“Yes,” he said. “People shape places, and places shape people. That is one of the great lessons of geography and history.”

She thought for a moment, then added, “And money matters too.”

He laughed. “Yes – though not because money is the most important thing. Money is a tool. It can be used well or badly. But when people trade, build, govern, lend, give and create, those choices shape the life of a city.”

The girl nodded.

“So, Petrarch helped people love learning again,” she said, “but Florence helped make space for that learning to grow.”

Her father looked at her with approval.

“Exactly.”

And that is why Florence means so much in the story of the Renaissance.

Not because it was the only city with clever people.

Not because money automatically creates wisdom.

Not because geography determines everything.

But because God placed that city in a location where trade, travel, industry, civic life and wealth could combine with curiosity, learning and ambition. Florence became one of the places where old books were rediscovered, new art was commissioned, businesses flourished, ideas spread and the Renaissance began to bloom.

In other words, Florence became fertile soil for a new season of learning.

And like all good soil, it was important because of what grew there.

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# Narration

## Foundation–Year 2

Tell someone three things that helped Florence become an important city.

## Years 3–4

Retell the story of the father and daughter walking through Florence. Explain what the daughter learned about trade, rivers and city life.

## Years 5–6

Pretend you are a traveller writing home after visiting Florence. Describe why the city is wealthy and why it seems to be an exciting place for learning and new ideas.

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# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary




## 1. Where is Italy?

Italy is a peninsula in southern Europe. It stretches into the Mediterranean Sea and sits between parts of western and eastern Europe. This location made it an important place for travel, trade and communication.




## 2. Where is Florence?

Florence is in **central-northern Italy**, in the region of Tuscany. It is not a coastal port like Venice, but it sits in a useful position for land trade, communication and movement between other cities and regions.

It is also located on the **Arno River**, which helped support settlement and trade.



# 3. Why was geography important?

Geography shaped Florence in several ways:

- **Italy's position in the Mediterranean** helped connect it to important trade networks.
- **Florence's location** allowed it to connect with other cities and regions.
- **Rivers and fertile land** helped support settlement and farming.
- **Roads and travel routes** made it easier for goods, ideas and people to move.

Geography does not explain everything, but it helps us understand why some places grow into important centres of trade and culture.

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# 4. What made Florence wealthy?

Florence became wealthy through several economic activities, including:

- **the wool and cloth trade**;
- **merchant activity**;
- **banking and money-lending**;
- **craftsmanship and skilled work**;
- **trade with other regions**.

As the city grew wealthier, some of its people used their resources to support churches, public buildings, education, artists and scholars.

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# 5. What is a city-state?

A **city-state** is a city that governs itself like a small country. During the Renaissance, parts of Italy were made up of city-states such as Florence, Venice and Milan. These city-states had their own leaders, laws and political struggles.

This is part of **civics**, because it helps us understand how communities organise themselves and make decisions.

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# 6. How did economics help the Renaissance?

Economics is not only about money. It is about how people use resources, labour, skills, trade and wealth.

In Florence:

- merchants traded goods;
- workshops made valuable products;
- bankers managed money;
- wealthy families funded projects;
- public life was shaped by economic power.

This created opportunities for artists, builders, scholars and teachers. Economics helped create the conditions in which Renaissance learning and creativity could flourish.

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# Did You Notice?

While reading today's story, did you notice that Florence became important because of **more than one reason**?

It had:

- a useful **location** in Italy;
- access to **trade routes**;
- a **river** and nearby fertile land;
- skilled **workers and merchants**;
- growing **wealth** through cloth and banking;
- a strong **city life** with leaders, families and guilds influencing decisions.

History is not shaped by one thing alone. Places, people, money, ideas and decisions all work together.

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# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. In what country was Florence?
2. What river ran through Florence?
3. What kinds of things were sold in Florence?
4. Why did many people live and work there?
5. What is one reason Florence became important?

## Years 3–4

1. Why was Italy in a good place for trade?
2. How did the Arno River help Florence?
3. What kinds of work helped Florence become wealthy?
4. Why might a wealthy city be able to support artists and scholars?
5. What is a city-state?

## Years 5–6

1. How did Florence's geography help it become an important Renaissance city?
2. Why were trade and banking so significant in Florence's growth?
3. In what ways did economics help create the conditions for Renaissance art and learning?
4. How did the political structure of Italian city-states differ from a kingdom ruled by one king?
5. Why is it important to understand both geography and economics when studying history?

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# Activities

## Foundation–Year 2

**1. Map of Italy**
Colour Italy on a map of Europe. Mark Florence with a star.

**2. Florence Market Drawing**
Draw a busy Florence market with cloth sellers, bread, carts, merchants and buildings.

**3. Sort the Reasons**
Cut out simple cards labelled *river*, *trade*, *money*, *city*, *wool*, *people*. Sort them into "Things that helped Florence grow."

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## Years 3–4

**1. Florence on the Map**
Use a map of Europe and Italy to label:

- Europe
- Italy
- Mediterranean Sea
- Florence
- Arno River

**2. How a City Grows**
Make a flow chart showing how geography, trade and money helped Florence grow. For example:
**good location → trade → wealth → support for buildings, art and learning**

**3. Market Role Play**
Pretend to be merchants, cloth sellers, bankers and customers in a Florence market. Discuss how trade helps a city.

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## Years 5–6

**1. Geography & Economics Explanation Page**
Create a notebook page titled:
**Why Florence Became the Birthplace of the Renaissance**
Include:

- a small labelled map;
- 4–6 dot points about geography;
- 4–6 dot points about economics;
- a paragraph explaining why Florence became influential.

**2. Compare Two Cities**
Compare Florence with another important Renaissance city such as Venice or Rome. Which had the stronger port, trade or political advantages?

**3. City-State Investigation**
Research what a guild, merchant family or banker did in Florence. Write a short explanation of how these groups influenced the city's economy and culture.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

God does not work only through individual people. He also works through places, communities, resources and historical circumstances.

Florence reminds us that geography and economics matter because they shape the opportunities people have. A city can use its wealth for greed and pride, or it can use its resources to build, teach, create and serve. Florence did both, because like every human society it reflected both God's common grace and humanity's fallenness.

As you think about Florence, ask:

- How can people use money and resources wisely rather than selfishly?
- How can a city or community encourage learning, beauty and service?
- What opportunities has God given my own family, school or community – and how should we use them for His glory?

# Lesson 1.3 – Civics / Economics / Historical Investigation: How a Renaissance City Worked

**Guilds, Merchants, Apprentices and City Life in Florence**

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## Character Focus

**Inquisitiveness**

*"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty."*
**Proverbs 21:5**

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## Theme

A city is more than buildings. It is made up of people, work, rules, responsibilities and relationships.

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- describe some of the different people who lived and worked in a Renaissance city such as Florence;
- explain what **guilds**, **merchants**, **apprentices** and **bankers** did;
- recognise that city life depended on cooperation, work, rules and shared responsibilities;
- understand that citizens contribute to the wellbeing of their community in different ways;
- reflect on how people can use their work, skills and resources to serve others.

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## Key Vocabulary

**Guild** – a group of workers or tradespeople in the same craft or trade who worked together, set standards and trained apprentices.



**Apprentice** – a young person learning a trade or craft from a skilled worker.

**Workshop** – a place where skilled work was done, such as painting, weaving, carving or metalwork.

**Merchant** – a person who buys and sells goods.

**Banker** – a person who manages, stores or lends money.

**Citizen** – a member of a community or city who lives under its rules and contributes to its life.

**Craftsman** – a person skilled at making things by hand.

**Public square** – an open area in a city where people gathered for markets, meetings, announcements and celebrations.

**Guildhall** – a meeting place or headquarters for a tradesman's guild.

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# Introduction

When we think about the Renaissance, we often think first about **famous people** – Petrarch searching for books, Leonardo painting and inventing, or Michelangelo carving marble.

But those famous people did not live alone.

They lived in **cities** full of ordinary people doing ordinary work.

Someone baked the bread. Someone else wove the cloth. There were builders constructing houses, and apprentices for various tradesmen. Others worked in an office copying documents, or helping people with legal matters. There were shopkeepers, and bankers counting money. In an artist's workshop an apprentice swept the floor before the master painter arrived. And someone rang the church bells.

A city like Florence worked because thousands of people each played a part.

Today's lesson is about those people – and about how a Renaissance city actually worked.

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# Living Historical Story

The bells of Florence had not long finished ringing when Matteo pushed open the wooden shutters and looked down into the narrow street below.

Already the city was waking.

A baker's boy hurried past with a basket of loaves balanced against his hip. Across the street, a woman leaned from an upper window and called to a neighbour below. A donkey clattered over the cobblestones carrying sacks of wool. Somewhere farther off, a man was hammering metal. The smell of bread, smoke and damp stone drifted upward into the morning air.

Matteo turned from the window and pulled on his tunic.

"Quickly," his mother said, tying a scarf over her hair. "You don't want Master Lorenzo waiting for you."

Matteo nodded. He was twelve years old, and today – like most days – he would spend the long hours of daylight in the workshop of **Master Lorenzo**, a wool merchant and cloth worker.

Matteo was not a full merchant yet.

He was an **apprentice**.

That meant he was learning a trade from someone older and more experienced. For now, he swept floors, carried bundles, fetched water, sorted wool, ran errands and watched carefully as the men in the workshop did their work. Someday, if he learned well and worked hard, he might become a skilled worker himself.

His mother handed him a piece of bread.

“Listen carefully. Work honestly. Be respectful,” she said.

“I will,” Matteo replied.

Then he slipped out the door and into the life of Renaissance Florence.

The street was busier than it had looked from above. Merchants were setting up their stalls. A group of boys ran past laughing, nearly knocking into a man carrying a basket of apples. Two monks walked quietly together, their heads bowed in conversation. At the corner, a mason with chalk on his sleeves was talking with a carpenter about timber prices.

Matteo loved these early hours. Florence felt like a giant machine slowly coming to life, with every person fitting into it somehow.

When he reached Master Lorenzo's workshop, the great wooden doors were already open.



Inside, several men were sorting wool. Bundles of cloth lay stacked against the walls. Dyed fabric hung from beams overhead in rich colours – red, blue, green and gold. A clerk sat at a small desk near the front, dipping his quill into ink as he copied figures into a ledger.

Master Lorenzo looked up as Matteo entered.

“Late?” he said sternly.

Matteo's eyes widened. “No, Master – I mean, I don't think so – ”

Lorenzo burst out laughing. “You are on time. But one day you will learn not to look so frightened.”

The men in the workshop chuckled.

“Now then,” said Lorenzo, “today you will carry these samples to the dyer's shop, then stop by the guildhall and collect the notice I am expecting. After that, come back and help Paolo sort the wool.”

Matteo nodded eagerly.

He liked errands. Errands meant he got to see more of the city.

He tucked the bundle of cloth under one arm and set off again, this time crossing a wider street lined with shops and workshops. Goldsmiths, shoemakers, scribes, carpenters, bakers and painters all had their own corners of the city. Some workshops were tiny, barely more than a room with a bench and a sign above the door. Others were larger and busier, with apprentices, assistants and customers coming and going all day.

As Matteo passed a woodcarver's shop, he paused to watch a young apprentice sweeping curls of wood into a basket.

The apprentice looked about his own age.

“Do you work here?” Matteo asked.

The boy nodded. “Since last spring.”

“What do you make?”



“Frames, chests, church panels – whatever the master is working on.”

Matteo looked around the workshop. “Do you like it?”

The boy shrugged. “Some days. Mostly I sweep and carry things. But yesterday Master let me smooth the edge of a frame.”

Matteo grinned. “That sounds better than carrying wool.”

“Perhaps,” the boy said. “Though I would not mind warm cloth in winter.”

Both boys laughed, and Matteo hurried on.

By the time he reached the **guildhall**, several men were already gathered near the doorway. They wore fine robes and serious expressions. One held a folded paper sealed with wax.



Matteo knew what this place was. His master had explained it many times.

The wool merchants, cloth workers and other tradesmen of Florence did not simply work alone. Many belonged to **guilds** – groups of people in the same trade or craft who worked together to protect standards, organise training and represent their members.

Guilds were very important in Florence during the Renaissance era.

If you wanted to become a skilled craftsman or merchant, the guilds often helped decide how that training would happen. They could make rules about quality. They could settle disputes. They could support members of their trade. In some cases, powerful guilds even had influence in the government of the city.

To Matteo, the guildhall looked important and mysterious. To grown men with businesses and money at stake, it was far more than mysterious. It was one of the places where the life of the city was organised.

A man standing by the door recognised Matteo.

“Master Lorenzo's apprentice, aren't you?” he asked.

“Yes, sir.”

The man handed him a folded notice. “For your master. Tell him the guild meeting is after vespers (the sunset evening prayer service).”

Matteo bowed his head politely. “Thank you, sir.”

As he turned to go, he glanced back at the men entering the hall. They would be discussing rules, prices, standards, business and who knows what else. Matteo did not understand all of it yet, but he knew enough to realise that Florence was not just a city where people made things. It was a city where people organised themselves.



That was part of what made it powerful.

On his way back, Matteo took a longer route through the **public square**. Here the city seemed even busier than before. Merchants sold cloth, fruit, leather goods and metal tools. A banker in dark robes stepped down from a doorway and climbed into a cart. Nearby, a priest spoke with a widow carrying a basket. A messenger read an announcement aloud to a small crowd. Children darted between adults like sparrows.

Matteo stopped at a fountain to drink and watched the square for a moment.

Everyone seemed to be doing something different.

And yet, somehow, all those different jobs fit together.

The baker needed flour from farmers.

The cloth merchant needed wool from shepherds and traders.



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The dyer needed plants, minerals or imported dyes to colour the cloth.

The banker needed merchants and families to trust him with their money.

The mason needed stone.

The painter needed wood panels, brushes and pigments.

The church needed candles, books, vestments and workers to care for the building.

The city needed roads, laws, markets, bridges, wells, taxes, leaders and labourers.

Florence was like a woven cloth itself – many threads crossing over and under one another to make something stronger than a single strand could ever be.

At the workshop, Master Lorenzo took the guild notice and scanned it quickly.

“Good,” he murmured. “Now, Paolo! Show Matteo how to sort this wool properly. If he is to learn the trade, he must learn to use his eyes.”

Paolo, a broad-shouldered man with rough hands, beckoned Matteo over.

“Look carefully,” he said, holding up a bundle of wool. “Not all wool is the same. Some is cleaner. Some is softer. Some is stronger. If you don't sort it well at the beginning, the cloth will not be as fine in the end.”

Matteo nodded and began trying to copy what Paolo did.

For a while the workshop fell into the steady rhythm of work – sorting, folding, measuring, recording, carrying. The clerk scratched figures into the ledger. A customer came in to inspect a bolt of cloth. Another man arrived to discuss payment. Lorenzo argued about prices with a merchant from another city. Matteo tried not to listen too obviously, but it was impossible not to hear some of it.

“Three florins?” Lorenzo said. “For cloth of this quality? Impossible.”

The merchant shrugged. “Prices are changing.”

“Then they are changing in the wrong direction.”

The men continued bargaining, and Matteo kept sorting wool.

By midday his back ached and his hands itched from the fibres, but he was beginning to understand something important: a city did not work only because of grand ideas or beautiful buildings. It worked because people were willing to work hard, and to negotiate, organise, train, serve, keep records and follow rules.

Later in the afternoon, Master Lorenzo sent Matteo to deliver a message to a banker across town.



The bank building was quieter than the market and cleaner than the wool workshop. Inside, men sat at tables counting coins, recording debts and discussing payments. One clerk weighed money carefully on a small scale.

Matteo handed over the message and waited while the banker wrote a reply.

He had always thought bankers simply sat with piles of coins, but now he realised their work helped people far beyond the bank building. Merchants needed safe places to store money. Families needed loans. Businesses needed financial help to buy supplies or expand their work. Churches and city leaders needed funds for building projects. Bankers, for better or worse, helped make all of that possible.

As Matteo stepped back out into the street, the bells began ringing again.

The light was softening now, and the city looked different in the late afternoon. Shadows stretched across the square. Some stalls were closing. Workers were sweeping floors or carrying the last of the day's goods indoors. Priests and monks crossed the streets on their way to evening prayers. Smoke rose from chimneys as families prepared supper.

Matteo slowed his pace.

He was tired, but his mind was busy.

That morning he had thought mostly about his own tasks – carry the cloth, fetch the notice, sort the wool. But now he was thinking about the city itself.

He thought about the guildhall and the men making rules.

He thought about the market and all the people whose work depended on one another.

His thoughts drifted to the banker counting coins, and to apprentices learning from masters.

He thought about the public square where messages were read, taxes discussed and people argued about city matters.

Then there were the churches, where people gathered not only to worship but also to hear news, meet others and mark the important events of life.

By the time he reached home, he had begun to see Florence differently.

It was not simply a place full of shops and noise.

It was a **community** – messy, busy, imperfect, hardworking, ambitious and alive.

At supper, his mother noticed his thoughtful expression.

“What is it?” she asked.

Matteo tore a piece of bread and shrugged.

“I was just thinking,” he said.

“About wool?”

He smiled. “Not only wool.”

His father looked amused. “Then what?”

Matteo hesitated, trying to put it into words.

“I think I used to imagine that the city just... existed. Like it had always been there. But today I kept seeing how many people are needed for everything. The merchants, the guilds, the apprentices, the bankers, the clerks, the bakers, the builders... everyone is doing something.”

His father nodded. “That is true.”

“And if nobody did their part,” Matteo continued, “the city would stop working.”

“Yes, that’s also true.”

Matteo looked down at his hands, still dusty with wool fibres.

“I don't feel very important when I'm sorting wool.”

His father smiled gently.

“Most people are not famous, Matteo. But that does not make their work unimportant. Cities are not built only by poets and painters. They are built by ordinary people doing honest work faithfully.”

Matteo sat quietly for a moment.

Then he said, “So being a good citizen means more than obeying the rules?”

“Yes,” said his father. “It includes obeying just laws, but it also includes serving your community well. Working honestly. Treating others fairly. Learning your craft. Helping your family. Caring what happens in the city. Using what God has given you for the good of others.”

Matteo thought about Master Lorenzo, the guild members, the apprentices, the bakers, the banker, the dyer and the clerk.

Suddenly Florence seemed even more extraordinary than before.

Not because it was full of famous names.

But because it was full of people – ordinary people, skilled people, wealthy people, poor people, powerful people, apprentices and merchants – all helping, in one way or another, to keep the city alive.

And perhaps that is one of the most important things to understand about a Renaissance city.

Florence did not become a centre of trade, art and learning by accident.

It became that kind of city because thousands of people worked, bought, sold, governed, built, taught, copied, counted, trained and served.

Some did it wisely. Some selfishly. Some faithfully. And some people did it foolishly.

But together they formed the life of the city.

And in God's providence, that city became one of the places where the Renaissance grew.

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# Narration

### Foundation–Year 2

Tell someone about Matteo's day in Florence. What jobs did he see people doing in the city?

### Years 3–4

Retell the story of Matteo's day as an apprentice. Explain what a guild was and why workshops and markets were important.

### Years 5–6

Write or tell a diary entry from Matteo's point of view. Describe what he learned in one day about how Florence worked as a city.

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# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. What was Matteo learning to do?
2. What is an apprentice?
3. Name two jobs people did in Florence.
4. Why did Matteo visit the guildhall?
5. Why do cities need many different workers?

## Years 3–4

1. What did Matteo learn about the city during his day in Florence?
2. Why were guilds important?
3. How did apprentices learn their trade?
4. Why did Florence need merchants and bankers as well as craftsmen?
5. What does it mean to be a good citizen in a city?

## Years 5–6

1. How did guilds help organise work and economic life in Florence?
2. Why was apprenticeship such an important part of Renaissance city life?
3. In what ways were economics and civics connected in Florence?
4. Why is it important to study the lives of ordinary workers as well as famous historical figures?
5. How can a Christian view ordinary work as valuable in God's world?

# Activities

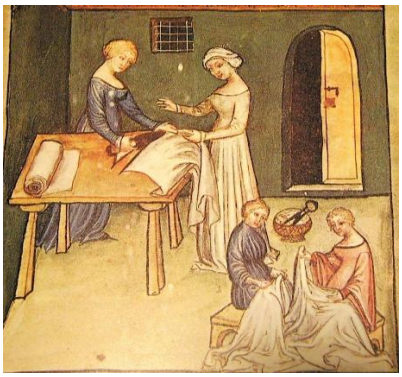
## Foundation–Year 2

### 1. Florence Jobs Match-Up
Match pictures or labels of different workers to their jobs:

- baker
- merchant
- apprentice
- banker
- painter
- cloth worker



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www.strage.googleapis.com



www.stockcake.com

_____ _____ _____



www.stockcake.com



www.knightstemplar.co



www.chronodigest.com

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### 2. Draw Matteo's Workshop
Draw Matteo in Master Lorenzo's wool workshop. Include cloth, wool, workers and tools.

### 3. City Helpers Discussion
Talk about all the people who help your own town or city work today. Compare them to Florence.

### Years 3–4

**1. A Day in Florence**
Create a simple timetable of Matteo's day and list what he learned at each place:

- workshop
- guildhall
- market
- bank
- home

**2. Guild Poster**
Make a poster explaining what a guild was and why it mattered.

**3. Compare Jobs**
Make a chart comparing jobs in Florence with jobs in your community today.

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### Years 5–6

**1. How Florence Worked Notebook Page**
Create a page titled **How a Renaissance City Worked**. Include sections on:

- apprentices
- guilds
- merchants
- bankers
- public life
- why ordinary work mattered

**2. City Web Diagram**
Draw a web showing how different workers in Florence depended on one another. For example:
shepherd → wool merchant → dyer → cloth worker → customer

**3. Civics Reflection**
Write a paragraph answering:
**What responsibilities did citizens have in a city like Florence, and what responsibilities do citizens have today?**

---

# God's Big Story Reflection

God made people to work, create, serve and live in community. Cities can be places of selfish ambition, pride and injustice – but they can also be places of cooperation, creativity, service and learning.

Florence reminds us that ordinary work is important. God uses bakers, merchants, apprentices, clerks, builders, bankers, teachers and parents – not just famous leaders – to shape communities and history.

As you think about Matteo and the people of Florence, ask:

- How can I use my work and skills to serve others?
- Why does God care about honesty, diligence and faithfulness in ordinary work?

- How can a community use its gifts and resources wisely for the good of others?

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| TOPIC 2 | BUILDING THE IMPOSSIBLE |
|---|---|

# Lesson 2.1 – History & Civics

# Filippo Brunelleschi: The Man Who Built the Impossible Dome

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## Character Focus

**Inquisitiveness**

*"Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men."*
**Proverbs 22:29**

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## Theme

Sometimes God gives people the curiosity, courage and skill to solve problems that seem impossible.

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- describe who **Filippo Brunelleschi** was and why he is remembered in history;
- explain why the unfinished cathedral dome in Florence was such a serious problem;
- recognise how perseverance, observation and problem-solving helped Brunelleschi succeed;
- identify how public building projects can shape the life of a city;
- reflect on how inquisitiveness can be used to solve difficult problems in wise and creative ways.

---

## Key Vocabulary

**Cathedral** – a large and important church building.

**Dome** – a rounded roof or ceiling shaped like half a sphere.

**Architect** – a person who designs buildings.

**Engineer** – a person who plans and solves practical building or design problems.

**Construction** – the work of building something.

**Scaffold** – a temporary structure that workers stand on while building or repairing something high up.

**Apprentice** – a young person learning a trade from an experienced worker.

**Innovation** – a new idea or method that helps solve a problem.

**Commission** – an important task or project given to someone to complete.

---

# Introduction

Imagine you are standing in the middle of a great city.

Around you rise busy streets, workshops, church towers and crowded market stalls. In the centre of the city stands a huge cathedral made of stone and brick. Its walls are magnificent. Its windows are tall and beautiful. People have spent many years building it.



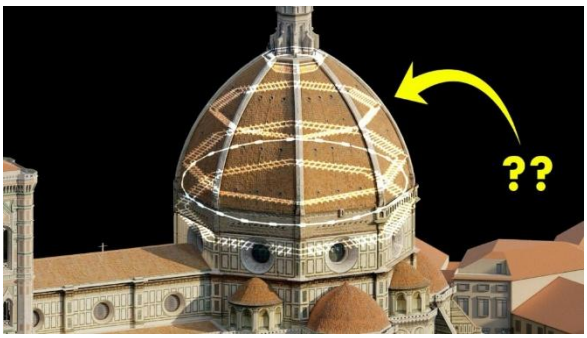

But there is one enormous problem.

There is a giant hole in the roof.

Not a little hole.

A huge one.

The people of Florence had built the cathedral walls, but they did not know how to finish the great **dome** that was supposed to rise above it. The opening was so wide and so high that many people thought the task was impossible.




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Then along came a man who looked at the problem and asked a very unusual question:

**What if it can be done?**

That man was **Filippo Brunelleschi**.

---

# Living Historical Story

The men standing in the cathedral looked very small.

Far above them, open to the sky, yawned an enormous empty space. Sunlight poured down through the unfinished top of the building, falling across scaffolds, stone floors and the faces of worried builders.

The walls of **Santa Maria del Fiore**, the great cathedral of Florence, were already vast and impressive. Its coloured marble gleamed outside in white, green and pink. Its bell tower rose proudly into the sky. The people of Florence loved it.

But the cathedral had a problem so large that everyone who entered could see it.

It had no dome.

High above the crossing of the cathedral, where the great rounded roof should have been, there was only a huge opening – wider than many houses, higher than a tower, and far too large for anyone to know how to cover.

The men below argued in low voices.

“We cannot leave it open forever,” one said.

“And yet who can build such a thing?” another replied.

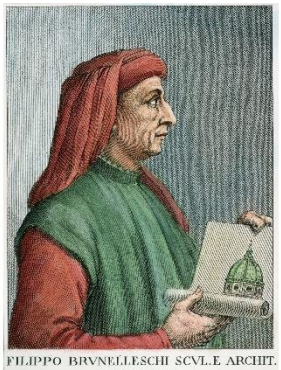
“A wooden support frame large enough for this dome would require forests of timber.”

“And even then it might collapse.”

“Perhaps the design was foolish from the beginning.”

At the edge of the group stood a man in a red cap, listening quietly.

He was not especially tall. He did not wear armour or a bishop's robes. He looked more like a craftsman than a nobleman. His eyes moved slowly upward, studying the empty space with such concentration that he seemed almost to forget the other men were there.



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This was **Filippo Brunelleschi**.

And while the others saw an impossible problem, Brunelleschi saw a challenge.

To understand why this moment was so important, we need to step back a little.

Florence was one of the great cities of the early Renaissance. It was wealthy, ambitious and proud of its achievements. The cathedral was meant to show the beauty, skill and importance of the city. Building such a grand church was not merely a religious project; it was also a public project, a sign of Florence's identity and confidence.

But the cathedral had been designed with an enormous octagonal space where the dome was supposed to go, and no one had worked out how to build it.

In earlier times, builders often used a huge wooden frame – called **centring** – to support a dome while it was being built. But the opening over the Florence cathedral was so vast that building such a frame would have been enormously expensive, difficult and perhaps impossible. There may not even have been enough timber nearby to do it.

So there the cathedral stood, beautiful and unfinished, like a sentence with no ending.

Brunelleschi had not begun life as a famous architect. He had trained as a **goldsmith** – someone skilled at making fine metal objects. Goldsmiths had to be precise. They had to measure carefully, shape materials

with patience and think closely about design. Brunelleschi had also studied mechanics, building and the remains of ancient Roman architecture. He was curious. He observed carefully. He asked questions.

And perhaps most importantly, he was not easily frightened by difficult problems.

Some stories say that when the leaders of Florence announced a competition to decide who should design and build the great dome, many men offered ideas. Some proposed filling the cathedral with earth to support the structure while it was built. Others suggested complicated machines or expensive wooden supports. There were debates, arguments and doubts.

Brunelleschi listened.

Then, as the story is often told, he offered a challenge of his own.

He took an egg and set it before the judges.

“Whoever can make this egg stand upright on the table,” he said, “will show the kind of cleverness needed to build the dome.”

One by one the men tried. The egg rolled, tipped or fell.

Finally Brunelleschi took the egg, tapped its end firmly on the table so that it flattened slightly, and stood it upright.

The others protested at once.

“We could have done that!”

Brunelleschi is said to have replied, “Yes – and once you see how the dome is built, you will say the same about that.”

Whether every detail of that story happened exactly as it is told, we cannot be completely sure. But it captures something important about Brunelleschi. He had the kind of mind that saw solutions others did not see.

Back inside the cathedral, Brunelleschi continued staring upward.

A younger man nearby shifted nervously.

“Master Filippo,” he said, “do you truly believe it can be done?”

Brunelleschi did not answer immediately. He walked slowly beneath the open space, counting steps, looking at angles, tracing lines in the air with his hand.

“Yes,” he said at last. “But not in the usual way.”

The younger man frowned. “What do you mean?”

Brunelleschi turned to him. “If we try to build this dome the way smaller domes have been built, we may fail. This dome is too wide. Too high. Too heavy. We must think differently.”

That was the beginning of something extraordinary.

Brunelleschi's idea was not merely to copy an old method. He designed a new approach. Instead of building one thick heavy shell, he planned a dome with **two shells** – an inner shell and an outer shell – connected together. This would make the structure strong but lighter than a single massive dome.

He also used a clever **herringbone brick pattern** in parts of the construction. This helped the bricks lock together and prevented them from sliding while the dome was being built. He designed special machines to lift heavy materials high into the air. He thought about weight, angles, support, balance and the order in which each part must be built.

In other words, Brunelleschi did not solve the problem by wishing it away.

He solved it by **thinking**, **observing**, **testing** and **planning**.

But none of that made the work easy.

Years passed as the dome slowly rose over Florence.

Imagine the noise and activity of the building site.

Men hauled bricks and stone.

Ropes creaked.

Pulley systems groaned.

Foremen shouted instructions.

Dust rose into the air.

Workers balanced on scaffolds high above the cathedral floor, laying bricks carefully according to Brunelleschi's design.

Brunelleschi himself watched constantly. He was known for guarding his ideas closely and insisting that the work be done correctly. Some people found him difficult. He could be stubborn. He could argue fiercely. But he cared deeply about the success of the project.

One day, as the story might have unfolded, a worker wiped sweat from his brow and stared at the rising walls of the dome.

“It still seems impossible,” he muttered.

Another worker, older and steadier, set down a brick.

“Perhaps,” he said, “but impossible things do not usually rise this slowly, one layer at a time.”

The younger man laughed.

That was the truth of it.

From the street below, ordinary citizens of Florence watched the dome rising year by year. Children who were very young when construction began might have been nearly grown by the time great sections of it were complete.



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Merchants crossing the square could look up and see progress. Priests entering the cathedral could see the opening shrinking. Apprentices in nearby workshops would hear people discussing the work with amazement.

Would it stand? Would it crack? Would it collapse?

Or would Brunelleschi truly succeed?

As the structure grew, it became more than a building project. It became a symbol of Florence's ambition, skill and determination. The city wanted to prove something – not only to itself, but to the rest of Italy.

Florence was a place where difficult things could be done.

And yet the story of the dome is not simply a story about civic pride. It is also a story about God-given human creativity.

God made a world full of patterns, order, shape, weight, force and beauty. He made people with minds able to observe and work with those patterns. A brick will behave in certain ways. An arch will bear weight in certain ways. A dome can stand if it is designed wisely. Brunelleschi did not invent the laws of structure and gravity. God had already made the world to work in orderly ways. Brunelleschi's task was to understand that order and build in harmony with it.

That is one reason architecture can be so fascinating.

It sits at the meeting point of beauty and truth.

A building must be beautiful enough to lift the eyes and useful enough not to fall down.

Brunelleschi understood both.

He had studied ancient Roman buildings, especially the **Pantheon** in Rome, with its great dome. He observed, measured and learned from the past. But he did not merely copy Roman methods. He adapted what he learned and created something new for the needs of Florence.

That, too, is part of inquisitiveness.

It is not only asking questions. It is also learning from what others have already done, then using that knowledge wisely.

At last, after years of labour, the great dome stood complete over Florence Cathedral.



It rose like a giant crown above the city, visible from far away. Its brick sides curved upward with astonishing grace and strength. The empty hole that had once seemed to mock the builders was gone. In its place stood one of the greatest architectural achievements of the Renaissance.

People must have looked up in wonder.

Merchants in the square.

Children in the streets.

Monks and scholars.

Apprentices and bakers.

Mothers carrying baskets.

Foreign travellers arriving in Florence.

All of them could see the same thing:

the impossible had been built.



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And though many workers had played their part, one name would forever be connected with that triumph.

**Filippo Brunelleschi.**

Yet perhaps the most important part of his story is not simply that he built a dome.

It is **how** he did it.

Brunelleschi looked carefully at a problem; and he refused to give up just because the answer was not obvious. He learned from older buildings; he thought in new ways; and then planned patiently.

He used skill, mathematics, craftsmanship and imagination together.

And then he worked, year after year, until the solution stood above the city for all to see.

That is a picture of inquisitiveness at work.

Not inquisitiveness that flits from one idea to another and never finishes anything.

But inquisitiveness that studies deeply, asks carefully, perseveres through difficulty and uses knowledge to build something good.

The dome of Florence Cathedral still stands today.

Hundreds of years have passed. Empires have risen and fallen. Wars have been fought. Cities have changed. But Brunelleschi's dome remains, a reminder that one curious, determined mind – working with the materials, laws and patterns God placed in His world – can help turn an impossible problem into a masterpiece.

And all because one man looked up at a giant empty space and asked:

**What if it *can* be done?**

# Narration

### Foundation–Year 2

Tell someone the story of Brunelleschi and the great dome. What was the problem, and how did he help solve it?

### Years 3–4

Retell the story of Florence Cathedral's unfinished dome. Explain why people thought it was impossible and how Brunelleschi approached the challenge.

### Years 5–6

Imagine you are a young apprentice in Florence watching the dome being built. Write or tell a diary entry describing what you see, what people are saying, and why Brunelleschi's work is so exciting.

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# Did You Notice?

While reading today's story, did you notice that Brunelleschi:

- looked carefully at a problem instead of running away from it;
- learned from older buildings and ideas;
- used creativity together with skill and patience;
- kept working over many years to solve something difficult;
- helped build something that served the whole city?

That is inquisitiveness joined with perseverance.

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# Thinking Questions

### Foundation–Year 2

1. Who was Brunelleschi?
2. What building problem did Florence have?
3. What is a dome?
4. Why did people think the dome was difficult to build?
5. What kind of person keeps trying to solve hard problems?

### Years 3–4

1. Why was the unfinished cathedral dome such a serious problem for Florence?
2. What skills helped Brunelleschi solve the problem?
3. Why do you think the people of Florence cared so much about finishing the cathedral?
4. How did Brunelleschi show inquisitiveness?
5. Why are public buildings important to a city?

### Years 5–6

1. Why was Brunelleschi's dome considered an engineering achievement?
2. In what ways did Brunelleschi learn from the past while also creating something new?
3. How did the cathedral project reflect the civic identity of Florence?
4. What is the difference between shallow curiosity and patient, productive inquisitiveness?
5. How can Christians use creativity and problem-solving in ways that honour God?

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# Activities

## Foundation–Year 2

**1. Build a Dome Shape**
Use blocks, clay or other materials to try making a dome shape or rounded roof.

**2. Draw the Cathedral**
Draw Florence Cathedral with a huge empty hole in the roof on one side of the page and the finished dome on the other side.

**3. Problem-Solver Talk**
Talk about a time when you had to keep trying to solve a problem.

---

## Years 3–4

**1. Before and After Page**
Create a page showing Florence Cathedral before Brunelleschi solved the problem and after the dome was built. Write a few sentences explaining the difference.

**2. Build a Mini Dome**
Try building a dome-like structure from blocks, paper strips, clay or other classroom materials. Discuss what makes it stable or unstable.

**3. Brunelleschi Fact File**
Create a simple fact file with:

- who Brunelleschi was;
- what problem he solved;
- why the dome mattered;
- one character lesson from his life.

---

## Years 5–6

**1. Brunelleschi's Challenge Notebook Page**
Create a notebook page titled **The Man Who Built the Impossible Dome**. Include:

- a short biography of Brunelleschi;
- a labelled sketch of the cathedral dome;
- a paragraph explaining why the project was difficult;

- a paragraph explaining how inquisitiveness helped him succeed.

**2. Engineering Reflection**
Write a paragraph answering:
**Why do difficult building problems require both creativity and careful planning?**

**3. Research Extension**
Research the **Florence Cathedral dome** and find one or two additional facts about how Brunelleschi designed or built it.

---

# God's Big Story Reflection

God made a world full of order, pattern, beauty and structure. He also made people with minds capable of observing, designing and building. Brunelleschi's story reminds us that human creativity is one of the ways people reflect the image of God.

But creativity is not enough by itself. In a fallen world, our talents can be used selfishly or proudly. The challenge for Christians is to use skill, imagination and perseverance in ways that honour God and serve others.

As you think about Brunelleschi, ask:

- What difficult problem has God placed in front of me that requires patience and effort?
- Am I willing to keep learning when the answer is not easy?
- How can I use creativity and skill to bless other people?

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# Lesson 2.2 – Geography & Economics

# Why Florence Could Build So Big

**Wealth, Materials, Workers and the Building of a Great Cathedral**

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## Character Focus

**Inquisitiveness**

*"By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established."*
**Proverbs 24:3**

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## Theme

Great buildings do not appear by accident. They require resources, skilled workers, planning, money, materials and a community willing to work together.

---

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- explain why large public buildings require many resources;
- describe how Florence's wealth helped support major building projects;
- identify some of the materials, workers and systems needed to build a cathedral;
- recognise that geography and economics influence what a society can build;
- reflect on how communities can use resources wisely for purposes greater than themselves.

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## Key Vocabulary

**Resource** – something useful that helps people meet needs or complete work.

**Material** – the physical substance used to make something, such as stone, wood, brick, wool, metal or clay.

**Labour** – the work done by people.

**Skilled worker** – a person trained to do a particular kind of work well.

**Supply** – the amount of something available.

**Cost** – the amount of money, effort or resources needed to obtain or make something.

**Public building** – a building used by a community, such as a church, town hall, bridge or marketplace.

**Patron** – a person or group who provides money or support for a project, artist or worker.

**Budget** – a plan for how money or resources will be used.

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# Introduction

In the last lesson, we met **Filippo Brunelleschi**, the man who solved the problem of Florence Cathedral's enormous dome.

But Brunelleschi could not build the dome by clever thinking alone.

Even the best architect needs materials; the best engineer needs workers; and even the best plan needs money.

A great building project is not only a design problem. It is also a geography and economics problem.

Today we will ask:

**What did Florence need in order to build so big?**

---

# Living Historical Story

The first cart arrived before sunrise.

Its wooden wheels creaked as it rolled slowly through the streets of Florence. Two oxen leaned into their harnesses, their breath steaming in the cool morning air. Behind them the cart groaned under the weight of stone blocks covered with dust from the quarry.

A boy named Luca hurried beside the cart, trying not to stumble over the uneven stones of the road. He was carrying a small wax tablet tucked under one arm. His job was simple but important: count the loads, mark the deliveries and make sure the foreman knew which materials had arrived.

At least, it sounded simple.

But nothing about building a cathedral dome was truly simple.

When the cart reached the open space near **Santa Maria del Fiore**, the great cathedral of Florence, the building site was already alive. Men were untying ropes, checking scaffolds, sharpening tools and calling instructions. Stonemasons inspected blocks. Bricklayers stacked materials in ordered piles. Carpenters examined beams. A clerk sat beneath a canvas shelter with ledgers spread before him, recording payments and deliveries.

High above them, the unfinished dome was slowly rising.

Luca tilted his head back and looked up.

Every time he looked, it seemed impossible.

And yet, brick by brick, stone by stone, rope by rope, the impossible was becoming real.

The foreman strode across the yard with a roll of parchment in one hand.

"Stone from the north road?" he called.

"Yes, sir," Luca answered. "One cart."

"Only one?"

Luca checked his wax tablet. "The second cart broke an axle outside the city gate."

The foreman groaned. "Of course it did. Tell Matteo we need that stone before midday."

Luca nodded and ran.

He had learned quickly that a building site was like a city within the city. If one thing failed, many other things slowed down. If the stone did not arrive, the masons could not work. If the masons could not work, the bricklayers might have to wait. If the ropes frayed, the lifting machines stopped. If the workers were not paid, they would not keep coming. If the accounts were wrong, arguments would begin.

Everyone admired Brunelleschi's plan, but Luca was beginning to understand that a plan was only the beginning.

A great building required a whole world of support.

Near the edge of the yard, Luca found Matteo, one of the men responsible for arranging supplies.

"The second stone cart broke an axle," Luca said breathlessly.

Matteo closed his eyes for a moment. "Where?"

"Near the north gate."

"Then send two men with tools. And tell the carpenter we may need another axle."

Luca turned to go, but Matteo called him back.

"And make sure the clerk records the delay. If the carter wants full payment for late delivery, Master Filippo will not be pleased."



Luca nodded. He was not entirely sure whether Master Filippo was ever pleased, but he knew better than to say so.

As he hurried toward the clerk's table, he passed a group of brickmakers unloading stacks of specially shaped bricks. Some were ordinary, but others were made for particular parts of the dome. They had to be fired, transported and stored carefully so they did not crack before they were used.

The clerk looked up as Luca approached.

"Another problem?"

"The second stone cart broke near the north gate," Luca reported.

The clerk dipped his quill into ink and wrote the note carefully.

"Everything costs something," he muttered.

Luca looked at the columns of numbers. "How much does a dome cost?"

The clerk laughed. "More than you have."

"I know that," Luca said, grinning. "But I mean – how does the city pay for all of this?"

The clerk leaned back and rubbed his eyes.

"With difficulty," he said. "And with taxes, donations, guild money, church funds, merchants' contributions and careful records. Do you think stones walk here by themselves? Do you think workers climb scaffolds for free?"

Luca shook his head.

"Every rope, brick, beam, nail, tool, meal and cart journey must be paid for. A cathedral may lift people's eyes toward heaven, but someone still has to pay the mason."

That sentence stayed with Luca all morning.

A cathedral may lift people's eyes toward heaven, but someone still has to pay the mason.

It sounded funny, but it was true.

People often spoke about the glory of Florence Cathedral. They admired its beauty and praised its ambition. Travellers came from other cities to stare at the rising dome. Citizens pointed to it with pride.

But beauty needed budgets.

Luca looked around the yard.

There were materials everywhere.

Stone blocks; bricks; sand; lime; timber beams; iron tools; ropes; buckets; scaffolding; wax tablets; ledgers; food baskets; and water barrels.

Each item had come from somewhere.

The stone may have come from quarries outside the city. Timber came from forests. Iron had to be mined and shaped. Bricks were made from clay and fired in kilns. Lime was produced for mortar. Ropes had to be twisted from fibres. Food for workers came from farms and markets. Even the ink in the clerk's bottle came from materials that someone had prepared.

Luca had never thought of this before.

A building was not just built in one place. It gathered the work of many places.

At midday, he sat with several workers in a patch of shade. One of the younger masons was eating bread and cheese while brushing dust from his sleeves.

"Where does all the timber come from?" Luca asked.

The mason shrugged. "From wherever they can get it. Timber is expensive. And not every tree makes good building wood."

"Why do we need so much?"

The mason pointed toward the scaffolding. "For platforms, braces, frames, tools, supports, storage sheds. Even when Master Filippo avoids building a giant wooden frame for the whole dome, we still need timber everywhere."

A carpenter sitting nearby nodded. "And it must be strong. Weak timber costs lives."

Luca looked up at the scaffolds and swallowed.

That was another thing he was learning.

Resources were not merely useful. Some were essential for safety.

After the meal break, Luca was sent to deliver a message to a banker whose office was near the market. The streets between the cathedral and the bank were crowded with merchants, apprentices, women carrying baskets, priests, travellers and children. Florence was noisy, busy and full of movement.

At the bank, Luca waited while a man in a dark robe read the note carefully.

"More funds released for rope and iron fittings," the banker said to his assistant. "And make sure the payment to the carpenters' guild is recorded."

Luca listened with interest.

"Does the bank pay for the dome?" he asked.

The banker looked amused. "Not exactly. But money must move safely and correctly. Large projects require careful management."

"Because everything costs something?"

"Precisely."

The banker gestured to the ledgers on the table.

"Florence is able to build because Florence is wealthy. It has merchants, cloth trade, banking families, guilds and citizens willing – or sometimes required – to support public works. Without wealth and organisation, even the finest design remains a drawing."



Luca pictured Brunelleschi's dome drawn on parchment and then imagined it never being built.

A drawing was not enough.

Ideas needed resources.

When Luca returned to the cathedral yard, Brunelleschi himself was standing near one of the lifting machines, speaking sharply to a group of workers. The machine had been designed to lift heavy materials far above the ground. Luca did not understand exactly how it worked, but he knew it involved ropes, gears, animals and careful control.



Brunelleschi pointed upward.

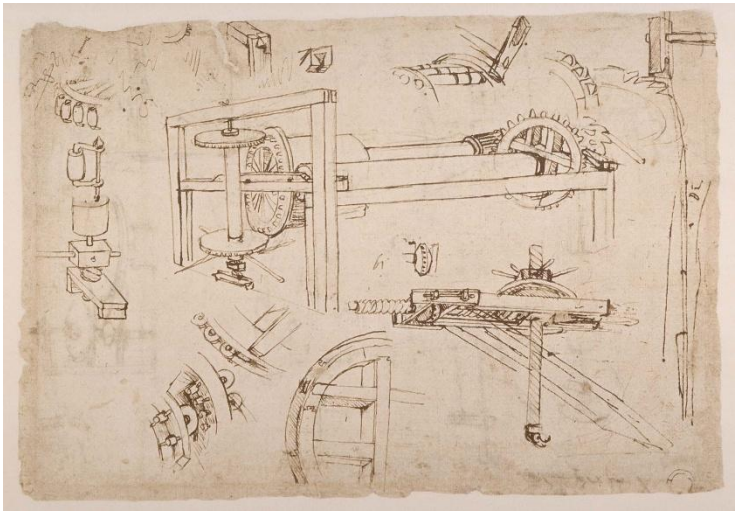
"The load must rise steadily," he said. "If it swings, it endangers the men above. Again."

The workers adjusted the ropes.

Everything was in position.

Then slowly, the machine began to move.

A load of bricks rose from the ground.



[ Drawing by Leonardo da Vinci representing the winch invented by Filippo Brunelleschi for the construction of the dome of the Cathedral of Florence - www.latoscanadileonardo.it/ ]

Luca held his breath as the bundle climbed higher and higher, past the lower scaffolds, past the stone walls, up toward the men waiting above.

No one cheered. They were too busy watching.

At last the bricks reached the platform safely.

Brunelleschi nodded once.

Luca exhaled.

It was astonishing.

It wasn’t achieved through magic or luck. But from diligent planning plus skill, materials, money, workers, machines, and discipline.

A little later, Luca found himself beside an older labourer named Pietro, who had worked on the cathedral for many years.

"Did you help build the walls too?" Luca asked.

Pietro nodded. "Yes. Before your time."

"Were people proud of it then?"

"Of course."

"And now?"

Pietro looked up at the dome. "Now they are prouder. Or more nervous. Sometimes both."

Luca smiled. "Do you think it will last?"

Pietro's face grew thoughtful.

"If it is built well."

He picked up a brick and turned it in his hands.

"That is true of most things - a city, a family, a church, a trade, a life. If you build carelessly, then cracks come. Build wisely, and what you make may stand long after you are gone."

Luca watched him place the brick carefully in a stack.

That sounded like something his father might say.

As evening approached, Luca carried the final records to the clerk. The broken cart had arrived at last. The stone was unloaded. Payments were recorded. The carpenters had repaired the axle. The brick delivery had been counted. No one had fallen from the scaffolds. The dome was a little higher than it had been in the morning.

A little higher.

That was how great things were built.

Not all at once; not by one person; or by ideas alone.

But through thousands of ordered tasks, each one connected to the next.

As Luca walked home through the dimming streets, he saw Florence differently. The wealthy merchants, the wool workers, bankers, guilds, quarrymen, carpenters, clerks, plus animals pulling carts, farmers feeding workers, women selling bread, and men cutting stone – they were all part of the dome.



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Even those who never climbed the scaffolds helped build it.

The cathedral dome rose above Florence because Florence could gather resources from many places and organise them toward one great purpose.

That is what geography and economics help us understand.

Geography asks:

“Where did the materials come from?”

“How did roads and rivers help them move?”

“What resources were nearby?”

Economics asks:

“Who paid for it all?”

“Who worked to make it happen?”

“What did it cost?”

“How were materials, labour and money organised?”

Without these questions, we might look at Brunelleschi's dome and think only, "What a clever architect!"

He was clever. But a great building is never only the work of one mind. It is also the work of a community.

And that raises an important question for us….

If God gives a person or a community resources – money, materials, skills, workers, ideas and opportunities – how should that person or community use them?

Florence used many of its resources to build something beautiful and lasting. At times, its people also used wealth for pride, rivalry and power. Like every human city, Florence reflected both creativity and brokenness.

But when we look at the great dome rising over the city, we can still learn something true.

Resources are gifts. Work is important. And so is well-trained-skill, planning, and working together in community.

And when people use all these things wisely, they can build something that serves others long after they themselves are gone.

---

# Narration

### Foundation–Year 2

Tell someone about the things needed to build the great dome. What materials and workers did Luca see?

### Years 3–4

Retell Luca's day at the building site. Explain why building the dome required more than just Brunelleschi's idea.

### Years 5–6

Write or tell an explanation of how geography and economics helped Florence build its cathedral dome.

---

# Thinking Questions

### Foundation–Year 2

1. What materials were needed to build the dome?
2. Who were some of the workers Luca saw?
3. Why did the builders need money?
4. Why was it important for the workers to be careful?
5. What is one way we can use resources wisely?

### Years 3–4

1. Why could Brunelleschi not build the dome by himself?
2. How did geography affect the building of the cathedral?
3. Why did economics matter in a building project?
4. What is a patron?
5. Why should communities use resources wisely?

### Years 5–6

1. Explain how materials, labour and money all contributed to the building of the dome.
2. Why is a great building project both a geographical and economic problem?
3. How did Florence's wealth make the dome possible?
4. What are some wise and unwise ways a city might use its wealth?
5. How does the Christian idea of stewardship help us think about resources?

---

# Activities

### Foundation–Year 2

#### 1. Materials Sorting

Sort pictures or labels into groups:

- stone
- wood
- brick
- rope
- tools
- food
- workers
- money

Discuss which were needed to build the dome.

**2. Build with What You Have**

Use blocks, cups, cardboard or cushions to build a large structure. Talk about which materials were strongest and easiest to use.

**3. Draw the Building Site**

Draw Luca at the cathedral building site. Include carts, workers, bricks, ropes and the growing dome.

---

## Years 3–4

**1. Resource Map**

Draw a simple map showing materials travelling to Florence:

- stone from a quarry;
- wood from forests;
- food from farms;
- money from banks;
- workers from the city.

**2. What Does It Cost?**

Make a list of everything that might need to be paid for when building a cathedral. Group them under:

- materials;
- workers;
- transport;
- tools.

**3. Community Builders**

Choose five different workers from the lesson and explain how each one helped build the dome.

---

## Years 5–6

**1. Cathedral Budget Page**

Create a mock budget for building part of the dome. Include costs for:

- bricks;
- timber;
- ropes;
- workers;
- transport;
- tools.

You do not need real historical prices. The goal is to understand categories of cost.

**2. Geography and Economics Explanation**

Write a paragraph explaining this statement:

"Brunelleschi designed the dome, but Florence's geography and economy helped make it possible."

**3. Stewardship Reflection**

Write a short response:

How should a Christian community decide whether a large building project is a wise use of resources?

---

# God's Big Story Reflection

God created a world full of materials, patterns and resources. Stone, timber, clay, metals, animals, land, water and human skill are all part of His good creation.

Because of the Fall, people often misuse resources through pride, waste, greed or selfish ambition. Even beautiful projects can be motivated by the desire for human praise.

Through redemption in Christ, God's people are called to use resources wisely, humbly and generously. We are stewards, not owners, of what God gives.

As we look toward restoration, we remember that our work should serve others, reflect beauty and goodness, and point beyond ourselves to the God who made all things.

Ask yourself:

- What resources has God given me?
- Do I use them carefully or wastefully?
- How can my work help build up others?

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# Lesson 2.3 – Civics / Economics / Historical Investigation

# Who Paid for the Dome?

**Patrons, Guilds, Public Money and Civic Responsibility**

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## Character Focus

**Inquisitiveness**

*"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost?"*
**Luke 14:28**

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## Theme

Great public projects require careful decisions about money, responsibility and the common good.

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- explain that large public projects require funding, planning and cooperation;
- describe the role of patrons, guilds and civic leaders in supporting Renaissance building projects;
- recognise that money and influence can be used wisely or selfishly;
- ask thoughtful questions about who benefits from public projects and who pays for them;
- reflect on how Christians should use resources responsibly for the good of others.

---

## Key Vocabulary

**Patron** – a person or group who gives money or support to artists, builders, scholars or public projects.

**Funding** – money provided for a project or activity.

**Public project** – a project intended to serve or represent a whole community.

**Civic responsibility** – the duty people have to contribute wisely and fairly to the life of their community.

**Common good** – what benefits the community as a whole, not just one person.

**Influence** – the ability to affect decisions or events.

**Accountability** – being responsible for how decisions and resources are used.

**Taxes** – money collected by a government or authority to pay for public needs.

---

# Introduction

In the last lesson, we learned that building Florence Cathedral's great dome required materials, workers, machines and money.

But that raises a very important question:

**Who paid for it?**

Someone had to pay the workers. Someone had to buy the bricks, and arrange the timber, ropes, tools and transport. Who kept the financial records? Because someone had to decide whether this enormous building project was worth the cost.

Today we will investigate the civic and economic question behind Brunelleschi's dome:

**When a city builds something great, who pays, who decides, and who benefits?**

---

# Living Historical Story

The meeting room smelled of wax, wool and damp woollen cloaks.

Rain had fallen over Florence all morning, and the men gathering inside the guildhall shook droplets from their sleeves as they entered. A clerk sat at a long table near the front of the room, sharpening his quill and arranging several sheets of parchment. Beside him lay a wooden box for records, and an inkpot so dark it looked almost black.



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At the far end of the room stood **Master Lorenzo**, the wool merchant Matteo served as an apprentice.

Matteo was not supposed to be part of the meeting, of course. Apprentices did not decide city matters. But Master Lorenzo had brought him along to carry documents, fetch a message if needed, and keep quiet.

Especially keep quiet.

Matteo stood near the wall with his hands folded, trying to look useful without looking as though he were listening too hard.

But how could he not listen?

The men had gathered to discuss the cathedral dome. One man unrolled a parchment and tapped it with two fingers.

"The latest costs are higher than expected."

Several men groaned.

Another leaned forward. "Costs are always higher than expected."

"Not like this," said the first. "Timber prices have risen. The rope makers demand more money. Transport delays have added expense. And the brick order has increased again."

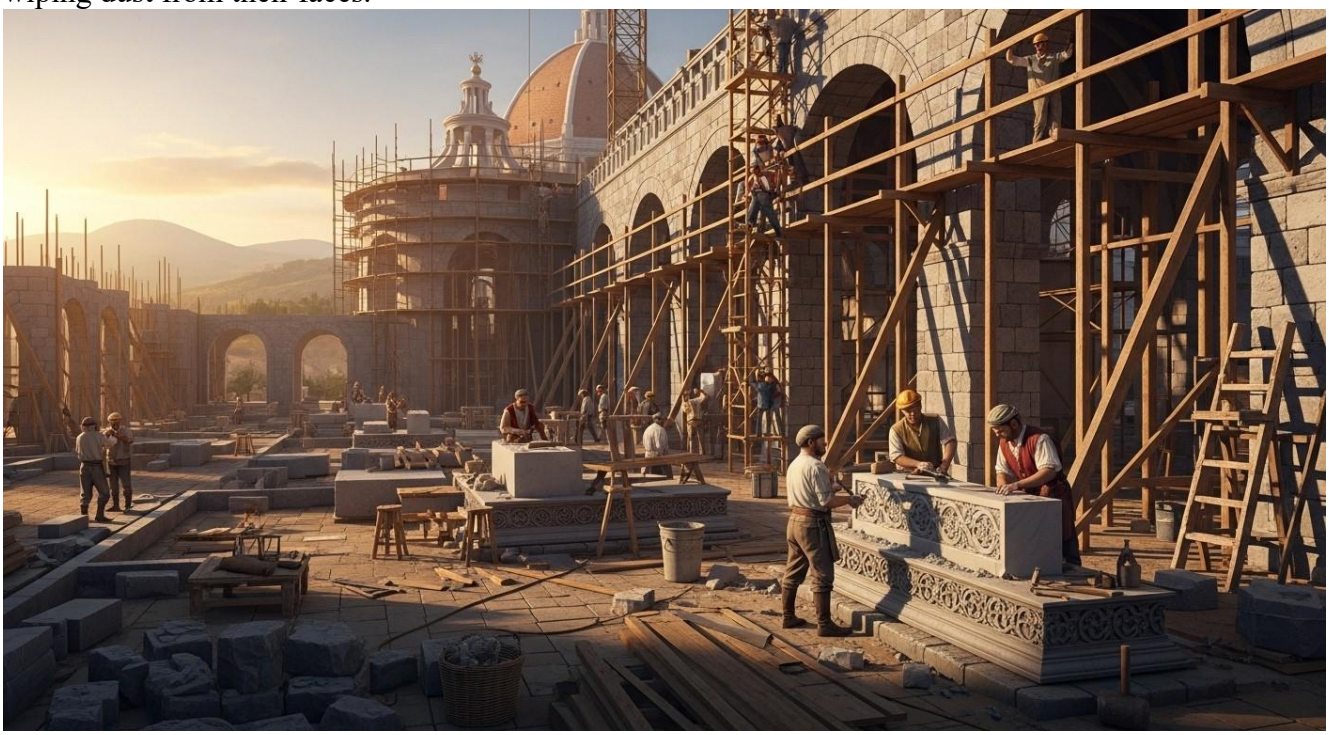
Master Lorenzo frowned. "The work must continue. If we stop now, the city will look foolish."

A man near the window snorted. "Perhaps we already look foolish for trying to build what others said could not be built."

A murmur ran around the room. Matteo lowered his eyes, but his ears remained open. The clerk cleared his throat. "The question before us is not whether the dome is beautiful. The question is how the next stage will be funded."

Funded. Matteo knew that word now. It meant someone had to pay.

He thought of the building site: the stone, the bricks, the ropes, the machines, the scaffolds, the tired men wiping dust from their faces.



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None of it was free.

One of the older guild members rose slowly. His beard was white, and his voice was thin but firm.

"Florence benefits from this cathedral," he said. "Travellers come to see it. Citizens take pride in it. The church uses it. The craftsmen earn work from it. The city gains honour. Therefore, the city must support it."

Another man replied, "And by 'the city,' do you mean every citizen? The poor widow? The baker? The apprentice? The small tradesman barely keeping his shop open? We can't take any more money from them in taxes."

No one answered at first.

That was the problem with public projects. They sounded simple when people said, "The city will build it." But the city was not a purse sitting on a table. The city was made of families, workers, churches, guilds, merchants and officials. When "the city" paid, real people had to pay real money.

Master Lorenzo folded his arms.

"No one here wants the poor crushed by taxes," he said. "But neither can we pretend great works cost nothing."

The clerk dipped his quill and began writing. Matteo watched the dark line move across the parchment.

A younger merchant spoke next.

"What of patrons? Wealthy families gain honour from supporting public works. Let those who wish their names remembered give more."

At that, several men exchanged glances.

Everyone in Florence knew that wealthy families could gain great influence by funding public projects. A family that paid for a chapel, a painting, a library or part of a building was not merely being generous. They were also shaping what people saw, remembered and admired.

A patron could serve the common good. A patron could also seek glory.

Both things could be true at the same time.

The old guild member nodded thoughtfully. "Patronage can help. But should one family gain too much influence over what belongs to the whole city?"

Another man leaned back. "If they pay for it, should they not be honoured?"

"Honoured, perhaps," said Master Lorenzo. "But not obeyed. If someone pays a lot of money to support a project, then often they will want to make rules about how it should be made"

A few men chuckled.

Matteo did not understand every argument, but he could feel the tension in the room. They were not simply counting coins. They were asking deeper questions.

Who should pay? Who should make decisions? Who should be honoured? Who should be protected?

What is fair? …and… What serves the common good?

These were **civic questions**.

The rain tapped against the shutters, and the clerk read aloud several possible sources of funding:

"Guild contributions. Donations from wealthy families. Church funds. Public taxes. Merchant loans. Special collections."

A man near the table sighed. "All of them will cause complaints."

"Most necessary things do," said another.

The discussion continued.

One group argued that the wool guild had benefited greatly from Florence's prosperity and should contribute more. Another argued that banking families had the resources to help. One man warned that if taxes rose too much, ordinary people would suffer. Another insisted that the cathedral belonged to all Florence, so all Florence must share responsibility.

Matteo thought of the dome rising above the city. Everyone admired it. But admiration was easier than payment.

At last, Master Lorenzo turned and saw Matteo watching.

"Boy," he said.

Matteo stiffened. "Yes, Master?"

The room grew quiet.

"You have carried messages to the building site, the bank and the guildhall. You have seen more than some boys your age. Tell me – who benefits from the dome?"

Matteo's mouth went dry. He looked from one serious face to another.

"I... I suppose the church does," he said.

"Good. Who else?"

"The builders, because they have work."

"Yes. Anyone else?"

"The craftsmen, because they make things for it."

"Yes."

"The city, because people admire Florence."

A few men nodded.

"And the poor?" asked the man near the window. "Do they benefit?"

Matteo hesitated.

He thought of a beggar he had passed near the cathedral steps. He thought of bakers selling bread to workers; and about labourers earning wages. Then he considered the beauty of the cathedral lifting people's eyes heavenward.

"Maybe," he said slowly. "If the poor people get work… or if the church cares for them…or if the city becomes stronger; then the poor people will benefit. But maybe not if they are taxed too heavily."



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The room was silent for a moment.

Then the old guild member smiled faintly.

"The boy has said in one breath what we have taken an hour to circle around."

The men laughed, and Matteo felt his face grow hot.

Master Lorenzo nodded. "That is why it is important that we ask the hard questions. Not every beautiful thing is automatically just. Not every costly thing is wasteful. We must ask carefully."

The meeting continued, but Matteo's mind stayed fixed on those words.

‘Not every beautiful thing is automatically just’… and … ‘Not every costly thing is wasteful. We must ask carefully.’

That afternoon, after the rain had stopped, Matteo accompanied Master Lorenzo to the cathedral square. Puddles shone between the stones, reflecting pieces of the unfinished dome above.

A group of labourers were unloading timber. Nearby, a woman sold hot food to workers. Children stood watching one of Brunelleschi's machines lift a bundle of bricks. A priest crossed the square carrying a book. Two wealthy men in fine cloaks paused to look up at the dome, speaking softly.

Master Lorenzo stopped beside Matteo.

"What do you see?" he asked.

"The building site," Matteo replied.

"What else?"

Matteo knew by now that Master Lorenzo never asked simple questions by accident.

He looked again.

"I see workers being paid," he said. "Merchants supplying materials. Clerks keeping records. People watching. The church using the building. Wealthy men wanting to be connected with it. The city becoming famous."

"Good," said Master Lorenzo. "And what question should an inquisitive citizen ask?"

Matteo thought.

"Who benefits?"

"Yes. And?"

"Who pays?"

"Yes. And?"

"Whether it is worth the cost?"

Master Lorenzo smiled. "Now you are beginning to think like a citizen."

They walked slowly around the edge of the square.

"Florence needs curious minds," Master Lorenzo said. "But not curiosity that merely wants gossip. Not curiosity that asks questions only to complain. The city needs people who ask wise questions so they can make just decisions."

"What kind of questions?" Matteo asked.

"Questions like these: Is this good? Is it fair? Who is responsible? What does it cost? Who might be harmed? Who might be helped? Are we serving God and neighbour, or only our own pride?"

Matteo looked up at the dome.

It was very beautiful.

Even unfinished, it seemed to gather the whole city beneath it.

"I think the dome is good," he said.

"I think so too," said Master Lorenzo.

"But it could still be paid for wrongly."

"Yes."

"And people could support it for proud reasons."

"Yes."

Matteo frowned. "That makes things very complicated."

Master Lorenzo laughed. "Welcome to civic life."

They stood for a while in the square. The late sunlight touched the wet stones, the scaffolds and the great rising curve of the dome. It was easy to feel proud of Florence in that moment. Easy to imagine travellers arriving from distant cities and staring upward in amazement.

But Matteo also remembered the meeting room: the arguments, the worries about taxes, the discussion of patrons, the questions about the poor people.

A city was not wise simply because it built beautiful things. A city was wise when it used its resources justly.

The next morning, Master Lorenzo sent Matteo back to the guildhall with a message. This time, when Matteo passed through the market square, he noticed things differently.

He saw a baker paying a fee to use a stall. He saw a merchant checking weights.

There was a poor woman asking for help near the church door.

Then he saw a banker greeting a city official; and two apprentices carrying boards for a carpenter.

He saw workers heading toward the cathedral site. There were coins changing hands from one person to another.

He noticed that everywhere, people were making decisions. The life of a city was full of money, work, responsibility and influence.

It would be easy, Matteo thought, to ignore all that and simply admire the finished dome. But he was beginning to understand that a thoughtful person looks deeper.

A thoughtful person asks:

How was this built?

Who gave?

Who worked?

Who decided?

Who benefited?

Was anyone treated unfairly?

Was this done for pride, service or both?

These were not questions only for adults in long robes sitting at tables. They were questions for anyone who wanted to understand a community. They were questions for citizens.

Years later, people would remember Brunelleschi's dome as one of the great achievements of the Renaissance. They would praise its beauty, its engineering and its boldness. And rightly so.

But behind that dome stood more than one brilliant architect.

There were guild meetings, and patrons. There were taxes and donations.



There were workers' wages, ledgers and receipts.

There were arguments about fairness.

And there were ordinary people whose labour made the great work possible.

That is one reason history is so interesting…. because, every great achievement has a story behind it.

Sometimes the story is about genius. Sometimes it is about money. And sometimes it is about civic responsibility. Often it is about all three.

Brunelleschi asked, "How can this dome be built?"

Florence also had to ask, "How should this dome be paid for?"

Both questions were important. And both required inquisitiveness.



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# Narration

## Foundation–Year 2

Tell someone who helped pay for or build the dome. What people were involved?

## Years 3–4

Retell the story of Matteo listening at the guild meeting. What questions were the men asking about the dome?

## Years 5–6

Write or tell a report from Matteo's point of view explaining why paying for the dome was a civic responsibility, not just a money problem.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Why do public projects cost so much?

Answer: Public projects such as cathedrals, bridges, town halls and roads usually cost a great deal because they require:

- many workers;
- skilled labour;
- materials;
- tools;
- transport;
- planning;
- records;
- repairs;
- supervision.

The bigger and more complex the project, the more carefully the community must plan.

---

## 2. Who might pay for a public project?

Answer: In Renaissance Florence, major projects could be supported by:

- church funds;
- guild contributions;
- wealthy patrons;
- merchant families;
- public taxes;
- loans;
- donations;
- civic authorities.

Often more than one source of funding was needed.

---

## 3. What is patronage?

Answer: Patronage is financial or practical support given to an artist, builder, scholar or project.

A patron might support a project because:

- they wanted to honour God;
- they loved beauty;
- they wanted to serve the city;
- they wanted their family remembered;
- they wanted influence or prestige.

Patronage can be generous, but it can also be mixed with pride.

---

# 4. What is civic responsibility?

Answer: **Civic responsibility** means contributing wisely to the life of a community.

In a city, people must ask:

- What does the community need?
- Who should help?
- How should money be used?
- How can decisions be fair?
- How can leaders be accountable?

A good citizen does not merely enjoy the benefits of a community. A good citizen also thinks about responsibilities.

---

# 5. What is the common good?

Answer: The **common good** refers to what benefits the community as a whole.

A public project should not serve only one person or one family. It should contribute to the wellbeing, beauty, safety, order or life of the wider community.

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# 6. Why should we ask, "Who benefits?"

Answer: This is an important historical and civic question.

When we study a project, law, decision or event, we can ask:

- Who benefits?
- Who pays?
- Who has influence?
- Who might be overlooked?
- Is the decision fair?
- Does it serve the common good?

These questions help us think carefully instead of accepting appearances too quickly.

---

# Did You Notice?

While reading today's story, did you notice that building the dome involved civic questions?

The people of Florence had to think about:

- cost;
- fairness;
- taxes;
- patrons;
- guilds;
- workers;
- public benefit;
- community responsibility.

A beautiful building can still raise difficult questions about money and responsibility.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. Who helped build the dome?
2. Why did the workers need to be paid?
3. What is a patron?
4. Why should people use money carefully?
5. How can we help our own community?

## Years 3–4

1. Why was paying for the dome a challenge?
2. What groups of people might help fund a public project?
3. Why might a wealthy person want to become a patron?
4. What does "common good" mean?
5. Why is it important to ask, "Who benefits?"

## Years 5–6

1. Why is a public building project both an economic and civic issue?
2. What are some wise and unwise reasons a patron might support a project?
3. How might a city decide whether a large project is worth the cost?
4. Why is accountability important when public money or shared resources are used?
5. How can Christians think wisely about beauty, cost and service?

---

# Activities

## Foundation–Year 2

### 1. Who Helps Build?

Draw or sort pictures of people who helped make the dome possible:

- architect;
- builder;
- patron;
- guild member;
- banker;
- worker;

- clerk.

**2. Spend the Coins**
Give the student ten pretend coins. Ask them to decide how many to spend on:

- bricks;
- workers;
- ropes;
- food;
- helping poor people;
- church needs.

Discuss why choices about money can be difficult.

**3. Community Helper**
Draw one way you can help your family, school, church or community.

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## Years 3–4

**1. Public Project Planning Sheet**
Imagine your town wants to build a new bridge, library or playground. List:

- who would use it;
- what materials are needed;
- who might help pay;
- how it could serve the common good.

**2. Patron Motives Sort**
Sort these reasons into **wise**, **selfish**, or **mixed**:

- to honour God;
- to become famous;
- to provide work for people;
- to control decisions;
- to beautify the city;
- to help others learn.

**3. Who Benefits? Chart**
Create a chart showing who benefited from the dome:

- workers;
- church;
- city;
- merchants;
- citizens;
- patrons.

---

## Years 5–6

**1. Civic Decision Table**
Create a table with three columns:

| Question | Possible Answer | Is this fair? |
|---|---|---|
| Who pays? | | |
| Who benefits? | | |
| Who decides? | | |
| Who is accountable? | | |

Use it to analyse the cathedral dome project.

**2. Short Written Argument**
Write a paragraph responding to this statement:

"Florence was right to spend so much on the cathedral dome."

Use at least two reasons to support your answer.

**3. Modern Connection**
Choose a modern public project such as a bridge, hospital, school, library, sports stadium or road. Ask:

- Who pays for it?
- Who benefits from it?
- What might be difficult or controversial?
- Does it serve the common good?

---

# God's Big Story Reflection

God gives people resources, skills, imagination and communities. These are gifts to be stewarded wisely. Public projects can serve others, create beauty and strengthen a community. They can also become expressions of pride, power or selfish ambition.

Because of the Fall, even good projects can have mixed motives. A beautiful cathedral might be built partly to honour God and partly to make a city famous. A wealthy patron might give generously and still desire praise.

Through Christ, we are called to use our resources with humility, wisdom and love. We should ask not only, "Can we build this?" but also, "Should we build this? Who will it serve? Does it honour God and love our neighbour?"

As you think about Florence and the dome, ask:

- How can beauty serve God and others?
- How can money be used wisely?
- How can I become a person who asks careful questions about fairness, responsibility and service?

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| TOPIC 3 | LEONARDO DA VINCI: A MIND FULL OF QUESTIONS |
|---|---|

# Lesson 3.1 – History & Civics

# Leonardo da Vinci: A Mind Full of Questions

## Character Focus

**Inquisitiveness**

*"Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them."*
**Psalm 111:2**

## Theme

Leonardo da Vinci reminds us that careful observation, thoughtful questions and disciplined learning can help people understand God's world more deeply.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- describe who Leonardo da Vinci was and why he is remembered;
- explain what it means to be a "Renaissance person";
- recognise that Leonardo's learning was shaped by observation, drawing, questioning and practice;
- identify how ideas, skills and inventions can influence society;
- reflect on how inquisitiveness should be guided by wisdom, humility and service.

## Key Vocabulary

**Renaissance person** – someone with many interests and skills, especially in learning, art, invention and observation.

**Inventor** – a person who designs or creates something new.

**Observation** – looking or listening carefully to learn about something.

**Notebook** – a book used for writing, drawing, recording ideas and remembering observations.

**Anatomy** – the study of the body and how its parts are arranged.

**Engineer** – a person who designs or builds machines, structures or practical solutions.

**Apprentice** – a young person learning a skill or trade from a master.

**Inquisitiveness** – the habit of asking thoughtful questions and seeking truthful understanding.

---

# Introduction



Some people ask one question and then stop.

Leonardo da Vinci asked another question. And another. Then thought some more.

He looked at birds and wondered how wings worked.

He looked at water and wondered how it moved.

While walking down the street, he looked at faces and wondered how to paint emotion.

He looked at machines and wondered how they could be improved.

When painting the human body, he wondered how muscles and bones worked together.

Leonardo was not content merely to glance at the world. He wanted to understand it.

Today we meet one of the most famous people of the Renaissance: **Leonardo da Vinci**, a man whose mind seemed always full of questions.

---

# Living Historical Story

The boy was supposed to be grinding colours.

That was part of the work of an apprentice in a painter's workshop. Pigments had to be prepared. Brushes had to be cleaned. Panels had to be smoothed. Tools had to be carried. Masters did not simply hand young apprentices a brush and say, "Paint a masterpiece."

First, they watched. They worked. They practised.

Then they watched again.



In a busy workshop in Florence, a young apprentice named Leonardo bent over a small bowl, carefully grinding colour. Around him the workshop was alive with quiet industry. One assistant prepared a wooden panel. Another mixed oil. A third cleaned brushes. Drawings hung from the walls. Patterns, studies, sketches and half-finished works leaned against tables.

But Leonardo's eyes kept wandering. He noticed the way light struck the edge of a pot.

The folds in a man's sleeve intrigued him.

He noticed how dust drifted through a beam of sunlight.

He carefully watched the old master's hand as it moved across a drawing, correcting a line.

Leonardo noticed everything.

"Leonardo," said the master, without looking up, "the colour will not grind itself."

Leonardo quickly returned to his work. "Yes, master."

But his mind was still busy.

Why did light change the colour of things? How did shadows soften at the edges?

Why did a face look alive in one drawing and stiff in another?

How could a painter make a flat surface seem deep?

How could the movement of a hand show what a person felt?

Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1452 near the town of Vinci, not far from Florence. He did not grow up as a prince or nobleman. He was the son of a notary, and as a young man he became an apprentice in the workshop of **Andrea del Verrocchio**, a skilled Florentine artist.

There he learned painting, drawing, sculpture, design and the careful use of materials. But Leonardo was never satisfied with only being told how to do something. He wanted to know why.

Why does water swirl? Why do birds rise into the air? Why do muscles move beneath the skin?

Why do plants grow in spirals? Why do faces express joy, fear or sadness? Why does the eye see depth?

A lazy student sees a bird and says, "There is a bird."

Leonardo saw a bird and asked, "How does it fly?"

A careless person sees water and says, "There is water."

Leonardo saw water and asked, "Why does it turn, fall, foam and flow?"

A hurried person sees a face and says, "There is a face."

Leonardo saw a face and asked, "What makes this person look gentle, proud, tired or afraid?"

This habit of careful questioning became one of Leonardo's greatest strengths.

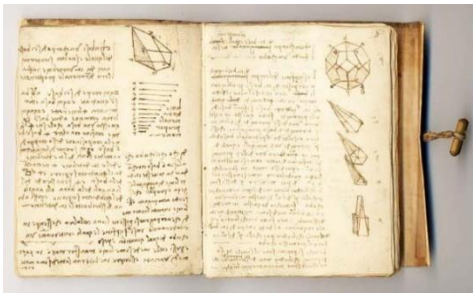
As he grew older, Leonardo filled notebooks with drawings, ideas and observations. He sketched machines, plants, animals, human bodies, buildings, weapons, bridges and flying devices.



www.webneel.com

Some of his pages look like the thoughts of several people at once: artist, scientist, engineer, inventor and philosopher.

Sometimes he wrote backwards, in mirror writing, moving from right to left across the page. Historians still discuss why he did this. Perhaps it was easier for him as a left-handed writer. Perhaps it helped keep some notes private. Whatever the reason, his notebooks show a mind that was constantly observing, recording and wondering.



www.education-reimagined.org

One day, as we might imagine it, Leonardo stood near a river outside Florence. The water moved around rocks, curling and spinning as it flowed. Most people crossing nearby would not have stopped to study it.

But Leonardo stopped.

He crouched by the bank and watched.

The water struck a stone, divided, curled back, foamed and moved on. He took out his notebook and began to sketch the movement.

A boy passing with a bundle of sticks paused.

"What are you drawing?" the boy asked.

"Water," Leonardo replied.

The boy looked at the river, then at the page. "Why?"

Leonardo smiled slightly. "Because water moves according to patterns."

The boy frowned. "It just flows."

"Yes," said Leonardo, "but how?"

The boy had no answer.

Leonardo continued sketching. He drew curves and spirals, trying to capture the movement. He wanted to understand not only what water looked like, but how it behaved.

That was Leonardo's way.

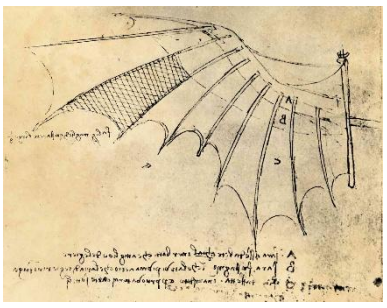
He wanted art to be true.

He wanted drawings to show how things really were.

This is one reason his paintings became so remarkable. Leonardo studied the world so carefully that his art gained a lifelike quality. He observed light, shadow, bodies, hands, expressions and landscapes. He understood that to paint God's world well, he had to look carefully at God's world.

But Leonardo was not only a painter.

He designed flying machines inspired by birds. He drew machines for lifting, cutting, moving and defending. He studied architecture.



www.news.eb.com

He planned waterways. He sketched musical instruments. He explored anatomy. He imagined machines that would not be built until long after his death.

Not all his inventions worked. Some remained only drawings. Some were far ahead of what builders of his time could make. Some ideas were useful; others were impractical. But even his unfinished ideas reveal the same habit: he asked questions and tried to follow them.

This made Leonardo a wonderful example of Renaissance inquisitiveness.

But it also reminds us of something important.

Inquisitiveness needs wisdom.

A person can ask questions for good reasons or selfish reasons. Knowledge can be used to heal or to harm, to serve or to gain power, to worship God or to glorify oneself. Leonardo lived in a world of patrons, princes, city-states and war. Some of his designs were for useful machines. Others were for military purposes. Like all human learning, Renaissance discovery contained both light and shadow.

Christians can admire Leonardo's careful observation, artistic skill and love of learning while also remembering that all knowledge should be brought under God's truth.



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God made the world orderly and intelligible. That means it can be studied. Birds, bones, muscles, water, light and plants are not random nonsense. They belong to a creation filled with structure and meaning.

But because of the Fall, human beings do not always use knowledge rightly. We need wisdom, humility and redemption.

Leonardo's life shows us the wonder of a curious mind.

It also shows us that curiosity alone is not enough.

A curious mind must become a wise mind.

A wise mind asks not only:

"What can I discover?"

but also:

"What is true?"

"What is good?"

"How should this knowledge be used?"

"How can it serve others?"

Years passed, and Leonardo became famous. He worked in Florence, Milan and other places. He painted, designed, studied and filled notebook after notebook. Some projects were completed. Others were abandoned. Some patrons were pleased. Others waited too long for unfinished work. Leonardo was brilliant, but not always orderly in finishing what he began.

That too is a lesson.

Inquisitiveness must be joined with discipline.

Questions are wonderful, but they should lead somewhere. Wonder should lead to understanding. Understanding should lead to wisdom. Wisdom should shape character. Character should lead to faithful service.

Near the end of his life, Leonardo could look back on thousands of pages of notes and sketches. He had not answered all his questions. No human being ever could. But he had shown generations after him how powerful careful observation could be.

He taught artists to look more closely; and inventors to imagine more boldly.

He taught students to ask better questions; which reminds us that God's world is worth studying.

So, when you see a bird, do not only say, "There is a bird." Ask, "How does it fly?"

When you see water, do not only say, "There is water." Ask, "How does it move?"

When you see a face, do not only say, "There is a face." Ask, "What does this expression show?"

And when you learn something new, do not ask only, "What do I know?"

Ask, "How can I use this knowledge wisely before God?"

That is inquisitiveness trained by wisdom.

And that is one of the great lessons Leonardo da Vinci still teaches.

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# Narration

## Foundation–Year 2

Tell someone about Leonardo da Vinci. What kinds of things did he like to look at, draw and study?

## Years 3–4

Retell the story of Leonardo in the workshop and by the river. Explain why he was always asking questions.

## Years 5–6

Imagine you are looking through one of Leonardo's notebooks. Write or tell what you find inside and what it teaches you about Leonardo's mind.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the thinking questions and activities.]**

## 1. Who was Leonardo da Vinci?

Answer: **Leonardo da Vinci** was an Italian artist, inventor, engineer and observer of nature. He lived during the Renaissance and is remembered as one of the most famous examples of a "Renaissance person."

He painted famous works of art, filled notebooks with drawings and ideas, and studied the world carefully.

## 2. What is a Renaissance person?

Answer: A **Renaissance person** is someone with many interests and abilities. Leonardo studied art, machines, anatomy, nature, architecture and more.

The Renaissance encouraged people to explore many kinds of learning.

## 3. Why were notebooks important?

Answer: Leonardo's notebooks show how carefully he observed the world. He recorded:

- drawings;
- inventions;
- questions;
- studies of nature;
- studies of the body;
- machine designs;
- observations of water, flight and movement.

Notebooks helped him remember, investigate and develop ideas.

## 4. Why was Leonardo important in history?

Answer: Leonardo matters because he represents the Renaissance spirit of observation, creativity and inquiry. He shows how art, science, invention and careful study can work together.

His work influenced later artists, inventors and thinkers.

## 5. What does Leonardo have to do with civics?

Answer: Leonardo did not work in isolation. He worked for patrons, city leaders and rulers. His skills were used in public life through art, engineering, design, city planning and sometimes military projects.

This reminds us that knowledge and skill influence society. Talented people have responsibility to use their gifts wisely.

## 6. What does Leonardo teach us about inquisitiveness?

Answer: Leonardo teaches us that inquisitiveness involves:

- careful observation;
- asking thoughtful questions;
- recording ideas;
- practising skills;
- learning from God's creation;
- using knowledge responsibly.

# Did You Notice?

While reading today's story, did you notice that Leonardo:

- looked carefully at ordinary things;
- asked many questions;
- used notebooks to record his thoughts;
- connected art, science and invention;
- reminds us that curiosity needs wisdom and discipline?

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# Differentiated Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. Who was Leonardo da Vinci?
2. What did Leonardo like to draw?
3. Why did Leonardo keep notebooks?
4. What does it mean to observe carefully?
5. What is one thing in God's world you would like to study?

## Years 3–4

1. Why is Leonardo called a Renaissance person?
2. How did observation help Leonardo become a better artist and inventor?
3. Why are notebooks useful for learning?
4. What is the difference between just looking and observing carefully?
5. How can inquisitiveness help us learn about God's world?

## Years 5–6

1. How did Leonardo connect art, science and invention?
2. Why do you think Leonardo studied water, birds, machines and the human body?
3. How can notebooks help turn curiosity into disciplined learning?
4. Why does inquisitiveness need wisdom?
5. How should Christians think about Leonardo's achievements and limitations?

# Activities

## Foundation–Year 2

**1. Leonardo's Notebook Page**
Draw three things Leonardo might have studied: a bird, water, a hand, a plant, a machine or a face.

**2. Careful Looking Activity**
Choose one object nearby. Look at it quietly for one minute. Then tell someone five things you noticed.

**3. I Wonder Questions**
Say or write three questions beginning with "I wonder..."

## Years 3–4

**1. Observation Sketch**
Choose a natural object such as a leaf, shell, feather or flower. Draw it carefully and label three details.

**2. Leonardo Fact File**
Create a fact file including:

- name;
- dates;
- country;
- skills;
- famous works;
- one character lesson.

**3. Notebook Habit**
Begin a small "inquisitiveness notebook." Write one question and one observation each day for three days.

## Years 5–6

**1. Leonardo Notebook Study Page**
Create a notebook page in Leonardo's style. Include:

- a careful drawing;
- labels;
- questions;
- possible explanations;
- one idea for an invention or improvement.

**2. Renaissance Person Paragraph**
Write a paragraph explaining why Leonardo is called a Renaissance person.

**3. Wisdom Reflection**
Write a short response:
"Knowledge is powerful, but it must be guided by wisdom."
Use Leonardo as your example.

# God's Big Story Reflection

God created a world filled with order, beauty and wonder. Leonardo's careful observations remind us that creation is worth studying because it displays God's wisdom.

Because of the Fall, human beings do not always use knowledge rightly. Curiosity can become pride, and inventions can be used for harm as well as good.

Through Christ, we are called to bring our minds, gifts and questions under God's truth. We should use learning to serve others, care for creation and honour the Creator.

As you think about Leonardo, ask:

- What part of God's world do I want to observe more carefully?
- How can I train my curiosity with discipline?
- How can knowledge become wisdom, character and service?

# Lesson 3.2 – Geography & Economics

## Why Renaissance Italy Produced Great Thinkers

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate how geography influenced trade and communication in Renaissance Italy.
- explain how wealth from trade and banking supported learning, science and the arts.
- understand why Florence, Milan and Venice became centres of innovation.
- recognise that God often provides opportunities through people, places and circumstances.

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# Key Terminology

**City-state** – An independent city that governs itself and the surrounding land.

**Trade route** – A path used by merchants to transport goods between places.

**Merchant** – A person who buys and sells goods.

**Patron** – A wealthy person who financially supports artists, scientists or scholars.

**Banking** – The business of keeping, lending and investing money.

**Innovation** – A new idea, invention or improved way of doing something.

**Resources** – Materials, wealth or people that help achieve a goal.

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# Informational Story

## Why Leonardo Could Travel

Leonardo stood on the hill overlooking Florence.

Below him the city shimmered in the afternoon sunlight. Church bells echoed between tall stone buildings. The great dome designed by Brunelleschi towered above red-tiled roofs. Merchants called to one another in crowded streets while wagons rolled through the city gates carrying cloth, spices and timber.



Leonardo smiled.

"I wonder where all these people have come from."

His teacher, Andrea del Verrocchio, joined him.

"From almost everywhere," he replied.

Leonardo looked puzzled.

"How can one city have people from so many places?"

Verrocchio pointed towards the distant hills.

"Beyond those mountains are roads leading to France and Germany. South lie Rome and the ports of the Mediterranean. West is Pisa with ships sailing to Spain. East are the great trading routes that reach Constantinople and beyond."




Leonardo imagined long caravans crossing mountains and ships travelling across sparkling seas.

"So, ideas travel just as people do?"

"Exactly."

Verrocchio smiled.

"Every merchant brings more than goods."

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The markets of Florence were filled with sights and sounds from many lands.

Silk from the East; fine wool from England; precious spices from India.

Glass from Venice; books copied by scholars; maps drawn by explorers.

Musical instruments. New inventions.

People did not simply exchange products.

They exchanged ideas.

A merchant returning from another country might describe a clever machine he had seen.

Travellers might bring an improved compass.

A sailor might explain better methods of navigation.

Every visitor added another piece to the great puzzle of knowledge.

Leonardo loved listening.

He asked questions about everything. How did ships stay afloat? Why did bridges stand?

How were clocks made? Could flying machines be built?

Every answer led to another question.

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Florence had become wealthy because its people were skilled at making cloth.

Fine woollen fabric produced in Florence was famous throughout Europe.

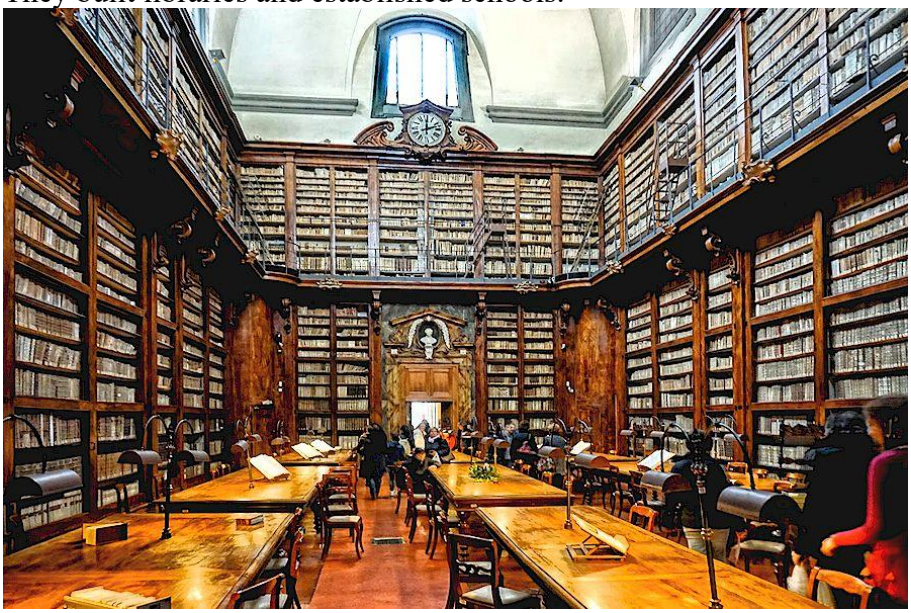
Merchants bought wool from distant countries.

Skilled workers spun, dyed and wove it into beautiful cloth. Finished fabric was then sold across Europe for high prices. Then money flowed back into the city.

But Florence did something unusual with its wealth.

Instead of spending everything on luxury, many wealthy families invested in learning.

They built libraries and established schools.



www.tuscany-toscana.blogspot.com

They employed artists, paid architects, supported engineers, and encouraged musicians.

Some collected ancient Greek and Roman books so scholars could study them.

Others paid painters to decorate churches.

Many sponsored inventors who designed better machines.

Knowledge became something worth investing in.

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One family became especially well known.

The Medici family owned one of Europe's largest banking businesses.




People from many countries trusted them to protect their money. Kings borrowed from them; merchants borrowed from them; Church leaders borrowed from them.

Because they were successful bankers, the Medici family became enormously wealthy.

Yet much of their money helped transform Florence.

They supported artists like Botticelli; they encouraged young scholars; collected ancient manuscripts; and welcomed thinkers who wanted to learn.

Although Leonardo never became a permanent member of the Medici household, he benefited from the city they helped create – a place where curiosity was valued.

---

Leonardo's talents soon became widely known.

Before long he travelled to Milan. The Duke of Milan wanted talented people.

He wanted engineers to improve city defences.

He wanted artists to decorate buildings.

He wanted musicians for celebrations, and inventors who could solve practical problems.

Leonardo offered all these skills.

Leonardo designed bridges, planned canals, imagined machines, and painted magnificent artworks.

His curiosity became valuable because cities competed to attract intelligent people.

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Venice was different again. Venice is a city that seems to float on water. It is built on a logoon, with 126 islands that are separated by expanses of open water and by canals; portions of the city are linked by 472 bridges.

Instead of banking, Venice grew rich through trade.

Hundreds of ships sailed in and out of its harbours. Merchants brought silk, spices, jewels and exotic goods from across Asia and the Middle East. Shipbuilders developed remarkable engineering skills.

Navigators improved maps. Glassmakers invented new techniques.

Knowledge spread quickly because so many travellers visited the city.





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Rome also attracted brilliant minds.

The Church commissioned enormous building projects.

So, they employed architects, artists, engineers, stone masons, scientists, and craftsmen.

Many travelled to Rome hoping to use their talents in service of great works.



Across Italy, different cities became famous for different strengths.

Florence for banking, learning and art; Venice for trade and navigation; Milan for engineering and military design; Rome for architecture and scholarship.

Together these cities created an environment where gifted people could learn from one another.

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Leonardo realised something important.

No one discovers everything alone.

Every inventor builds upon ideas already learned.

Every scientist learns from teachers.

Every artist studies earlier masters.

Every engineer improves previous designs.

God often grows wisdom through communities where people share knowledge generously.

Leonardo looked again across Florence.

The city itself had become like a giant classroom.

Its streets were filled with questions.

Its markets carried ideas.

Its workshops encouraged experiments.

Its libraries preserved knowledge.

Its people inspired one another.

And Leonardo could hardly wait to ask his next question.

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# Narration

Without looking back at the story, tell or write:

- Why Florence became wealthy.
- How geography helped Renaissance Italy.
- Why merchants spread more than goods.
- How patrons supported learning.
- Why Leonardo travelled to different cities.
- Which Italian city would you most like to visit during the Renaissance, and why?

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the thinking questions and activities.]**

## How Does Geography affect Innovation?

Italy sits in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, making it an ideal meeting place for travellers from Europe, Asia and Africa.

Its mountains protected many regions while its coastline encouraged trade.

Independent city-states competed with one another to become the best places for business, learning and culture.

## What is the Effect of Economic Prosperity?

Trade created wealth.

Wealth allowed cities to:

- build libraries
- educate scholars
- employ artists
- support inventors
- improve buildings and infrastructure

Economic prosperity often creates opportunities for scientific and artistic advancement.

## How Does Trade Spread Ideas?

Trade carries:

- products
- technologies
- inventions
- languages
- cultures
- knowledge

The Renaissance spread rapidly because people travelled frequently between cities and countries.

## What is Patronage?

Many Renaissance artists and inventors could only devote themselves to their work because patrons paid for their time, materials and living expenses.

Without this support, many famous discoveries and artworks may never have been completed.

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# Differentiated Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

- What things did merchants bring to Florence?
- Why were people travelling to different cities?
- How did rich people help artists?

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## Years 3–4

- Why was Florence a good place for learning?
- How did trade help spread ideas?
- Why would rulers want clever people living in their cities?

## Years 5–6

- Explain the relationship between geography, trade and innovation.
- How did competition between city-states encourage progress?
- Could a society become innovative without sharing ideas? Explain your reasoning.

---

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2

Draw a simple map showing Florence connected to other cities by roads and ships. Label goods that travelled between them.

## Years 3–4

Create a flow chart showing:

Trade → Wealth → Patronage → Learning → Innovation

Write one sentence explaining each step.

## Years 5–6

Using a map of Renaissance Italy, investigate Florence, Venice, Milan and Rome.

For each city identify:

- geographical advantages
- main industries
- important contributions to the Renaissance
- famous people associated with the city

Present your findings as a comparison table.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

God created people to live in communities where they learn from one another, serve one another and use their gifts for His glory.

The Renaissance reminds us that wisdom often grows where people share ideas generously, steward resources faithfully and encourage others to develop their God-given abilities.

Like Leonardo, we should remain curious – but our curiosity should always lead us towards truth, wisdom and service to God and others.

"The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly." – **Proverbs 15:14**

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## Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Connections

| Age Band | Content Description |
|---|---|
| **Foundation–Year 2** | Identify places people belong to and how places provide for people's needs; recognise why people and places are connected through movement and exchange. |
| **Years 3–4** | Explain how environments and resources influence where people live and work; describe how goods, services and ideas move between places. |
| **Years 5–6** | Explain how geographical and economic factors influence human activity; analyse how trade, resources and movement contribute to the development of societies and innovations. |

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## Achievement Standard Alignment

Students demonstrate understanding by:

- explaining how geography influenced the growth of Renaissance city-states
- describing how trade created wealth and encouraged learning
- identifying the role of merchants, patrons and banking in supporting innovation
- analysing how the movement of people, goods and ideas contributed to the achievements of figures such as Leonardo da Vinci.

# Lesson 3.3 – Civics, Economics & Historical Investigation

## How Did Leonardo Learn? Workshops, Apprentices and the Sharing of Knowledge

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate how Renaissance workshops and apprenticeships operated.
- examine how knowledge and skills were passed from one generation to another.
- identify the roles of masters, apprentices, guilds and patrons.
- use historical information to draw conclusions about Leonardo's education.
- recognise that inquisitiveness grows through careful observation, questioning and practice.

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# Key Terminology

**Apprentice** – A young person who learns a skilled trade or craft by working under an experienced person.

**Master** – A highly skilled and recognised craftsperson who may train apprentices.

**Workshop** – A place where artists, craftspeople or other skilled workers produce goods and train others.

**Guild** – An organisation of people involved in the same trade or craft.

**Patron** – A person who provides financial support for an artist, scholar or craftsman.

**Commission** – A request and payment for a particular work to be produced.

**Primary source** – Evidence created during the time being investigated.

**Secondary source** – Information about the past created after the time being investigated.

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# Informational Story

## The Workshop Door

When Leonardo da Vinci first entered Andrea del Verrocchio's workshop in Florence, he did not enter a school like yours.

There were no rows of desks, and there was no blackboard. There were no printed textbooks for every student.

Instead, Leonardo stepped into a crowded room filled with wood, metal, clay, paint, brushes, tools and half-finished works of art.

Someone was grinding coloured stone into powder. Another apprentice was heating wax.

A young man was polishing a piece of metal.

In one corner, a wooden panel was being prepared for painting. Nearby, someone carefully copied a drawing.

The room smelled of timber, oil and paint.

Leonardo looked everywhere.

He had questions immediately.

What was that tool? Why was the powder being crushed? How did the metal become so smooth?

Why did the master draw the human hand again and again?

But Leonardo was not there merely to ask questions. He was there to work.

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Leonardo had entered the workshop of **Andrea del Verrocchio**, one of Florence's respected artists and craftsmen.

Verrocchio was known as a painter and sculptor, but his workshop did much more than produce paintings.

Renaissance workshops were places of practical learning.

A large workshop might receive commissions for paintings, statues, decorations, metalwork and other objects. The master could not complete every task alone.

He needed assistants; so he trained apprentices.

Young apprentices usually began with simple jobs.

They swept floors, and cleaned brushes.

They carried materials, and prepared wooden panels.

They crushed minerals to make pigments, and mixed paints.



www.creator.nightcafe.studio

They watched.

To a careless student, these tasks might have seemed boring.

But Leonardo watched carefully.

When he ground pigment, he noticed how different materials behaved.

Some minerals crushed easily. Others resisted. Some colours changed when mixed.

Some paints dried quickly. Others remained wet.



www.stormthecastle.com

Leonardo was learning about materials even when no one called the lesson "science".

---

One day, an older apprentice showed Leonardo how to prepare a wooden panel for painting.

"You must make the surface smooth," he explained.

Leonardo ran his fingers across the timber.

"It is already smooth."

The apprentice shook his head.

"Not smooth enough."

A mixture was carefully applied to the surface. It was allowed to dry. Then it was polished.

Leonardo examined the result.

"Why so many layers?"

"Because the painting must last."

Leonardo considered this.

"What happens if the wood expands?"

The apprentice stopped.

"What?"

"When the air is damp. Wood changes."

"You ask too many questions."

Leonardo smiled.

Perhaps he did. But he remembered the question.

As apprentices became more skilled, they were trusted with more difficult work.

An apprentice might copy a master's drawing. Later, he might paint a small section of a picture.

Perhaps a tree, a building, or a piece of clothing.



Eventually, a skilled assistant might paint an important part of a commissioned work.

The master supervised everything.

This meant that a painting associated with one famous artist might involve the work of several people.

The workshop was a community of skilled workers. Knowledge passed from person to person.

A master demonstrated. An apprentice observed. The apprentice practised. The master corrected.

The apprentice tried again.

Observation. Practice. Correction. Improvement.

Again and again.

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Leonardo became an unusually attentive apprentice.

He did not simply copy what Verrocchio did; but wanted to understand why it worked.

If he was asked to draw fabric, Leonardo studied the way cloth folded.

If he painted a face, he watched how light crossed the skin.

If he drew a hand, he examined how the fingers bent. He studied birds, water, plants, machines.

Leonardo's workshop training taught him a habit that remained with him for the rest of his life.

**Look carefully before you assume you understand.**

---

Florence also had organisations called **guilds**.

Guilds were associations of people involved in particular trades or professions.

There were guilds connected with cloth making, banking, medicine and other skilled occupations.

Guilds helped regulate working life.

They could establish expectations about who was permitted to practise a trade. They protected the reputation of their members, and sometimes inspected the quality of goods. They provided connections between skilled workers.

For artists, guild membership could be important for gaining professional recognition and receiving commissions.

Painters like Leonardo belonged to the guild of the Doctors and Apothecaries ("Arte dei Medici e Speziali").



This might sound strange. Why would painters be connected with apothecaries (ie., a Chemist or Pharmacist)?

The answer lay partly in their materials. Painters needed pigments. Pigments could be made from minerals, plants and other substances. Apothecaries worked with many of these materials.

However, sculptors were members of the Masters of Stone and Wood ("Maestri di Pietra e Legname).

Once again, Renaissance knowledge did not fit neatly into separate school subjects. Art connected with chemistry and masonry. Painting connected with anatomy. Engineering connected with mathematics. Architecture connected with geometry.

Leonardo moved between them all.

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Yet the workshop system had rules.

An apprentice could not simply declare himself a master. Skill had to be demonstrated. A person’s reputation was important. Customers wanted to know that a craftsperson could complete the promised work. Guilds and professional associations helped maintain standards.

But systems could also limit people. A person without the right connections might struggle to enter a respected workshop. A poor family might not have the same opportunities as a wealthy family. Women could work in family businesses and participate in many forms of production, but formal opportunities in some guilds and professions were restricted. Renaissance Florence encouraged remarkable achievement, but opportunities were not equally available to everyone.

This is important for historians to remember. We must not look only at the famous people whose names survived. We must also ask questions about the people whose names were never written down. Who ground the pigments? Who prepared the panels? Who carried the stone? Who cleaned the workshop? Who taught the apprentice his first skill?

History often remembers the master.

Historical investigation teaches us to look for the others as well.

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One of the most famous stories about Leonardo's apprenticeship concerns a painting called *The Baptism of Christ*.



www.mastersgaze.com

The painting was produced in Verrocchio's workshop. According to a story written many years later by Giorgio Vasari, the young Leonardo painted an angel so beautifully that Verrocchio was astonished by his apprentice's skill.

Vasari even claimed that Verrocchio decided never to paint again. It is a wonderful story. But is every part of it true?

Historians must ask questions.

Vasari was born after Leonardo had already become an adult. He wrote his account decades after the events he described.

We need to ask… Where did he get the story? Was he recording a reliable tradition? Did he exaggerate to make Leonardo seem even more extraordinary?

The painting itself is evidence. Vasari's writing is evidence. There are different types of sources of information that could be evidence (books, songs, poems, artworks, machines, carvings, buildings, etc). But historians must examine all the evidence carefully. They compare sources of information. They ask who created these sources.

They consider when they were created. They investigate the purpose of the source. Then they draw a conclusion based on the available evidence.

An inquisitive historian does not say, "That is a good story, so it must be true."

Nor does an inquisitive historian say, "We cannot know everything, so nothing can be known."

Instead, the historian asks:

**What does the evidence allow us reasonably to conclude?**

---

Leonardo eventually left Verrocchio's workshop and built his own reputation.

But he never stopped being a learner. His notebooks reveal a man who continued to ask questions. He made lists of things he wanted to investigate, and tried to find people who knew things he did not know.

He examined machines. He watched water. He studied human bodies; and filled pages with sketches and observations.

The workshop had taught Leonardo more than painting. It had taught him how to learn; observe carefully; and how to ask a good question. Working at Verrocchio’s workshop had taught Leonardo how to learn from someone with experience; how to try the skill, examine the result, correct mistakes, and how to try again.

Leonardo had walked through Verrocchio's workshop door as an apprentice; and he left as a skilled artist.

But perhaps his greatest achievement was that he never decided he had finished learning.

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# Narration

Without looking back at the story, tell or write what you remember about Leonardo's apprenticeship.

You might explain:

- what Verrocchio's workshop was like.
- the jobs performed by young apprentices.
- how an apprentice developed new skills.
- the role of guilds.
- why Leonardo's inquisitiveness made him an unusual learner.
- why historians should investigate stories about famous people carefully.

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# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the thinking questions and activities.]**

## 1. Apprenticeship Was a Form of Education

Renaissance education did not always occur in a formal school.

An apprenticeship used:

**Observation → Demonstration → Practice → Correction → Increasing Responsibility**

This is sometimes called **learning by doing**.

The apprentice gradually moved from simple tasks to skilled work.

## 2. A Workshop Was Also an Economic Organisation

A Renaissance workshop was not merely a school.

It was a business.

A patron or customer might **commission** a work.

The workshop then needed:

- workers
- materials
- tools
- specialist skills
- time.

The master was responsible for the quality and reputation of the workshop.

Apprentices and assistants contributed to its production.

Therefore, the workshop connected **education, work and economics**.

## 3. Guilds Helped Organise Skilled Work

Guilds and professional associations could:

- regulate entry into occupations
- establish standards
- protect professional reputations
- connect skilled workers
- influence economic life.

However, historians should also investigate who had access to these systems and who might have been excluded.

## 4. Historians Evaluate Sources

Historians do not accept every historical story without investigation.

When examining a source, ask:

**Who created it?**

**When was it created?**

**Why was it created?**

**What perspective does it present?**

**Can its claims be compared with other evidence?**

These questions help historians draw **evidence-based conclusions**.

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# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. What was one job a young apprentice might do?
2. Who taught Leonardo in the workshop?
3. How did Leonardo learn by watching?
4. Why is it helpful to practise a skill many times?
5. Tell one observation about Leonardo as a learner.

## Years 3–4

1. How was Verrocchio's workshop different from a modern classroom?
2. Explain how an apprentice gradually became more skilled.
3. Why were guilds important to Renaissance workers?
4. What perspective might a master have about the guild system? Might an excluded worker see it differently?
5. What conclusion can you draw about Leonardo's approach to learning?

## Years 5–6

1. Explain the relationship between apprenticeship, workshops and economic production.
2. Why might guilds have both benefits and disadvantages?
3. What questions should a historian ask about Vasari's story of Leonardo and Verrocchio?
4. Is Vasari's account a primary or secondary source for Leonardo's apprenticeship? Explain your reasoning.
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **Why did Leonardo's apprenticeship contribute to his later achievements?**

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# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – How an Apprentice Learns

Create four pictures showing:

**Watch → Try → Practise → Improve**

Under each picture, tell or write a sentence about how Leonardo might have learned a skill.

The Home-Tutor may record a younger student's oral explanation.

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## Years 3–4 – Inside Verrocchio's Workshop

Create an annotated drawing or diagram of Verrocchio's workshop.

Include at least five people performing different roles.

For each person:

- identify what the person is doing.
- identify the skill or material being used.
- explain how that person's work contributes to the workshop.

Then answer:

**What can we conclude about how people worked together in a Renaissance workshop?**

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## Years 5–6 – Investigating the Story of Leonardo's Angel

Investigate the claim that Leonardo painted an angel in Verrocchio's *The Baptism of Christ*.

Use at least two provided sources or sources selected by your teacher.

Create a source investigation table:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective or limitation | What evidence does it provide? |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Then write one paragraph answering:

**What does the available evidence allow us reasonably to conclude about Leonardo's contribution to *The Baptism of Christ*?**

Your conclusion must refer to evidence from your sources.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

God created human beings with the capacity to learn from one another.

A child learns from a parent. An apprentice learns from a master. A student learns from a teacher.

A skilled person can use experience to serve and train another person.

This sharing of knowledge is part of wise stewardship.

Yet human systems are affected by the Fall. Organisations intended to protect quality can also become unfair. Opportunities may be given to some and denied to others. This is why Christians should examine human institutions wisely and treat every person as made in the image of God.

Leonardo reminds us that inquisitiveness requires humility.

To ask a genuine question is to admit: **There is something I do not yet know.**

"Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance." – **Proverbs 1:5**

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# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact code and wording below are taken from the uploaded HASS F–6 Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students develop and respond to questions about Leonardo, apprentices and Renaissance workshops. |
| **AC9HS2S03** | **interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present** | Students compare apprenticeship learning with modern classroom learning and interpret information about Leonardo's workshop. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Narration and the differentiated activity require students to communicate observations using terms such as apprentice, master and workshop. |
| **AC9HS4S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students use historical questions to investigate Leonardo's apprenticeship and the reliability of historical accounts. |
| **AC9HS4S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students consider the perspectives of masters, apprentices and people who may have been excluded from guild systems. |
| **AC9HS4S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students draw a conclusion about cooperation and learning within a Renaissance workshop. |
| **AC9HS4S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present an annotated explanation of a Renaissance workshop using historical terminology. |
| **AC9HS6S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Leonardo, apprenticeship and the guild system through historical inquiry questions. |
| **AC9HS6S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | The source investigation requires students to collect and organise information about Leonardo's contribution to *The Baptism of Christ*. |
| **AC9HS6S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students explicitly evaluate sources about Leonardo and Vasari's account. |
| **AC9HS6S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Years 5–6 students produce an evidence-based conclusion about Leonardo's contribution to the painting. |
| **AC9HS6S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students communicate a historical conclusion drawing findings from multiple sources. |

# Achievement Standard Contribution

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students develop questions, and collect, sort and record related information and data from observations and provided sources.”** | Students respond to information about Leonardo's workshop and sequence the apprenticeship learning process. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales.”** | Narration and the apprentice activity require students to communicate historical observations using subject-specific vocabulary. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students examine different perspectives on guilds and draw conclusions about workshop cooperation. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | The annotated workshop task requires a historical description and explanation. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students evaluate the origins and limitations of sources concerning Leonardo and Verrocchio. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students develop an evidence-based conclusion about Leonardo's contribution to *The Baptism of Christ*. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise source findings in a table and present a written historical conclusion. |

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# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Teacher/Home-Tutor observation |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 apprenticeship sequence | Student work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 annotated workshop | Portfolio work sample |
| Years 5–6 source investigation | Historical inquiry work sample |
| Evidence-based conclusion | Achievement Standard evidence |

| TOPIC 4 | POWER, WEALTH AND PATRONAGE |
|---|---|

# Lesson 4.1 – History & Civics

## Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici: The Family Who Helped Shape Florence

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate the historical significance of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici.
- explain how wealth and influence could shape a Renaissance city.
- examine the difference between formal government and informal political influence.
- identify different perspectives concerning the Medici family.
- use historical evidence to draw conclusions about significant people of the Renaissance.

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# Key Terminology

**Medici** – A wealthy Florentine banking family who became influential in Renaissance politics and culture.

**Republic** – A system of government in which a country or city is not ruled by a hereditary king.

**Patronage** – Financial or practical support given to artists, scholars or other skilled people.

**Influence** – The ability to affect people's decisions or actions.

**Political power** – The ability to influence how a community or government is governed.

**Banker** – A person involved in managing, lending or investing money.

**Perspective** – A person's particular way of understanding an event or issue.

**Significance** – The importance of a person, event or development in history.

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# Informational Story

## The Man Who Was Not a King

Florence had no king.

That was important to the people of Florence. They were proud of their city. They were proud of their merchants; proud of their guilds; and they were particularly proud that Florence was a **republic**. At least, that was what the laws said.

But one morning in 1434, a man named **Cosimo de' Medici** rode back into Florence. Church bells rang; crowds gathered; friends welcomed him; and enemies watched nervously from windows.

Cosimo was not wearing a crown. Soldiers did not march before him. No royal trumpet announced his arrival. Yet almost everyone in Florence understood something.

One of the most powerful men in the city had returned. And Cosimo de' Medici was not even a king.

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The Medici family had become wealthy through banking. Banking was an important business in Renaissance Europe. Merchants needed ways to move money between cities. Rulers borrowed money. Businesses needed loans; and international trade required careful records of debts and payments.

The Medici Bank established branches in important European cities.

Information travelled between these branches. Letters were written; accounts were recorded; representatives watched economic and political events carefully.

To be a successful banker, it was helpful to know what was happening in the world.

Would a ruler repay his loan?

Was a city becoming unstable?

Was a particular business growing?

Would a war interrupt trade?

Banking required money; but it also required information. Cosimo learned to observe people and circumstances carefully.

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Cosimo's wealth made him influential; but Florence was complicated.

The city had councils and government offices. Wealthy families competed for influence. Guilds played important roles in public life.

People valued political friendships; and so did political enemies. Cosimo understood that power did not always require a crown. So, he helped friends, built alliances, and he supported people who might later support him.

Cosimo used his family's wealth to strengthen his position. Some Florentines admired him; others feared him.

In 1433, Cosimo's political enemies succeeded in having him arrested. He was accused of trying to gain too much power. Some of his enemies wanted him killed. Instead, Cosimo was sent into exile. He left Florence.

His enemies may have believed their problem was solved; but it was not.

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Cosimo had friends. Many of them were important people in the city. Some were wealthy merchants; some were political leaders; and others had benefited from Medici support.

Before long, the political situation in Florence changed. Cosimo's opponents lost influence. In 1434, Cosimo was invited to return. He came home in triumph.

After his return, Cosimo became the most influential person in Florence. Yet he still did not call himself king, because Florence remained a republic. A ‘republic is a s State (ie. a country with its own separate government) where supreme power is not held by a king (monarch), but by the people and their representatives.

Government offices continued. Councils met. Officials were selected. Laws were made. But Cosimo worked behind the scenes.

He supported political allies; influenced important decisions; and he ensured that people friendly to the Medici often held important positions.

The official government remained. But one family had extraordinary influence over it. This creates an interesting question for historians.

**Who was really governing Florence?**

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Cosimo was not only interested in politics.

He loved books.

In an age before books could be cheaply printed, a collection of manuscripts was extremely valuable. Ancient texts had to be found, copied, compared, translated, and preserved. Cosimo supported scholars who searched for ancient Greek and Roman writings. He employed people to copy manuscripts, and he helped establish libraries. The Medici library became one of the important collections of Renaissance Florence.

Cosimo also supported philosophers and scholars. He was particularly interested in the writings of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. When Greek-speaking scholars travelled west, especially during the troubled final years of the Byzantine Empire, Renaissance Italians gained greater access to Greek texts and scholarship.

Cosimo wanted to know what these ancient writers had said. His wealth gave scholars time to investigate. His curiosity helped finance their curiosity.

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Cosimo also supported architecture. You have already met Filippo Brunelleschi. Cosimo employed Brunelleschi in projects connected with the Medici family. One of these was the rebuilding of the church of San Lorenzo.

Cosimo also supported the construction of a Medici palace. Yet Cosimo could be cautious about displaying wealth too proudly. Florence was a republic filled with other powerful families. A man who appeared too much like a prince might create enemies.

Cosimo needed to appear to be a citizen of Florence while exercising enormous influence over Florence. This required political skill.

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Cosimo died in 1464. After his death, Florence gave him an extraordinary title:

**Pater Patriae,** which meant “Father of the Fatherland”.

His influence had been so great that Florence publicly honoured him as a father of the city. But the Medici story did not end with Cosimo. A few years later, his grandson **Lorenzo de' Medici** became the leading figure of the family.

History remembers him as **Lorenzo the Magnificent**.

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Lorenzo was different from his grandfather. Cosimo had often been careful and reserved. However, Lorenzo enjoyed poetry, music, festivals, hunting, conversation, and art.

He wrote poems himself, and gathered intelligent people around him. Scholars discussed philosophy. Artists experimented with new techniques. Poets debated ideas. Young people with unusual talents could attract Medici attention.

One of these young people was a teenage sculptor named **Michelangelo Buonarroti**. Lorenzo recognised his ability. Michelangelo was welcomed into the Medici household and gained opportunities to study ancient sculpture. Imagine being a young artist surrounded by scholars, poets and ancient works of art. Every conversation could produce a new question. Every statue could suggest a new technique. Every book could introduce an unfamiliar idea.

The Medici household became a meeting place for inquisitive minds.

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But Lorenzo's Florence was not simply a peaceful city filled with artists. Politics remained dangerous. The Medici had powerful enemies.

In 1478, a group connected with the Pazzi family participated in a plot against Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano. The conspirators planned to attack the brothers during Mass in Florence Cathedral. As the service reached a solemn moment, the attack began. Giuliano was killed, and Lorenzo was wounded but escaped.

Florence erupted. Supporters of the Medici seized conspirators. Some were executed. The event became known as the **Pazzi Conspiracy**. The attack showed how bitter political competition in Renaissance Italy could become.

Patrons of paintings and poetry also lived in a world of political alliances, violence and struggles for power.

Lorenzo survived. He continued to dominate Florentine politics. Like Cosimo, he did not wear a crown. Yet foreign rulers treated him as one of Italy's important political leaders. Lorenzo negotiated with other states. He attempted to maintain a balance between the competing powers of Italy. His political skill helped Florence survive in a dangerous world. But maintaining Medici influence was expensive.

The Medici Bank was no longer as successful as it had been under Cosimo. Some branches suffered serious problems. Money and politics had become deeply connected.

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How should history remember the Medici?

Were they generous patrons who helped the Renaissance flourish? There is strong evidence that they supported artists, architects, scholars and libraries.

Were they clever political leaders who helped protect Florence? Lorenzo certainly played an important role in Italian diplomacy. But did they also weaken the republican government of Florence by concentrating influence in one family? Many historians would say yes.

Different Florentines may have answered these questions differently. An artist receiving Medici support might praise them. A political rival might fear them. A scholar using a Medici library might feel grateful. A citizen concerned about republican freedom might ask whether one family had gained too much influence.

Historical people are often complicated. Inquisitiveness requires us to resist simple answers when the evidence reveals a more difficult story.

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Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici did not paint the *Mona Lisa*. They did not build Brunelleschi's dome. They did not carve Michelangelo's *David*. Yet the world in which those achievements occurred was shaped partly by people like the Medici.

They gathered resources; created opportunities; and commissioned works. They supported scholars, influenced governments, and they connected people.

Sometimes a person changes history by creating something. Sometimes a person changes history by making it possible for someone else to create.

The inquisitive historian asks about both.

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# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember about Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici.

You might explain:

- how the Medici became wealthy.
- why Cosimo was sent into exile.
- how Cosimo exercised political influence without becoming king.
- how the Medici supported learning and the arts.

- how Lorenzo helped talented people.
- why some Florentines may have supported the Medici while others opposed them.
- whether you think the Medici were significant to the Renaissance, and why.

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# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the thinking questions and activities.]**

## 1. Historical Significance

Historians investigate why some people are **historically significant**.

A person may be significant because he or she:

- caused important changes.
- influenced many people.
- affected events over a long period.
- created something that continued to influence later generations.
- helped other significant developments occur.

Cosimo and Lorenzo are historically significant partly because their patronage and political influence helped shape Renaissance Florence.

## 2. Formal Power and Informal Influence

**Formal political power** comes from an official position.

A king formally rules a kingdom.

An elected representative formally holds public office.

**Informal influence** occurs when someone affects decisions without necessarily holding the highest official position.

Cosimo often exercised influence through:

- political friendships
- wealth
- banking connections
- patronage
- support for allies.

This raises an important civics question:

**Can a person have political power without officially being the ruler?**

The Medici demonstrate that the answer can be yes.

## 3. Patronage and Resources

Artists and scholars need resources.

These may include:

- materials
- buildings
- books
- training
- skilled workers
- money
- time.

Patrons used financial resources to support particular people and projects.

However, patrons could also influence **what** was produced.

A commissioned artist usually needed to consider the wishes of the person paying for the work.

Therefore, historians should investigate both the artist and the patron.

## 4. Historical Perspectives

People experiencing the same event may have different perspectives.

Consider the Medici.

| Person | Possible Perspective |
|---|---|
| Medici-supported artist | The Medici create valuable opportunities. |
| Political rival | The Medici have gained too much power. |
| Scholar | Medici libraries preserve important knowledge. |
| Republican citizen | One family should not control the government. |
| Medici ally | The family provides stability and leadership. |

Identifying a perspective does not automatically prove that it is correct.

Historians compare perspectives with evidence before drawing conclusions.

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# Differentiated Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. How did the Medici family become wealthy?

2. Name one way Cosimo helped learning.
3. Name one way Lorenzo helped artists.
4. Why might an artist be thankful to the Medici?
5. Tell one reason the Medici were important to Florence.

## Years 3–4

1. Why was Cosimo powerful even though he was not a king?
2. How did the Medici use their wealth to change Florence?
3. Why might different people have different perspectives about the Medici?
4. How did Lorenzo help Michelangelo?
5. What conclusion can you draw about the importance of patrons during the Renaissance?

## Years 5–6

1. Explain the difference between Cosimo's formal political position and his actual influence.
2. What resources did the Medici use to influence Florence?
3. Why might patronage encourage innovation?
4. How could patronage also influence the work produced by artists and scholars?
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **Did Medici influence strengthen or weaken Florence?** You may argue that it did both.

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# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Why Were the Medici Important?

Fold a page into four sections.

Draw and label:

**Books**

**Buildings**

**Artists**

**Florence**

In each section, draw one way the Medici helped or influenced Renaissance Florence.

Tell your Home-Tutor:

**“The Medici were important because…”**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral narration.

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## Years 3–4 – Perspectives on the Medici

Choose three people:

- an artist supported by the Medici
- a political rival
- a Florentine citizen
- a scholar using a Medici library.

For each person, write a short statement explaining what he or she might think about the Medici.

Then answer:

**Why can people have different perspectives about the same historical person?**

Conclude with your own judgement about the Medici.

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## Years 5–6 – Historical Significance Investigation

Investigate either **Cosimo de' Medici** or **Lorenzo de' Medici** using provided primary and secondary sources.

Organise your evidence under these headings:

| Significance Criterion | Evidence |
|---|---|
| Caused or influenced change | |
| Affected other people | |
| Influenced important events | |
| Created a lasting effect | |
| Helped other developments occur | |

Evaluate the origin, purpose and perspective of at least two sources.

Then write an evidence-based response to:

**How significant was Cosimo or Lorenzo de' Medici to the Renaissance?**

Use evidence from your sources to support your conclusion.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

God gives people different resources. Some receive artistic ability; some develop practical skills; some lead; some teach; some manage wealth.

Resources bring responsibility.

The Medici used considerable wealth to support books, buildings, artists and scholars. Their patronage contributed to remarkable achievements. Yet their story also warns us that wealth and influence can become deeply connected with political power.

In God's Big Story, the Fall affects every human institution. Wealth can be stewarded generously, but it can also be used to control. Leadership can serve a community, but it can also become self-serving.

The Christian question is not merely:

**“How much influence do I have?”**

It is:

**“How faithfully am I using the influence God has entrusted to me?”**

“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” – **1 Corinthians 4:2**

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# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded HASS F–6 Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students investigate questions about Cosimo, Lorenzo and their importance to Renaissance Florence. |
| **AC9HS2S04** | **discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events** | Students discuss how artists, scholars, citizens and political rivals might hold different perspectives about the Medici. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw a simple conclusion about why the Medici were important. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Narration and the differentiated task require students to communicate observations about the past using relevant terminology. |
| **AC9HS4S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students investigate the political and cultural influence of the Medici family. |
| **AC9HS4S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students analyse differing perspectives concerning Medici patronage and political influence. |
| **AC9HS4S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students form a judgement about the importance of patrons during the Renaissance. |
| **AC9HS4S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students explain perspectives and present a conclusion using terms such as republic, patronage and influence. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | Years 5–6 students consider how financial and human resources enabled artistic, architectural and scholarly activity. |
| **AC9HS6S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Medici political influence, patronage and historical significance. |
| **AC9HS6S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | The historical significance investigation requires students to organise evidence from multiple sources. |
| **AC9HS6S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students evaluate at least two sources concerning Cosimo or Lorenzo. |
| **AC9HS6S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students form an evidence-based judgement concerning Medici historical significance. |
| **AC9HS6S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | The final response requires students to select and communicate findings from historical sources. |

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# Achievement Standard Contribution

The exact Achievement Standard clauses are drawn from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives.”** | Students consider why an artist and a political opponent might view the Medici differently. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students conclude why the Medici were important to Renaissance Florence. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales.”** | Narration develops communication about a historical family and city using relevant terminology. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students compare perspectives on Medici influence and form their own judgement. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students explain Medici influence using historical and civics terminology. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students evaluate primary and secondary sources about Cosimo or Lorenzo. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students judge the historical significance of a Medici leader using organised evidence. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise evidence according to significance criteria and present a supported historical explanation. |

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# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Questions | Oral or written formative assessment |
| F–2 illustrated explanation | Work sample and oral narration |
| Years 3–4 perspective task | Portfolio evidence |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation | Historical inquiry evidence |
| Historical significance judgement | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 4.2  Geography & Economics

## How Florence Used Resources to Become a Renaissance Power

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate the natural, human and capital resources that supported Florence.
- explain how Florence's geography influenced trade and economic development.
- examine the wool, banking and artisan industries of Renaissance Florence.
- identify relationships between resources, wealth, patronage and cultural achievement.
- use information and evidence to draw conclusions about Florence's economic success.

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# Key Terminology

**Natural resources** – Materials and features that come from the natural environment and can be used by people.

**Human resources** – The skills, knowledge and labour of people.

**Capital resources** – Buildings, tools, equipment and money used to produce goods or services.

**Industry** – Economic activity connected with producing particular goods or services.

**Manufacture** – The process of making goods from raw materials.

**Import** – A good or resource brought into a place from somewhere else.

**Export** – A good produced in one place and sold to another place.

**Economic interconnection** – A relationship in which the economic activities of people or places affect one another.

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# Informational Story

## The Cloth That Travelled Across Europe

A merchant entered Florence through one of the city gates. Behind him came a line of pack animals carrying great bundles. The bundles were not filled with jewels; they were not filled with gold. They contained wool.

The merchant had travelled a long distance. Some wool reaching Florence came from other parts of Italy. Fine wool was also brought from places far beyond the city.

To an ordinary traveller, a bundle of raw wool might not look very impressive. It was rough. It needed cleaning and sorting.

It was certainly not the sort of thing a wealthy nobleman would wear to an important banquet. Yet the people of Florence saw something different.

They saw possibility.

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Florence did not become wealthy due to valuable resources lying beneath the city's streets. There were no mountains of silver in the centre of Florence. The citizens could not walk outside and gather finished cloth from trees. Instead, Florentines became skilled at taking resources from different places and transforming them.

Raw wool arrived.

Skilled workers cleaned it.

Others sorted it.

Some combed the fibres.

Others spun the fibres into thread.

Weavers turned thread into cloth.

Dyers added rich colours.

Finishers improved the surface.

Merchants then sold the finished product.

A resource that had entered Florence as raw wool could leave as valuable cloth. The process required many people. It also required knowledge.

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Imagine following one bundle of wool…. First, the wool had to be purchased. A merchant needed money. The wool then had to be transported. Animals, carts and roads were required.

When it arrived, workers inspected it. Different grades of wool might be used for different purposes. The wool was washed. This required water.

It was then prepared for spinning. Spinners needed skill. Weavers needed looms. The looms needed buildings in which they could be operated. Dyers needed vats. They needed water. They needed substances that could produce reliable colours. Then the cloth had to be checked. Poor-quality cloth could damage the reputation of Florentine merchants.

Finally, the finished cloth had to be sold. Every stage involved resources.

---

The River Arno flowed through Florence. This river was important to the city's geography. Water could support different forms of work. The river valley also helped connect Florence with the surrounding region.

Roads linked the city with other Italian centres. Florence was situated inland, but it was not isolated. The city participated in networks of trade that stretched across Europe and the Mediterranean world. Florentine merchants bought materials from other places. They sold finished goods elsewhere, borrowed and lent money. They communicated with business partners in distant cities.

Florence was connected to a much larger economic world.

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A cloth merchant needed to ask many questions…

Where could the best wool be purchased?

Which route was safest?

How much would transport cost?

Was demand increasing in another city?

Would a war interrupt trade?

Would a customer pay the promised amount?

Should the merchant borrow money to buy more wool?

Successful merchants needed more than courage. They needed information. They needed to compare choices, to observe patterns, and they needed to make decisions.

Inquisitiveness was economically useful. A merchant who never asked questions could lose everything.

---

The cloth industry depended particularly on **human resources**.

A skilled dyer knew how to produce colours that remained attractive.

A skilled weaver could produce cloth of consistent quality.

A merchant understood markets.

A bookkeeper kept accurate records.

A craftsman maintained tools.

A porter transported goods.

Florence's wealth therefore depended upon the combined skills of thousands of people. The famous Medici family is remembered in history. However, the names of many ordinary Florentine workers have been forgotten. Yet without those workers, there would have been no prosperous cloth industry.

Economic history asks us to investigate the contribution of both famous and ordinary people.

Florence also depended upon **capital resources**.

A loom is a capital resource; and so is a workshop, and a warehouse. Money that can be invested in a business may also function as capital.

Suppose a merchant wanted to purchase a large shipment of wool but did not possess enough money immediately.

A banker might provide a loan. The merchant could buy the wool. Workers could transform the wool into cloth. The cloth could be sold. Then the merchant could repay the loan.

Of course, there was risk.

What if the cloth could not be sold?

What if the shipment was stolen?

What if war interrupted trade?

Banking helped economic activity grow, but financial decisions required careful judgement.

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This was one reason the Medici Bank became so influential. Its branches connected Florence with other parts of Europe. Business records moved between cities. Money could be transferred. Loans could be arranged. Information about political and economic conditions could be gathered.

The Medici did not become powerful by producing every item themselves. They became powerful partly by helping manage the movement of money. Money connected merchants. Merchants connected cities. Cities connected regions.

Florence became a small city with very large networks.

---

The city's guilds were also connected with economic activity. The wool guild was particularly important. Guilds could establish expectations about work and quality.

Why would quality matter?

Imagine that a merchant in another country bought expensive cloth labelled as Florentine. Imagine what would happen if when the cloth arrived, the dye faded immediately, the weaving was poor.

The customer might not simply avoid that one workshop. He might decide: "**Florentine cloth cannot be trusted".**

One poor product could damage the reputation of many people. Quality standards helped protect the reputation of an industry. But regulations could also make it harder for some people to enter a trade.

Again, economic systems could create benefits and limitations. An inquisitive historian asks about both.

---

Wealth from trade and banking changed Florence. Merchants built large homes; families commissioned chapels; and guilds contributed to important public works.

Artists received commissions, architects designed buildings, scholars were supported, and books were collected.

This did not mean that every wealthy person cared deeply about art or learning. Sometimes patronage was an act of devotion; sometimes it expressed civic pride; sometimes it displayed family status; sometimes it increased political influence.

Often several motives were present at once. Nevertheless, the economic prosperity of Florence provided resources that could be used for cultural activity.

Michelangelo needed marble. Painters needed pigments. Architects needed stone and skilled workers. Scholars needed books and time. Great ideas require imagination.

But turning ideas into physical achievements often requires resources.

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Consider Brunelleschi's dome. The idea was extraordinary. But an idea alone could not raise a dome over Florence.

Workers were needed.

Materials were needed.

Tools were needed.

Transport was needed.

Money was needed.

Organisation was needed.

Florence could attempt ambitious projects partly because it possessed economic resources and skilled people. Consider Leonardo… His inquisitiveness was remarkable. But he also benefited from workshops, patrons, tools, paper, libraries and contact with skilled people.

Consider Michelangelo… His artistic genius mattered. But someone still needed to provide marble. Economic history does not reduce great achievements to money.

Instead, it helps us understand the conditions that allowed ideas to become actions.

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Florence was not the largest kingdom in Europe. It did not possess unlimited natural resources. Its strength lay partly in what its people did with the resources available to them…

They imported materials. They developed skills. They manufactured goods. They built commercial networks. They managed money. They invested. They competed. They experimented. They made mistakes. And they tried again.

Florence demonstrates an important principle…. A resource does not automatically create prosperity. People must decide how to use it. The same piece of wool could remain a rough bundle. Or, through knowledge, labour, tools and organisation, it could become fine Florentine cloth sold hundreds of kilometres away.

The difference was not found in the wool alone. The difference was also found in human skill.

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Perhaps this was one reason Florence became such an important Renaissance city.

The people of Florence had learned to look at materials, problems and opportunities and ask:

**What could this become?**

It was an economic question. It was also the question of an inquisitive mind.

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# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- how raw wool became finished cloth.
- why Florence needed trade with other places.
- the importance of the River Arno and trade connections.
- the difference between natural, human and capital resources.
- how banking supported business.
- why the quality of Florentine goods mattered.
- how economic wealth helped support artists, architects and scholars.

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# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the thinking questions and activities.]**

## 1. Three Types of Resources

Economists investigate the resources people use to satisfy needs and wants.

### Natural Resources

These come from the natural environment.

Examples connected with Renaissance production might include:

- water
- wool
- timber

- stone
- minerals used in pigments.

Florence did not possess every natural resource it needed.

Trade allowed merchants to obtain resources from other places.

### Human Resources

Human resources are the knowledge, skills and labour of people.

Florence relied upon:

- merchants
- bankers
- weavers
- dyers
- artists
- architects
- builders
- bookkeepers
- transport workers.

A city may possess materials, but skilled people are needed to use them effectively.

### Capital Resources

Capital resources are produced resources used to make other goods or provide services.

Examples include:

- looms
- workshops
- warehouses
- tools
- banking capital.

Capital resources helped Florentine workers produce and trade goods more efficiently.

## 2. Economic Interconnections

Florence was economically interconnected with other places.

A simplified economic chain might look like this:

**Wool from another region**

↓

**Florentine merchant purchases wool**

↓

**Florentine workers manufacture cloth**

↓

**Merchant exports finished cloth**

↓

**Income returns to Florence**

↓

**Money is spent, saved or invested**

This shows a relationship between places, resources, workers and consumers.

A change in one part of the system could affect the others.

# 3. Adding Value

When people use knowledge, skill and resources to transform a product, its usefulness or economic value may increase.

For example:

**Raw wool → spun thread → woven cloth → dyed and finished cloth**

Each stage requires work and knowledge.

The finished cloth may be worth more than the original raw material.

This is one reason skilled human resources are economically important.

# 4. Wealth and Patronage

Economic prosperity helped create opportunities for Renaissance cultural achievements.

A simple relationship is:

**Trade and industry → wealth → investment and patronage → cultural projects**

However, historians should be careful.

This does not mean wealth automatically produces a Renaissance.

People still make choices about how resources will be used.

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# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. What raw material was used to make cloth?
2. Name one worker who helped make cloth.
3. Why did merchants bring goods to Florence?
4. What is one tool a worker might use?
5. How did many people work together to make Florentine cloth?

## Years 3–4

1. Why could Florence not depend only upon resources found inside the city?
2. Explain one way the River Arno or Florence's location helped the city.
3. What is the difference between a natural resource and a human resource?
4. Why was the reputation of Florentine cloth important?
5. What conclusion can you draw about the contribution of ordinary workers to Renaissance Florence?

## Years 5–6

1. Classify wool, a skilled weaver and a loom as natural, human or capital resources.
2. Explain how the different resources depended upon one another.
3. How did Florence add value to imported raw materials?
4. Why could an interruption to trade affect workers inside Florence?
5. Explain the inferred relationship between Florence's economic prosperity and Renaissance patronage.

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# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – From Wool to Cloth

Create a four-part picture sequence:

**Wool → Spinning → Weaving → Finished Cloth**

Label each picture.

Then tell your Home-Tutor:

**“Many people helped to make cloth because…”**

Your Home-Tutor may record your oral explanation.

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# Years 3–4 – Resources of Florence

Create a three-column chart.

| Natural Resources | Human Resources | Capital Resources |
|---|---|---|

Sort at least 12 examples from the lesson into the correct groups.

Then choose three resources, one from each column, and explain how they worked together to produce Florentine cloth.

Finish with the conclusion:

**Florence's success depended upon…**

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# Years 5–6 – The Florence Economic Interconnection Investigation

Study a map showing Florence and major European or Mediterranean trade connections.

Using provided sources, investigate the movement of one resource or product connected with Renaissance Florence.

Possible investigations include:

- wool
- finished cloth
- pigments
- banking services.

Organise your findings under the following headings:

| Investigation Question | Findings |
| --- | --- |
| Where did the resource or product originate? | |
| How did it reach or leave Florence? | |
| What natural resources were involved? | |
| What human resources were involved? | |
| What capital resources were involved? | |
| Who might have wanted or needed the product? | |
| How were different places economically interconnected? | |

Then create a flow diagram showing the economic relationships you identified.

Write an evidence-based conclusion:

**How did Florence's use of resources and economic interconnections contribute to its development as a Renaissance city?**

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# God's Big Story Reflection

In creation, God provided a world filled with resources. But He also created human beings with the ability to observe, learn, work, design and organise.

Wool does not weave itself. Stone does not become a cathedral by itself. A block of marble does not become a sculpture by itself. Human beings use God-given abilities to develop and steward the resources of creation.

The Fall means that economic life can also involve greed, exploitation, dishonesty and unfairness. Wealth is not automatically evidence of wisdom or faithfulness.

Yet resources can be stewarded for service. A skilled worker can serve others through good work. A business can provide useful goods. Wealth can support learning. Tools can help people create.

The Christian does not simply ask: **“What resources do I possess?”**

We also ask: **“How can I faithfully use what God has provided?”**

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.” – **Colossians 3:23**

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# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact code and wording below are taken from the uploaded HASS F–6 Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2K03** | **how places can be spatially represented in geographical divisions from local to regional to state/territory, and how people and places are interconnected across those scales** | Students investigate Florence as a city connected with broader regional and international trading networks. The mapping and product-flow activities develop an age-appropriate understanding of interconnection across scales. |
| **AC9HS2S02** | **collect, sort and record information and data from observations and from provided sources, including unscaled timelines and labelled maps or models** | Students use provided information and map-based resources to represent Florence's connections and record information about resources and production. |
| **AC9HS2S03** | **interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present** | Students interpret the sequence through which raw wool was transformed into finished cloth and consider how resources were used in the past. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw a conclusion about why many people and resources were needed to produce Florentine goods. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Narration and differentiated activities require students to communicate observations about Florence using terms such as merchant, resource and trade. |
| **AC9HS3S02** | **locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources, including annotated timelines and maps** | Years 3–4 students gather and organise information about the resources and economic activities of Florence and may use maps to identify trade relationships. |
| **AC9HS3S03** | **interpret information and data displayed in different formats** | Students interpret written information, process sequences, resource classifications and geographical representations. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students draw a conclusion about the importance of ordinary workers and different resources to Florence's prosperity. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students explain how natural, human and capital resources worked together using relevant HASS terminology. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | The lesson explicitly teaches natural, human and capital resources and applies them to Florence's cloth, trade and banking industries. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Florence's economic system, trade connections and use of resources. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Years 5–6 students organise information about a resource or product using maps and provided sources. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between resources, production, trade, prosperity and Renaissance patronage. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students write an evidence-based conclusion explaining how economic interconnections contributed to Florence's development. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students present a flow diagram and written explanation using findings from sources and relevant economic and geographical terminology. |

# Achievement Standard Contribution

The clauses below are drawn directly from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards. The lesson intentionally addresses transferable geographical, economic and inquiry aspects of the standards rather than Australian-history-specific knowledge clauses that belong more naturally in later units.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They identify how people and places are interconnected both at local and broader scales.”** | Students identify that Florence depended upon goods, workers and trade relationships extending beyond the city. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students develop questions, and collect, sort and record related information and data from observations and provided sources.”** | Students sequence the production of cloth and organise information about workers and resources. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students explain why many people were required to produce Florentine cloth. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students gather and classify information concerning Florence's resources and economic activities. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse the contribution of different resources and workers and draw conclusions about Florence's prosperity. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students explain the relationship between natural, human and capital resources using HASS terminology. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students analyse maps, economic processes and resource information to infer relationships between trade, production, wealth and patronage. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students use findings from their economic interconnection investigation to conclude why Florence became a significant Renaissance city. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise findings in an investigation table and flow diagram and produce a written economic-geographical explanation. |

# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Questions | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 wool-to-cloth sequence | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 resource classification | Portfolio work sample |
| Years 5–6 map and economic investigation | HASS inquiry evidence |
| Flow diagram | Interpretation and organisation of information evidence |
| Evidence-based conclusion | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 4.3 – Civics, Economics & Historical Investigation

## Who Really Ruled Florence? The Medici and the Florentine Republic

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate how the Florentine Republic was governed.
- distinguish between official political roles and informal influence.
- examine how wealth, alliances and patronage could affect political decision-making.
- identify different perspectives about Medici leadership.
- analyse historical information and draw evidence-based conclusions about who really held power in Renaissance Florence.

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# Key Terminology

**Republic** – A system of government in which a state is not ruled by a hereditary king or queen.

**Citizen** – A recognised member of a political community.

**Government** – The system and people responsible for making decisions and administering a community or state.

**Council** – A group of people who meet to make decisions or provide advice.

**Political office** – An official position of responsibility in government.

**Alliance** – A relationship in which people or groups cooperate for a shared purpose.

**Influence** – The ability to affect the decisions or actions of others.

**Faction** – A group within a larger community that works together to advance particular interests.

**Evidence-based conclusion** – A judgement formed by examining and using available evidence.

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# Informational Story

## The Name in the Bag

A Florentine official reached into a leather bag. Around him, men watched. Inside the bag were small slips carrying names. One name would be drawn. Then another.

The selected men might serve in Florence's government. At first glance, this seemed remarkably fair. Florence had no king. The son of the previous ruler did not automatically inherit the city.

Florence called itself a republic.

Important citizens participated in political life. Officials served for limited periods. Councils met. Votes were taken. Names were selected for public offices. Surely this meant that no one family could control Florence.

Or did it?

The official placed his hand into the bag. Somewhere else in the city, Cosimo de' Medici waited. He did not need his own name to be drawn.

---

To understand Florence, we need to understand that its government was complicated. Florence was not a democracy like modern Australia. Not every adult could vote.

Women did not participate in formal political government in the same way as male citizens. Poor labourers had limited political influence. Eligibility for office was restricted.

Guild membership and family status could matter. Even among the men who participated, political power was not evenly shared. Florence was a republic. But it was a Renaissance republic.

Its political system belonged to a different time and place.

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At the centre of Florentine government was a group of officials called the **Signoria**. The Signoria was led by the **Gonfaloniere of Justice**. Members served only short terms. This was intended to prevent one person from holding office for too long.

Florentines were suspicious of permanent rulers. The people remembered conflicts between powerful families. They feared tyranny. A citizen who openly tried to make himself king might create immediate opposition.

The structure of government therefore attempted to distribute political responsibility. Names of eligible citizens could be placed into bags and drawn for office. The system was called **sortition**. Selection by lot might seem to reduce political competition. But there was an important question.

**Whose names entered the bags?**

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Before someone could be selected, he first had to be eligible. Committees examined lists of possible officeholders. Political enemies could be excluded. Allies could be supported.

A system where a name was randomly drawn from a bag of names might appear neutral. But the decisions made before the drawing could affect the result. Imagine a game in which you must draw one marble from a bag. You are told that the drawing is completely random. But before the game begins, someone secretly chooses which coloured marbles are placed inside.

The drawing may be random. But the choices before the drawing are not random chance. This was one way political influence could operate in Florence.

---

Cosimo de' Medici understood this. He rarely needed to occupy the most important government position himself. Instead, men sympathetic to the Medici could serve in government. Cosimo cultivated friendships.

He provided financial assistance; he supported political allies; he used banking connections; and he knew important families. People understood that Medici friendship could be useful. They also understood that Medici opposition could be dangerous.

Cosimo's influence rested on relationships.

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Suppose a Florentine merchant needed money for a business venture. A Medici-connected banker helped him. Years later, an important political question arose…

Would the merchant forget the assistance he had received?

Suppose an artist received a valuable Medici commission. Suppose a scholar used a library supported by Cosimo. Suppose a political family knew that Cosimo had helped one of its members.

Patronage created opportunities. It could also create loyalty. This does not mean every person helped by the Medici became an obedient servant. People do make their own decisions.

But networks of obligation and friendship can influence political life.

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Cosimo was careful. He understood the pride Florentines took in their republic. So he did not sit on a throne; he did not wear a crown; he did not announce: "I am your king."

He lived as a wealthy citizen. Yet foreign diplomats knew that Cosimo was the person they needed to understand. Political opponents knew it too. When major decisions were discussed, Medici wishes mattered.

This creates a difficult problem for historians. Florence had official government structures.

But how much power rested outside those structures?

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Years later, Lorenzo de' Medici faced the same challenge. Lorenzo inherited enormous influence. But he did not inherit a legal crown.

He needed to maintain relationships, and he needed political allies. He needed supporters in government, and he needed the Medici name to remain powerful. His position depended partly upon reputation.

This explains why festivals, public celebrations and patronage could have political importance. A beautiful public event might bring enjoyment to the city. It might also remind citizens of the generosity of the family who supported it.

A commissioned building might serve a useful purpose. It might also display the influence of a patron.

Art and politics were not always separate.

---

One Florentine might have said: "The Medici bring stability. They know foreign rulers. They support our city."

Another might have replied: "Florence is a republic. No family should control public decisions."

A merchant might value stable government because war and disorder were bad for trade. An artist might value Medici commissions. A rival family might resent Medici influence. But then a poor worker might care more about food prices and employment than about which wealthy family dominated a council.

People viewed government from different positions. The inquisitive historian asks:

**Whose perspective are we hearing?**

---

Florentine politics could be dangerous. You already learned about the Pazzi Conspiracy. The murder of Giuliano de' Medici and attack upon Lorenzo revealed intense rivalry among powerful groups. After the conspiracy failed, Medici supporters reacted violently.  Conspirators were arrested. Some were executed. Bodies were displayed publicly.

Florence sent a clear message. The struggle for political influence could become a struggle for survival. This was not merely a polite disagreement in a council chamber.

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There was another important feature of the Florentine political system. Guilds mattered. Florence's major guilds represented powerful economic interests. Bankers, cloth merchants, judges, doctors, apothecaries (ie., chemists).

Other organised trades. Economic life and political life overlapped. A successful merchant could gain social influence. A major banking family could build political connections. Guilds could affect public affairs.

The people managing Florence's economy were often linked with the people participating in its government. This relationship helps explain why the Medici Bank mattered politically. Money did not automatically produce political power. But wealth could provide connections, opportunities and influence.

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Consider three kinds of power.

The first is **legal power**. This comes from an official role or law. A member of the Signoria possessed legal responsibilities during his period in office.

The second is **economic power**. This comes from control of wealth, business or resources. The Medici possessed substantial economic power through banking and property.

The third is **social or political influence**. This develops through relationships, reputation, alliances and the ability to persuade or pressure others.

The Medici possessed all three kinds of influence at different times. But their greatest strength often came from combining them.

---

Imagine a web.

At the centre is the Medici family. One line connects them with bankers. Another connects them with merchants. Another with political allies. Another with artists. Another with scholars. Another with foreign rulers. Another with church leaders.

Each relationship is different. But together the connections form a network. A network can be more powerful than a single official title. Cosimo understood networks. Lorenzo understood networks. The official government of Florence changed frequently. But the Medici network remained.

---

Did that make Florence a dictatorship?

The answer is not simple. Florentine institutions continued to exist. Councils met. Officials served. So, the city was not governed exactly like a kingdom ruled by an absolute monarch.

The Medici still needed supporters, and they could face opposition. They could even be driven from Florence. In fact, the Medici family was expelled from the city after Lorenzo's death. Their power was great, but it was not unlimited.

The best historical conclusion may therefore require careful wording. Perhaps we might say:

**Florence remained formally a republic, but under Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, one family gained extraordinary informal influence over political decision-making.**

That sentence is less dramatic than: "The Medici were kings." But historical conclusions should follow evidence, not drama.

---

How can a student determine whether this conclusion is reasonable?

You examine evidence. You investigate the structure of the Florentine government. You examine the offices held by Medici supporters. You read accounts written by people who knew the family. You consider diplomatic correspondence. You investigate the exile and return of Cosimo. You study the reaction to the Pazzi Conspiracy. And you compare historical interpretations.

Then you ask: **Which explanation best accounts for the available evidence?**

Historical investigation is not merely collecting facts. It is using evidence to answer questions.

---

This is also an important civics lesson. A written system of government matters. Rules matter; offices matter; laws matter. But people also matter.

A government can have carefully designed structures, yet relationships and influence still affect how decisions are made. Citizens therefore need to understand both the formal structures of government and the way influence operates within society.

Inquisitive citizens ask questions. Who has legal authority? Who has economic influence? Who is advising decision-makers?

Whose interests are represented? Whose voices are not being heard?

These are not questions of cynical suspicion. They are questions of careful citizenship.

---

Florence called itself a republic. The Medici called themselves citizens. Cosimo wore no crown. Lorenzo inherited no throne.

Yet for decades, foreign rulers, Florentine politicians and ordinary citizens watched the Medici family carefully. The system said one thing. The network of influence sometimes suggested another.

So, who really ruled Florence? The historian must examine the evidence. Then make a judgement.

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# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- what a republic is.
- how the Signoria helped govern Florence.
- why officials served for short terms.
- how names could be selected for political office.
- why the names placed into the selection bags mattered.
- how Cosimo and Lorenzo exercised influence.
- the relationship between wealth, patronage and political alliances.
- whether you think the Medici really ruled Florence.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Formal Government

Florence had formal political institutions.

These included:

- councils

- public offices
- the Signoria
- limited terms of office
- processes for selecting eligible officeholders.

Formal political structures identify **who officially has authority**.

Florence was therefore formally a republic.

---

# 2. Informal Political Influence

Political decisions can also be affected by informal influence.

This may include:

- friendships
- family connections
- financial relationships
- patronage
- alliances
- reputation.

Cosimo de' Medici often exercised considerable influence without permanently holding Florence's highest public office.

---

# 3. Different Forms of Power

| Form of Power | Meaning | Florentine Example |
|---|---|---|
| Legal power | Authority connected with an official role | Members of the Signoria |
| Economic power | Influence arising from wealth or resources | The Medici banking network |
| Social or political influence | Ability to shape decisions through relationships and reputation | Medici alliances and patronage |

These forms of power can overlap.

---

# 4. Systems and Networks

A **system** contains recognised structures and processes.

The Florentine Republic had a governmental system.

A **network** is formed through relationships between people and groups.

The Medici built networks involving:

- merchants

- bankers
- politicians
- patrons
- scholars
- church leaders
- foreign rulers.

Historians may investigate both formal systems and informal networks to explain political events.

---

## 5. Drawing an Evidence-Based Conclusion

A strong historical conclusion:

1. answers the investigation question.
2. uses evidence.
3. recognises complexity.
4. avoids claims that the evidence cannot support.

Compare:

**Weak conclusion:**
"The Medici controlled everything."

**Stronger conclusion:**
"The Medici did not formally abolish the Florentine Republic, but their wealth, alliances and political networks gave them substantial influence over its government."

The second statement is more precise.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. Did Florence have a king?
2. What group helped govern Florence?
3. How could the Medici help their friends?
4. Why might people listen to a wealthy and important family?
5. Who do you think was powerful in Florence? Explain your answer.

---

## Years 3–4

1. Why did Florence give government officials short terms of office?
2. Why did it matter which names were placed into the selection bags?
3. How could Cosimo influence government without being a king?
4. Why might a merchant and a political rival have different perspectives about the Medici?
5. What conclusion can you draw about who really held power in Florence?

## Years 5–6

1. Explain the difference between formal political power and informal influence.
2. How could the Medici banking network contribute to political influence?
3. What relationship can you infer between economic resources and political power in Florence?
4. Why is the statement "The Medici were kings of Florence" historically inadequate?
5. Develop an evidence-based response to the question: **Who really ruled Florence during the time of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici?**

---

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Who Helps Make Decisions?

Create two pictures.

### Picture 1 – The Official Government

Draw members of Florence's government meeting together.

Label:

**Council**

**Officials**

**Florence**

### Picture 2 – The Medici Family

Draw Cosimo speaking with merchants, bankers or political friends.

Label:

**Money**

**Friends**

**Influence**

Then tell your Home-Tutor:

**“The government had official power, but the Medici had influence because…”**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral explanation.

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# Years 3–4 – Perspectives in the Florentine Republic

Read the following four statements.

**A merchant:**
"The Medici help keep Florence stable. Stable government is good for trade."

**A Medici political rival:**
"Florence calls itself a republic, but one family has far too much influence."

**An artist:**
"The Medici provide opportunities for talented people."

**A citizen concerned about republican government:**
"Public decisions should be made through the government, not through one family's friendships."

Create a table:

| Person | What does this person value? | Why might this affect the person's perspective? |
|---|---|---|
| Merchant | | |
| Political rival | | |
| Artist | | |
| Citizen | | |

Then answer:

**Which perspective do you find most convincing, and why?**

Draw a conclusion about Medici influence.

---

# Years 5–6 – Who Really Ruled Florence? Historical Investigation

Investigate the question:

**Who really ruled Florence during the time of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici?**

Use a collection of teacher-provided primary and secondary sources.

Evidence might include:

- information about the Signoria.
- information about Florentine selection for political office.
- accounts of Cosimo's exile and return.
- correspondence involving the Medici.
- information about Medici banking and patronage.
- historical interpretations of Medici political influence.

Complete the following source analysis:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective | Evidence about political power | Limitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Then organise your evidence:

### Evidence that Florence remained a republic

### Evidence that the Medici exercised substantial influence

### Evidence that Medici power had limits

Write an evidence-based conclusion of several paragraphs answering:

**Who really ruled Florence?**

Your response should:

- explain the formal government of Florence.
- explain informal Medici influence.
- refer to evidence from sources.
- identify at least one limitation of the evidence.
- reach a balanced conclusion.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

Human beings create governments because communities need order, responsibility and decision-making. Government can serve good purposes. Yet the Fall affects political life. People may seek status. Wealth can become power. Friendships can become favouritism. Leaders may use influence for service or for self-interest.

The story of the Medici reminds us that authority is not only found in official titles. A person can influence others through money, reputation, relationships or knowledge. This means every form of influence brings moral responsibility.

Jesus taught His disciples that leadership should not be used merely to dominate others.

"But whoever would be great among you must be your servant." – **Matthew 20:26**

A Christian view of leadership asks: **Who has been given influence?**

But it must also ask: **How is that influence being used to serve others and honour God?**

Inquisitiveness helps us look beneath appearances. We do not merely ask what a political system is called.

We investigate how it actually works.

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# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded HASS F–6 Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students investigate the historical question of who held political power in Renaissance Florence. |
| **AC9HS2S04** | **discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events** | Students consider different perspectives held by merchants, artists, political rivals and Florentine citizens concerning Medici influence. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw a conclusion about who was powerful in Florence using information from the lesson. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Narration and the differentiated task require students to communicate observations about Florence using terms such as government and influence. |
| **AC9HS3K06** | **who makes rules, why rules are important in the school and/or the local community, and the consequences of rules not being followed** | The lesson develops a comparative civics understanding of recognised decision-makers and formal political processes. Students investigate why communities identify people and systems responsible for public decisions. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students investigate the issue of formal government and informal Medici political influence. |
| **AC9HS3S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students analyse contrasting perspectives about Medici political influence. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students draw conclusions about power in the Florentine Republic after considering different viewpoints and historical information. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students explain Medici influence using terms such as republic, government, political office and influence. |
| **AC9HS5K07** | **how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal** | Students examine how political allies and groups of Florentine citizens formed networks and cooperated to advance shared political interests. The historical context also enables comparison between civic cooperation and factional political influence. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | Students examine financial resources and human networks as factors contributing to Medici economic and political influence. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate the Florentine political system and Medici networks of influence. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | The historical investigation requires students to collect and organise evidence concerning Florence's formal institutions and Medici influence. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between banking wealth, patronage, alliances and political influence. |
| **AC9HS5S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students evaluate sources concerning Medici political influence and identify the perspective and limitations of each source. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students develop a balanced historical conclusion answering who really ruled Florence. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students present a multi-paragraph historical explanation drawing upon source evidence and differing viewpoints. |

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# Achievement Standard Contribution

The Achievement Standard clauses below are quoted from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. This lesson develops transferable civics and historical inquiry skills appropriate to the Renaissance context; it does not attempt to force Australian-government-specific knowledge into the unit.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives.”** | Students consider that government officials and people connected with the Medici could understand political power differently. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students draw a simple conclusion about why the Medici were influential. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales.”** | Narration and the differentiated task require students to describe Florence's government using relevant historical and civics terms. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students investigate political power in Florence through lesson information and structured perspective evidence. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students compare four perspectives about Medici leadership and draw their own conclusion. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students explain the operation of Medici influence using subject-specific civics terminology. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students undertake a structured historical investigation into the Florentine Republic and Medici political influence. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students analyse the origin, purpose, perspective and limitations of historical sources. |

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students infer relationships between financial resources, political alliances, patronage and influence. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students weigh evidence that Florence remained a republic against evidence of Medici informal control. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise evidence into competing categories and present a balanced multi-paragraph historical conclusion. |

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# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 formal power and influence activity | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 perspective analysis | Portfolio evidence |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation table | Historical inquiry evidence |
| Evidence organisation | Analysis and evaluation evidence |
| “Who Really Ruled Florence?” conclusion | Achievement Standard evidence |

| TOPIC 5 | SEEING WHAT OTHERS COULD NOT SEE |
|---|---|

# Lesson 5.1 – History & Civics

## Michelangelo: The Boy Who Saw a Figure in the Stone

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate the life and historical significance of Michelangelo Buonarroti.
- explain how questioning, observation and persistent practice contributed to Michelangelo's achievements.
- examine the role of patrons, workshops and political leaders in shaping his work.
- identify different perspectives concerning Michelangelo and his major works.
- use historical information and sources to draw conclusions about Michelangelo's significance to the Renaissance.

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# Key Terminology

**Sculptor** – An artist who creates three-dimensional works from materials such as stone, wood, clay or metal.

**Marble** – A hard stone often used for buildings and sculpture.

**Commission** – A request and payment for a particular work to be created.

**Patron** – A person or organisation that provides support or payment for an artist or scholar.

**Fresco** – A painting made on freshly applied wet plaster.

**Anatomy** – The study of the structure of living things and their body parts.

**Perspective** – A particular way of understanding or viewing a person, event or issue.

**Historical significance** – The importance of a person, event or development in shaping history.

# Informational Story

## The Stone in the Yard

The block of marble had been lying in Florence for years. It was enormous at more than five metres tall. It had been brought from the marble quarries of Carrara and prepared for an ambitious sculpture. One artist had begun working on it; then another had considered it. The stone was difficult to work with because it was narrow in places and parts of it had already been cut.

Some people thought the block had been spoiled. Eventually, it was left in the yard connected with Florence Cathedral. Rain fell on it, the sun warmed it, and workers passed it. Years went by, and the marble waited.

Then a young sculptor named **Michelangelo Buonarroti** looked at it. Where others saw a damaged block of stone, Michelangelo imagined a man. Not just any man. He imagined David, the young shepherd who had faced Goliath. Michelangelo wanted the figure to stand alert before the battle – strong, watchful, thinking.

Michelangelo imagined that the giant had not yet fallen. David was preparing to act. Michelangelo looked at the marble. He studied its shape. He considered the stone already removed by earlier workers, and began to imagine what could still be created. The damaged block had become a problem to other stone-workers; but Michelangelo was curious enough to ask a different question.

Not: **Why did others fail?** But: **What can still be done?**

---

Michelangelo had been born in 1475 in the small Tuscan town of Caprese. His family soon returned to Florence. Michelangelo's father, Lodovico, came from a family that valued social status. He did not originally imagine his son becoming a manual worker.

Artists today are often viewed as creative celebrities. However, Renaissance artists occupied a more complicated position. Painters and sculptors worked with their hands. They used tools. They mixed materials. They worked in dusty workshops. Sculptors struck stone with hammers and chisels.

Lodovico was not immediately delighted by his son’s artistic ambitions. But Michelangelo made drawings everywhere he went. He studied pictures and observed craftsmen. He seemed determined to learn.

Eventually, at about thirteen years of age, he entered the workshop of **Domenico Ghirlandaio**, a successful Florentine painter.

Michelangelo was expected to learn, observe, copy, practise, prepare materials, and study the master's work. But Michelangelo was intensely competitive. He did not merely want to produce an acceptable drawing. He wanted to understand why a body looked alive. Why did an arm appear strong? How did a shoulder move? Where did muscles tighten? How did weight shift from one leg to another?

Michelangelo looked closely. Then he drew.

---

Before long, Michelangelo attracted the attention of **Lorenzo de' Medici**. Lorenzo supported a garden where young artists could study ancient sculpture. Michelangelo gained access to works shaped by Greek and Roman artists centuries earlier. He examined them and copied them. But copying was only the beginning.

Michelangelo wanted to know how stone could seem to become flesh. He studied shape, proportion, balance, movement. He was especially fascinated by the human body. The human figure became central to his work.

---

One day, according to a story later told about Michelangelo, the young artist carved the head of an old faun. Lorenzo de' Medici examined it. The carving was skilful. But Lorenzo joked that the old faun's teeth looked too perfect for an elderly creature. Michelangelo supposedly hurried back to the sculpture. He removed a tooth and chipped away a bit more of the gums until it looked like an older faun.

Whether every detail of the story happened exactly as later writers described is difficult to know. But the story captures something important about Michelangelo. He observed, and responded to criticism; then he changed his work to make it better.

Inquisitiveness does not mean endlessly asking questions while ignoring answers. A curious learner must also be willing to revise and change.

---

Michelangelo's early life in Florence exposed him to artists, poets, scholars and political leaders. But opportunity did not remove difficulty. Lorenzo died in 1492. As a result, the political stability of Florence weakened and the Medici family were eventually expelled from the city.

Michelangelo then travelled to see what else he could learn. He worked in Bologna, and later went to Rome. There, a commission helped transform his reputation. A French cardinal wanted a sculpture for a tomb.

The subject was Mary holding the body of Jesus after the Crucifixion. Michelangelo carved the **Pietà**. Mary sits with Christ resting across her lap. The marble appears soft. The folds of Mary's clothing seem to fall naturally. Christ's body appears to possess weight. Yet everything is stone.

Michelangelo had studied the human body so closely that he understood how muscles and limbs should appear. He had also studied how cloth folded. Observation had entered the marble.

---

A story is told that Michelangelo later heard visitors discussing the *Pietà*. They admired it; but one person attributed the sculpture to another artist. Michelangelo was furious.

That night, he returned and carved his name across Mary's sash. It is the only sculpture Michelangelo is known to have signed. The action reveals something about him. Michelangelo possessed extraordinary ability. He also possessed pride.

The Bible teaches that human beings are made in God's image and capable of remarkable creativity. But the Fall affects every person. Giftedness does not remove weaknesses in character. Michelangelo could be determined. He could also be difficult. He argued with patrons, complained, and became angry. His life does not present a simple story of a perfect genius.

Historical people are real people. Their strengths and weaknesses exist together.

---

Then Michelangelo returned to Florence. And once again, he saw the abandoned block of marble. The city wanted a great figure of David. Michelangelo accepted the challenge. For more than two years he worked on the sculpture.

A sculptor cannot easily replace stone once it has been removed, so they must work very carefully, thoughtfully. A painter may sometimes paint over an error; a writer may cross out a sentence. But when Michelangelo struck his chisel, fragments of marble fell away. Each decision was mattered.

He studied the block, and he planned and carved. Then he stood back and examined the figure. Then he started carving again. Slowly, the image of David emerged from the stone. The hands are large; the head is powerful; the eyes appear watchful; and the body seems ready for action.

Michelangelo did not show David celebrating victory. He showed him preparing for a challenge. Florentines understood the image immediately. Just as Florence was a relatively small republic surrounded by powerful states; so too, David had faced a giant. The people of Florence could see their own city in the story.

The statue became more than a biblical figure. It also became a civic symbol.

---

This raises an important historical question. **Who decides what a work of art means?**

Michelangelo created David. He made artistic decisions. But the citizens of Florence also interpreted the statue. Political leaders decided where it should stand. Instead of placing it high on Florence Cathedral, a committee decided to position David near the Palazzo della Signoria, the centre of Florentine government.

The location changed how people saw the sculpture. David now stood near political power. The young shepherd who defeated a giant became a symbol of Florentine courage and republican independence.

An artwork can carry more than one meaning. There is the subject chosen by the artist. There is the purpose of the patron. There is the location selected by leaders.

There are the interpretations of the public. Historians investigate all of these perspectives.

---

Michelangelo's reputation continued to grow. Then Pope Julius II summoned him to Rome. The Pope wanted Michelangelo to create an enormous tomb. Michelangelo imagined a huge architectural and sculptural work. He travelled to Carrara to select marble. He planned the work; but then problems arose.

Money; changing plans; political complications; other projects were prioritised. Michelangelo became frustrated; so he left Rome. The relationship between Michelangelo and Julius II became famous for conflict. Both men were forceful, and both could become angry. The Pope gave orders. Michelangelo resisted.

Eventually, another extraordinary project emerged. The ceiling of the **Sistine Chapel**.

---

Michelangelo considered himself primarily a sculptor. Now he was expected to paint a vast ceiling.

The surface was high above the chapel floor; so, he needed scaffolding. The plaster had to be carefully prepared. Fresco painting required careful timing as paint was applied to wet plaster.

The artist needed to work section by section. Michelangelo could not simply take several years to finish one small area. The plaster itself created a deadline. Again, the problem required questions.

How should the scaffolding be built? How should the huge design be organised? How large must figures appear when viewed from the floor? How should colours and forms work across the curved ceiling?

Michelangelo planned, drew sketches, and altered his plans, and then he painted.

---

The ceiling eventually displayed scenes from Genesis – The Creation, Adam and Eve, The Fall, The Flood. Prophets and other figures surrounded the central scenes. Hundreds of human forms filled the chapel.

Michelangelo's study of anatomy shaped the entire work. Bodies twist, hands reach, figures bend, muscles tighten. The human body became a major language in Michelangelo's art.

One of the most famous images is the **Creation of Adam**. Adam reaches towards God. God reaches towards Adam. Their hands almost meet.

The image has become one of the most recognisable works in Western art.

---

Yet Michelangelo did not work in complete freedom. He had a patron – the Pope. The work was being created inside an important chapel. Its biblical subjects were important. The location mattered. The Church mattered. Michelangelo's skill mattered.

Patronage involved negotiation between creativity, purpose and authority. Michelangelo could propose ideas, and the Pope could demand progress. The artist and patron did not always agree.

The Sistine Chapel ceiling was therefore not created by artistic ability alone. Its history also involved church leadership, money, architecture, theology, politics and personal conflict.

Great works often emerge within complicated human systems.

---

Michelangelo lived for many years after the Sistine ceiling was completed. He continued to create sculptures and paintings. He also wrote poetry, and worked as an architect. Later in life, he became deeply involved with the design of St Peter's Basilica in Rome. The boy who wanted to draw became one of the most influential artists in European history.

But perhaps Michelangelo never stopped being the young man staring at stone – looking, questioning, imagining, examining, and removing what does not belong. Then looking again.

---

Michelangelo is sometimes reported as having described sculpture as releasing the figure already hidden in the stone. The exact wording of sayings attributed to famous people must always be checked carefully. But the idea fits his method. The sculptor must understand the stone. He must understand the human figure. He must imagine what is possible. Then he must work.

Curiosity alone does not create a statue. Skill alone may produce imitation. Michelangelo combined careful observation with relentless practice. He wanted to see what others had not seen.

Then he wanted to make others see it too.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember about Michelangelo.

You might explain:

- why Michelangelo wanted to become an artist.
- how he learned in Ghirlandaio's workshop.
- how Lorenzo de' Medici helped him.
- why Michelangelo studied the human body.
- how the abandoned block of marble became *David*.
- why the people of Florence saw David as a civic symbol.
- what difficulties Michelangelo faced while working for Pope Julius II.
- why Michelangelo is historically significant.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Michelangelo Learned Through Observation

Michelangelo repeatedly studied:

- the human body
- ancient sculpture
- fabric
- movement
- balance
- proportion.

Observation allowed him to ask increasingly precise questions.

A beginning artist might ask:

**How do I draw a person?**

Michelangelo asked questions such as:

**How does the shoulder move when the arm is raised?**

**How does body weight change the position of the hips?**

**How does a muscle appear when it is tightened?**

Deep inquisitiveness often produces more precise questions.

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## 2. Historical Significance

Michelangelo is historically significant because:

- his works influenced later artists.
- his sculptures and paintings became important Renaissance achievements.
- he helped shape Renaissance ideas about the human figure.
- his work became connected with important religious and civic institutions.
- major works such as *David* and the Sistine Chapel ceiling continue to influence art and culture.

Historical significance is not simply fame.

Historians ask **why a person or work continued to matter**.

---

## 3. Art Can Have Civic Meaning

Michelangelo's *David* represented a biblical person.

But Florentines also interpreted David as a symbol of their city.

Florence saw itself as:

- relatively small
- politically independent
- surrounded by stronger powers.

David's victory over Goliath could therefore be connected with Florentine political identity.

This demonstrates that historical objects may have:

- religious meaning
- artistic meaning
- political meaning
- civic meaning.

---

## 4. Patrons Influence Artistic Work

Michelangelo worked for:

- private patrons
- civic leaders
- church leaders
- popes.

A commission usually involved a purpose.

The patron might decide:

- the subject
- the location

- the size
- the intended audience.

The artist made creative decisions within those conditions.

Historians therefore investigate both the artist and the patron.

---

## 5. Historical Claims Must Be Investigated

Stories about famous people are often repeated.

Some may be strongly supported.

Others may have been written many years after the event.

When investigating a story about Michelangelo, ask:

**Who recorded the story?**

**When was it written?**

**Was the writer present?**

**What purpose might the story serve?**

**Can it be compared with other evidence?**

Inquisitiveness should lead to careful historical investigation.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. What kind of artist was Michelangelo?
2. What material did Michelangelo use to make *David*?
3. Who helped Michelangelo study sculpture when he was young?
4. Why did Michelangelo look carefully at the human body?
5. Tell one reason Michelangelo became important.

---

## Years 3–4

1. How did observation help Michelangelo improve his art?
2. Why was the abandoned block of marble difficult to use?
3. Why did the people of Florence see *David* as a symbol of their city?
4. How could a patron influence the work an artist created?
5. What conclusion can you draw about Michelangelo's approach to difficult problems?

## Years 5–6

1. Explain how Michelangelo's study of anatomy influenced his work.
2. Why did the location of *David* affect the sculpture's civic meaning?
3. What different perspectives might Michelangelo, Florentine leaders and ordinary citizens have had about *David*?
4. How did patronage both support and limit Michelangelo?
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **Why was Michelangelo historically significant to the Renaissance?**

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# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Michelangelo Looked Carefully

Choose one everyday object.

It might be:

- your hand
- a shoe
- a leaf
- a cup
- a piece of cloth.

Look at it carefully for one minute.

Draw what you see.

Then look again.

Add three details you missed the first time.

Tell your Home-Tutor:

**"Careful observation helped me notice…"**

Then explain how careful observation also helped Michelangelo.

---

## Years 3–4 – Why Did David Matter to Florence?

Create an illustrated explanation of Michelangelo's *David*.

Include three sections:

**The Biblical David -** Explain who David was and why facing Goliath required courage.

**The Florentine David -** Explain why the people of Florence might connect their city with David.

**Michelangelo's David -** Describe how Michelangelo presented David before the battle.

Finish with the conclusion: **Michelangelo's David became important to Florence because…**

Use the terms: **symbol; republic; perspective; civic**

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# Years 5–6 – Investigating Michelangelo's Historical Significance

Investigate Michelangelo using at least three provided primary and secondary sources.

At least one source should relate to:

- *David*
- the Sistine Chapel ceiling
- Michelangelo's relationship with a patron.

Complete the table:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective | Evidence about Michelangelo | Limitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

Then organise your evidence using the following significance criteria:

| Historical Significance Criterion | Evidence |
|---|---|
| Influenced people in his own time | |
| Produced important change or innovation | |
| Created a lasting impact | |
| Became connected with significant institutions or events | |
| Continued to influence later generations | |

Write an evidence-based response:

**Why was Michelangelo historically significant to the Renaissance?**

Your response should refer directly to evidence from your sources.

# God's Big Story Reflection

Michelangelo became famous for seeing possibilities in stone.

Christians believe that creativity is possible because human beings are made in the image of the Creator.

God gave people the ability to:

- observe
- imagine
- design
- make
- learn
- develop skills.

Yet the Fall affects even the most gifted people.

Michelangelo could be proud.

He could become angry.

He struggled with other people.

Great ability does not make a human being perfect.

The story of Michelangelo reminds us that our gifts should be developed faithfully, but they should never become the source of our identity or pride.

Restoration calls us to use our abilities with wisdom and service.

The question is not only:

**“What am I capable of creating?”**

It is also:

**“How can I faithfully use the abilities God has given me?”**

“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.” – **Romans 12:6**

Inquisitiveness helps us see possibilities.

Faithful stewardship helps us decide what to do with them.

# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded HASS F–6 Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students investigate Michelangelo, his artworks and the historical circumstances surrounding their creation. |
| **AC9HS2S03** | **interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present** | Students interpret information about Michelangelo's artworks and use direct observation in the differentiated activity to understand the importance of careful looking. |
| **AC9HS2S04** | **discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events** | Students consider how Michelangelo, patrons and Florentine citizens could understand artworks differently. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw a conclusion about Michelangelo's importance and the role of careful observation in his work. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Narration and activities require students to communicate historical observations using terms such as sculptor, marble and patron. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students investigate Michelangelo's artistic development and the civic importance of *David*. |
| **AC9HS3S03** | **interpret information and data displayed in different formats** | Students interpret written historical information and visual evidence associated with Michelangelo's artworks. |
| **AC9HS3S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students analyse the different religious, artistic and civic meanings connected with *David*. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students conclude why *David* became an important symbol for Florence. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present an explanation of the civic significance of *David* using historical and civics terminology. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Michelangelo, patronage and his historical significance within Renaissance society. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students collect and organise evidence from visual, primary and secondary sources concerning Michelangelo. |
| **AC9HS5S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students evaluate sources relating to Michelangelo's artworks and relationships with patrons. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students draw an evidence-based conclusion about Michelangelo's significance to the Renaissance. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students present a historical explanation that uses source findings and appropriate historical terminology. |

# Achievement Standard Contribution

The clauses below are quoted from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. The lesson contributes primarily to historical inquiry, source interpretation, perspectives and evidence-based conclusions.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students develop questions, and collect, sort and record related information and data from observations and provided sources.”** | Students observe an object closely and use provided historical information to investigate Michelangelo. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives.”** | Students consider how different people could view Michelangelo and his work. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales.”** | Narration develops historical communication using vocabulary connected with Michelangelo and Renaissance art. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students investigate the historical and civic context of Michelangelo's *David*. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse biblical, Florentine and artistic meanings attached to *David* and conclude why it mattered to Florence. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students create an explanation using historical and civics vocabulary. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students conduct a structured investigation into Michelangelo's historical significance. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students evaluate at least three sources concerning Michelangelo, his works and his patrons. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students judge Michelangelo's historical significance against defined criteria. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise source evidence and present an evidence-based explanation of Michelangelo's significance. |

# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 observation drawing | Work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 *David* civic-symbol task | Portfolio work sample |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation | Historical inquiry evidence |
| Historical significance criteria table | Evidence organisation and analysis |
| Michelangelo significance response | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 5.2 – Geography & Economics

## Why Marble Mattered: Carrara, Trade and the Making of Renaissance Sculpture

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate why the geography of Carrara made it an important centre for marble.
- explain how natural, human and capital resources were used to obtain and transport marble.
- investigate the interconnections between quarries, workers, merchants, artists and cities.
- infer relationships between geography, transport, resources and Renaissance artistic achievement.
- recognise that inquisitiveness involves examining where materials come from and how they are used.

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# Key Terminology

**Quarry** – A place where stone is cut and removed from the ground.

**Marble** – A hard stone that can be polished and carved and has been widely used in sculpture and architecture.

**Natural resource** – A material or feature provided by the natural environment and used by people.

**Human resource** – The skills, knowledge and labour of people.

**Capital resource** – A tool, building or other produced resource used to make goods or provide services.

**Transport** – The movement of people or goods from one place to another.

**Interconnection** – A relationship or link between people, places or systems.

**Supply chain** – The connected stages through which a resource or product moves from its source to the people who use it.

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# Informational Story

## The Mountain Michelangelo Climbed

Michelangelo looked upwards. Above him rose the mountains of Carrara. From a distance, pale sections of the mountains could appear almost covered with snow. But Michelangelo knew that the white slopes were not snow. They were stone – marble; and great quantities of it. Hidden inside the mountain were blocks that might one day become columns, tombs, statues or church decorations.

Michelangelo did not simply wait in a workshop for someone to bring him a convenient piece of stone. He travelled to the quarries. He wanted to examine the marble himself. He wanted to see its colour; its grain; its flaws; its possibilities.

A sculptor who planned to spend months or years carving a block of marble needed to ask an important question before beginning: **Is this the right stone?**

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Carrara lies in northern Tuscany, not far from the western coast of Italy. The area is surrounded by the Apuan Alps. These mountains contain enormous deposits of marble. For centuries, people had quarried stone there. Ancient Romans used Carrara marble. Renaissance sculptors used Carrara marble. Architects used it; stone workers cut it; merchants transported it. But marble was not valuable merely because it existed in the mountain. The stone had to be found, selected, cut, moved, transported, sold; then carved.

The marble began as a **natural resource**. Human skill transformed it into something people could use.

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Imagine standing beside a Renaissance quarry worker. There are no modern excavators; no large diesel trucks; no electric stone saws. The worker studies the rock face.

He must help separate an enormous block of stone from the mountain. Tools are prepared; and workers may use iron implements to cut channels or openings in the stone. Wooden wedges might be driven into cracks and then soaked with water so that the swelling wood placed pressure on the rock. Metal wedges and hammers could also be used. The work required judgement. Strike in the wrong place and the marble might crack. A damaged block could lose much of its value. Workers therefore needed knowledge gained from experience. They examined the stone. They watched for natural lines and weaknesses. They listened; they adjusted.

The quarry was a place of practical knowledge.

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Eventually, a block separated from the mountain. Now a new problem began. The marble was heavy – very heavy.

Michelangelo's *David* was eventually carved from a single large block. Moving stone of that size required planning. A marble block could not simply be lifted onto one person's shoulders. Workers used ropes, wooden supports, sledges, levers, and teams of people.

The route downhill could be dangerous. The stone needed to move from the quarry through steep mountain country. A broken rope could be disastrous. A block that gained speed could injure workers or shatter against the rocks. The mountain that provided the marble also made the marble difficult to transport.

Geography created both an opportunity and a problem.

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This is one reason geographers study more than the location of places. They investigate how the characteristics of a place influence human activity. Carrara's marble deposits encouraged quarrying. The steep terrain affected transport. Its relative closeness to the coast created opportunities for shipping stone to other places. Roads and routes connected the quarries with towns and ports. Each geographical feature influenced economic decisions.

A merchant might ask…

How expensive will it be to move this block?

Which route should be used?

Can the stone travel by sea?

How many workers will be needed?

Will the artist accept the marble?

A resource in one place could create economic activity far beyond that place.

---

Michelangelo became deeply involved in selecting marble. He knew that every block was different. Some marble contained flaws. A crack hidden inside a block could destroy months of work. The colour might not be right. The shape might not suit the planned figure. Michelangelo inspected the stone closely. Sometimes his involvement with quarries caused frustration. He spent long periods organising stone for commissions. Transport delays occurred; patrons changed plans; money became a problem.

A great artistic idea could be interrupted by a very practical question: **Where is the marble?**

---

This reminds us that Renaissance achievements depended upon large networks of people. Consider a finished sculpture. We remember the artist.

But before Michelangelo touched the marble, quarry workers had already laboured. Someone selected a quarry site. Someone made tools; workers cut the stone; teams moved it. Carpenters prepared wooden supports; rope makers produced ropes; animals might be used in transport. Merchants arranged purchases, and transport workers moved the block. Someone kept records; someone paid wages; and a patron provided the money to make it all happen.

Only then could Michelangelo begin carving. The artist was important. But he was part of a larger economic interconnection.

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Suppose Michelangelo ordered marble for a tomb in Rome. The stone began in Carrara. It might move from the mountain towards the coast. From there, it could be transported by ship. The ship required sailors. The sailors required food. The vessel needed repairs. Ports required workers. The marble then needed to continue towards the building site or workshop.

One commission created economic activity for many people. This is sometimes called a **supply chain**. A supply chain connects the source of a resource with the person who eventually uses it.

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Let us trace the marble.

**Mountain**

The marble exists as a natural resource.

↓

**Quarry**

Workers identify and remove a suitable block.

↓

**Mountain transport**

Teams move the block down steep terrain.

↓

**Road or port**

The marble enters a transport network.

↓

**Merchant or patron**

Payment and arrangements are made.

↓

**Artist's workplace**

Michelangelo examines and carves the stone.

↓

**Public or religious location**

The finished sculpture is installed and viewed.

Each stage depends upon the others. If the quarry workers damage the marble, the artist has a problem. If transport fails, the marble does not arrive. If the patron stops paying, work may cease. If a commission is cancelled, the artist may be left with unused stone.

Economic systems are interconnected.

---

The Medici, popes and civic leaders who commissioned Renaissance works therefore needed resources.

They needed **money**. Money allowed them to hire people and purchase materials.

They needed **human resources**. Quarry workers, merchants, transport workers, architects and artists all brought skills.

They needed **capital resources**. Tools, ships, roads, workshops and lifting equipment helped people perform work.

They also depended upon **natural resources** like stone, timber, water, and metal. A magnificent sculpture might begin with an artistic idea. But that idea entered a physical world filled with materials, people and economic choices.

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Marble itself affected what artists could create. It is hard. A sculptor must remove material. Once a piece has been cut away, it cannot simply be replaced. The characteristics of marble therefore influenced Michelangelo's decisions. He needed to understand the material….

Where was the stone strong?

How thin could a section become?

Could an arm be extended safely?

Would the block's shape allow the planned figure?

A sculptor does not merely command a natural resource.

A skilled sculptor learns its characteristics.

Michelangelo's inquisitiveness included a curiosity about materials.

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The geography of Carrara also influenced settlement and work. Where valuable resources exist, people often develop industries around them. Quarrying provided employment. Transport developed around the movement of stone. Specialised knowledge grew. Generations of quarry workers learned how marble behaved.

The place became known for a particular resource. Carrara and marble became interconnected. This is similar to the way some places become known for…

- farming
- fishing
- mining
- manufacturing
- banking.

The characteristics of a place can influence the economic activities that develop there. People also change places through their economic activities. Quarrying changes a mountain. Roads change landscapes. Ports grow. Workshops appear.

Geographers investigate both sides of this relationship. **Places influence people.** And: **People influence places.**

---

But resource use also raises questions…

How much material should be removed?

What happens to the landscape?

Who benefits economically?

Who performs the dangerous work?

What happens when demand increases?

Renaissance quarry workers did not use the modern language of environmental management in the same way students do today. Yet historians and geographers can still investigate the consequences of resource use.

Marble created beautiful buildings and sculptures. Its extraction also required the reshaping of mountains. A resource can create benefits while also producing costs.

Inquisitiveness asks us to examine the whole process.

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Michelangelo sometimes seemed happiest when standing before stone. He could imagine what a block might become. But before he imagined a figure, he inspected the marble.

The mountain mattered; the quarry mattered; the workers mattered; the transport route mattered; the patron mattered; the material mattered. They were all an important part of the process of creating something artistic, something significant.

The sculpture people admired in Florence or Rome began somewhere else. It began inside a mountain.

An inquisitive person looks at a finished object and asks: **Where did this come from?**

Then: **Who helped bring it here?**

And finally: **What relationships made it possible?**

Michelangelo looked at the marble and saw a figure. The geographer and economist look at the marble and see a network. Both are learning to see what others might miss.

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# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- where Carrara is located.

- why Carrara became important for marble.
- how quarry workers removed marble.
- why transporting marble was difficult.
- why Michelangelo inspected stone carefully.
- the different workers involved before a sculpture could be carved.
- how geography influenced economic activity.
- how a marble sculpture depended upon an interconnected supply chain.

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# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Natural Resources and Place

A **natural resource** comes from the natural environment and is used by people.

Carrara became important because its mountains contained large deposits of marble.

This created opportunities for:

- quarrying
- stone transport
- trade
- sculpture
- architecture.

The characteristics of a place can influence the kinds of economic activities that develop there.

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## 2. Geography Can Create Opportunities and Challenges

Carrara's geography provided marble.

But the steep mountain landscape made transport difficult.

Therefore, the same geographical environment created:

**Opportunity:** valuable stone.

**Challenge:** difficult and dangerous transport.

People developed knowledge, tools and transport systems to respond to these conditions.

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## 3. Resources Work Together

Renaissance marble production required several kinds of resources.

| Resource Type | Carrara and Michelangelo Example |
|---|---|
| Natural | Marble, timber |
| Human | Quarry workers, sculptors, sailors, merchants |
| Capital | Tools, ships, workshops, lifting equipment |

Economic activity often depends upon several kinds of resources working together.

---

## 4. Supply Chains Show Interconnections

A supply chain shows the stages that connect a resource with the person who eventually uses it.

For Renaissance marble:

**Quarry → Transport → Merchant or Patron → Artist → Finished Work**

Each stage affects the others.

This is an example of economic interconnection.

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## 5. People and Places Influence One Another

Carrara's marble influenced the work people performed.

People also changed Carrara through:

- quarrying
- road development
- transport activity.

Geographers investigate these relationships between people and places.

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# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. Where did Michelangelo get marble?
2. What is a quarry?
3. Why was marble difficult to move?
4. Name one person who helped before Michelangelo began carving.
5. How were Carrara and Michelangelo connected?

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## Years 3–4

1. Why did quarrying develop at Carrara?
2. How did the mountains create both an opportunity and a challenge?
3. Why were skilled quarry workers important?
4. How did transport connect Carrara with Renaissance cities?
5. What conclusion can you draw about the number of people involved in creating a sculpture?

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## Years 5–6

1. Classify marble, a quarry worker and a transport ship as natural, human or capital resources.
2. Explain how Carrara's geography influenced economic activity.
3. What relationship can you infer between transport networks and Renaissance artistic production?
4. How could a failure at one stage of the marble supply chain affect Michelangelo?
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **Why did Michelangelo's sculptures depend upon more than artistic skill?**

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# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – From Mountain to Statue

Create a four-part picture sequence: **Mountain → Quarry → Transport → Statue**

Label each picture.

Add one person to each stage.

Tell your Home-Tutor: **"Michelangelo needed other people because…"**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral explanation.

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## Years 3–4 – Geography: Opportunity and Challenge

Divide a page into two columns.

| Carrara's Geographical Opportunities | Carrara's Geographical Challenges |
| --- | --- |

| Carrara's Geographical Opportunities | Carrara's Geographical Challenges |
| --- | --- |

Include information about:

- marble deposits
- mountains
- steep slopes
- access to transport routes
- closeness to the western coast.

Then create a simple labelled map showing:

- Carrara
- the mountains
- the coast
- a possible marble transport route.

Write a conclusion:

**Carrara became an important marble centre because…**

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# Years 5–6 – Follow the Marble Supply Chain

Investigate the movement of Carrara marble from quarry to Renaissance artist.

Use a map and at least two provided sources.

Complete the table:

| Supply Chain Stage | Place | Resources Required | People Involved | Possible Problem |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quarrying | | | | |
| Moving stone from the mountain | | | | |
| Long-distance transport | | | | |
| Purchase or commission | | | | |
| Artist's workshop | | | | |
| Installation | | | | |

Then create a mapped flow diagram showing the movement of marble.

Write an evidence-based explanation:

**How did geography, resources and economic interconnections make Michelangelo's sculptures possible?**

Your explanation should infer at least two relationships between stages in the supply chain.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

A finished sculpture can draw our attention to the famous artist. But God's world is filled with interdependence. Michelangelo needed stone from a mountain.

He depended upon quarry workers, transport workers, toolmakers, patrons, builders.

Many of these people are not remembered by name. Yet their work was still significant.

The Bible teaches that different people have different abilities and responsibilities. Faithful work is not made valuable merely by becoming famous.

The Fall can lead human beings to glorify the celebrated person while ignoring ordinary workers.

Restoration calls us to recognise the dignity of faithful service and wise stewardship.

An inquisitive Christian asks:

**Who else contributed?**

**What has God provided?**

**How should resources be used wisely?**

"For the body does not consist of one member but of many." – **1 Corinthians 12:14**

Michelangelo may have carved the statue. But many hands helped the marble reach him.

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## Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded HASS F–6 Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2K03** | **how places can be spatially represented in geographical divisions from local to regional to state/territory, and how people and places are interconnected across those scales** | Students identify Carrara as a particular place and investigate its interconnections with other places through the movement of marble. Mapping and sequencing activities represent these connections spatially. |
| **AC9HS2S02** | **collect, sort and record information and data from observations and from provided sources, including unscaled timelines and labelled maps or models** | Students record the movement of marble through pictorial sequences and labelled geographical representations. |
| **AC9HS2S03** | **interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present** | Students interpret information about historical quarrying and transport and consider the stages through which marble moved from mountain to finished sculpture. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw a conclusion about why Michelangelo depended upon the work of other people. |

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Narration and differentiated activities require students to communicate observations about Carrara and marble using geographical and economic terms. |
| **AC9HS3S02** | **locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources, including annotated timelines and maps** | Students use maps and lesson information to locate Carrara and record geographical opportunities and challenges. |
| **AC9HS3S03** | **interpret information and data displayed in different formats** | Students interpret narrative information, maps, process sequences and resource classifications. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students analyse geographical characteristics and conclude why Carrara developed as an important marble centre. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students produce a mapped and written geographical explanation using terms such as quarry, transport and interconnection. |
| **AC9HS5K04** | **the influence of people, including First Nations Australians and people in other countries, on the characteristics of a place** | Students investigate how quarry workers, transport activity and the demand for marble influenced the human and economic characteristics of Carrara. The lesson applies the geographical concept of people influencing places in a non-Australian historical setting. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | The lesson explicitly classifies the natural, human and capital resources required for marble quarrying, transport and sculpture. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Carrara, quarrying, transport and the marble supply system. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students locate and organise information from maps and provided historical sources about marble production and transport. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between geography, resource availability, transport systems and artistic production. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students use their supply-chain findings to conclude how geography and economic interconnections made Michelangelo's work possible. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students present a mapped flow diagram and evidence-based explanation using findings from sources and relevant geographical and economic terminology. |

# Achievement Standard Contribution

The Achievement Standard clauses below are drawn directly from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. This lesson particularly develops geographical interconnection, interpretation of information and inferred relationships.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They identify how people and places are interconnected both at local and broader scales.”** | Students trace the connection between Carrara, transport workers and Michelangelo's place of work. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students develop questions, and collect, sort and record related information and data from observations and provided sources.”** | Students sequence and label the stages by which marble moved from the mountain to a finished statue. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students draw a conclusion about why Michelangelo depended upon other workers. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students use written information and map-based evidence to investigate Carrara. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse Carrara's geographical opportunities and challenges and draw a conclusion about its importance as a marble centre. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students create a geographical explanation using map information and relevant terminology. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students investigate the Renaissance marble supply chain using maps and historical sources. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students infer relationships between Carrara's geography, transport, resource systems and Renaissance sculpture. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students use evidence from the supply-chain investigation to explain why Michelangelo's achievements depended upon interconnected systems. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise resource and geographical findings in a table, mapped flow diagram and written explanation. |

# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 mountain-to-statue sequence | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 opportunity/challenge table | Geographical interpretation evidence |

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Years 3–4 labelled map | Mapping work sample |
| Years 5–6 supply-chain investigation | HASS inquiry evidence |
| Mapped flow diagram | Organisation and interpretation evidence |
| Evidence-based geographical-economic explanation | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 5.3 – Civics, Economics & Historical Investigation

## Who Owned the Artwork? Michelangelo, Patrons and the Power of a Commission

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

---

# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate how commissions shaped the work of Renaissance artists.
- explain the different roles of artists, patrons and institutions.
- examine how money, authority and purpose could influence artistic decisions.
- identify different perspectives in disputes between Michelangelo and his patrons.
- evaluate historical evidence and draw conclusions about who held power in a Renaissance commission.

---

# Key Terminology

**Commission** – An agreement in which a person or organisation requests and pays for a particular work to be created.

**Contract** – A formal agreement between people or organisations.

**Patron** – A person or organisation that supports or pays an artist, scholar or craftsman.

**Institution** – An established organisation with an important role in society.

**Authority** – The recognised right or power to make decisions.

**Obligation** – A duty or responsibility a person is expected to fulfil.

**Dispute** – A disagreement between people or groups.

**Perspective** – A particular way of viewing an event or issue.

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# Informational Story

## The Tomb That Would Not Stay the Same

Michelangelo was excited. Pope Julius II wanted a tomb. Not a small tomb; not a simple stone slab. Julius imagined an enormous monument. Michelangelo imagined it too.

He saw architecture, columns, statues, marble figures – a great structure filled with movement and power.

The Pope wanted something magnificent. Michelangelo wanted to create something magnificent. For a time, patron and artist seemed to want the same thing.

Michelangelo travelled north to Carrara. He entered the marble country, examined stone, and selected blocks. He planned; he thought about the figures he would carve. The commission was enormous. So was the opportunity.

Then the plan began to change.

---

Pope Julius II was not merely a wealthy private citizen. He was the Pope. He led the Roman Catholic Church. He was also involved in the political affairs of the Papal States and Renaissance Italy.

He commissioned buildings, employed artists, and planned military campaigns. He made political alliances. He had many demands upon his attention and resources.

Michelangelo thought about the tomb. Julius thought about many things. Money that might have been used for one project could be needed for another.

Plans changed; priorities changed; and Michelangelo became frustrated. He had already travelled for marble. He had invested time. He had imagined the work. Now he was uncertain whether the project would proceed as planned.

The artist had talent. The patron had authority and money. Who was really in control?

---

This question lay at the centre of many Renaissance commissions. Today, a person might imagine an artist standing alone in a studio and creating whatever he wishes. Some artists certainly work that way. But many famous Renaissance works began with a **commission**.

A patron requested something. A contract might specify details. The artist agreed to perform work. Money was promised. Materials were purchased. Deadlines might be established. The intended location was known. The work had a purpose.

An artist did not always begin with the question: **What do I feel like creating today?**

Often the question was: **What have I been asked to create?**

---

Consider Michelangelo's *David*. The enormous marble block belonged to a project connected with Florence Cathedral. Florentine officials had been considering a large sculpture for years.

Michelangelo did not discover an ownerless block in a field and decide to keep it. The marble was connected with a public commission. Officials selected Michelangelo. He accepted the work.

The finished statue was then examined. A group of respected Florentine artists and citizens discussed where it should stand. Michelangelo was the sculptor. But he was not the only person making decisions.

---

Now consider the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Pope Julius II wanted Michelangelo to paint it. Michelangelo did not initially regard himself primarily as a painter. He considered sculpture his great work.

According to later accounts, he was not immediately enthusiastic about the commission. But Julius had authority. The Pope wanted the ceiling painted. Michelangelo eventually accepted.

Once he began, however, Michelangelo made major artistic decisions. He designed an extraordinary arrangement of biblical scenes and figures. The patron initiated the commission. The artist shaped the work.

This creates a more complicated relationship than simply saying: "The Pope was in charge."

Or:

"Michelangelo did whatever he wanted."

Both patron and artist possessed influence. But they possessed different kinds of influence.

---

A patron could provide **economic power**. He could pay; or refuse to pay. He could purchase materials. He could employ assistants. He could offer access to important places. A church or city government could provide a major public location.

A patron might also possess **formal authority**. The Pope had authority within the Church. Florentine officials held civic responsibilities. A church organisation could determine what happened inside a particular building.

Michelangelo possessed something else. He had **specialist skill**. The patron might want a statue. But Julius II could not carve Michelangelo's *Moses* himself.

Florentine officials could order a great sculpture. But they could not simply command an ordinary block of marble to become *David*.

Michelangelo possessed rare human skill. A commission therefore created dependence. The artist depended upon the patron. The patron also depended upon the artist.

---

Imagine a conversation.

Patron: "I am paying for the work," says the patron.

Sculptor: "I understand the marble," replies the sculptor.

Patron: "The work must suit its location."

Sculptor: "The design must be artistically possible."

Patron: "I have a deadline."

Sculptor: "I need time."

Patron: "I have changed the plan."

Sculptor: "I have already purchased the stone."

The disagreement is easy to imagine. Michelangelo experienced versions of these problems repeatedly. He was famously difficult to manage. His patrons could also be demanding. Sometimes Michelangelo's projects were delayed. Sometimes plans changed. Sometimes arguments erupted.

The creation of great art could be surprisingly untidy.

---

The tomb of Julius II became one of the great frustrations of Michelangelo's life. The original plan was reduced and changed many times. Years passed. Julius died in 1513.

The project continued through further agreements and revisions. Michelangelo worked on other commissions. The tomb was eventually completed in a much reduced form compared with the original grand design. One of its most famous figures is Michelangelo's sculpture of **Moses**.

Imagine the problem from Michelangelo's perspective. He had imagined a vast artistic project. He selected marble. He invested years of thought and work. But the project kept changing.

Now imagine the perspective of the Pope's heirs or representatives. They might ask: Where is the tomb? Why is Michelangelo working on another project? What has happened to the money already provided?

The same events can be interpreted differently depending upon a person's role and responsibilities.

---

Contracts can help historians understand disputes. A contract is evidence.

It may tell us:

- who entered the agreement.
- what work was requested.
- how much money was promised.
- what materials were involved.
- when work should be completed.

But a contract does not tell us everything. It may not reveal every spoken conversation. It may not show how an artist felt. It may not explain every later change. Historians compare contracts with letters, financial records, artworks and later accounts.

One source rarely answers every question.

---

Michelangelo's letters are especially interesting. In letters, he sometimes complained about money. He discussed work. He wrote about family concerns. He expressed frustration.

A letter can allow historians to hear a person's own words. But even a personal letter must be interpreted carefully. Who was Michelangelo writing to? Why was he writing? Was he trying to persuade the recipient? Was he angry when he wrote? Could he have exaggerated his difficulties?

A primary source is valuable. But "primary" does not mean "perfectly neutral".

Historical inquiry still requires questions.

---

Consider a merchant's account book. It might record: **Payment made for marble.** That is evidence of a transaction.

Now consider Michelangelo's letter: **I have suffered greatly because of this work.** That is evidence of his perspective.

Now consider a papal representative's complaint: **The work has not been completed as expected.** That reveals another perspective.

The historian places the sources beside one another. Then asks: **What does each source help us understand? What can it not tell us?**

---

Patronage also affected the purpose of artworks. A city government might commission art for a public place. A guild might commission a statue for a church. A wealthy family might commission a chapel. A pope might commission work for the Vatican.

It was important who the intended audience was. Just as important were the location and the goals of the patron.

Michelangelo needed to work within these circumstances. Yet great artists often found ways to create something imaginative within the commission.

Inquisitiveness did not require Michelangelo to reject every limitation. Sometimes the limitation became the problem he needed to solve.

---

The Sistine Chapel ceiling was a ceiling, and it was a very high ceiling. Michelangelo could not move it to a different building. It had a particular shape; a particular height; and a religious purpose.

These were limitations. So, Michelangelo asked artistic questions.

How should hundreds of figures be arranged?

How large should they appear?

How would people see them from below?

How could separate sections form one great design?

The commission created boundaries. Within those boundaries, Michelangelo experimented.

A problem can restrict creativity. But a problem can also direct creativity.

This is true in many areas of life. An architect cannot usually design a house without considering the land. A builder must consider materials. A writer may have a word limit. A business may have a budget. A government works within laws. A family makes decisions with limited resources.

Freedom does not always mean having no limitations. Often wise action means asking:

**What can I faithfully and creatively do within the responsibilities I have been given?**

---

But there is another side to patronage. Power can become unfair. A wealthy patron may place enormous pressure upon a worker. A powerful leader may demand unreasonable changes. An artist may fear losing payment.

On the other hand, an artist may fail to fulfil an agreement. He may accept money and not complete promised work. He may ignore legitimate obligations. This is why disputes must be investigated carefully.

It is easy to automatically support the famous artist. It is equally easy to say: "The patron paid, so the patron must always be right."

Historical inquiry requires something better…

Evidence.

Perspective.

Context.

Judgement.

---

Suppose you were asked to decide a dispute between Michelangelo and one of his patrons. You would need to ask:

What was agreed?

What changed?

Who requested the change?

Was money paid?

Was work completed?

Were delays reasonable?

What responsibilities did each person have?

What evidence supports each claim?

These are historical questions. They are also civic and economic questions. Contracts, obligations and disputes are part of organised society.

---

Michelangelo wanted artistic freedom. His patrons wanted finished work. Both wanted magnificent results. But their priorities were not always identical.

The patron might think about money and deadlines. Michelangelo might think about perfection. The patron might think about the building. Michelangelo might think about the figure.

The patron might say: "Finish."

Michelangelo might say: "It is not ready."

Who was right?

Sometimes one side may have been clearly unreasonable. Sometimes the evidence remains complicated.

A historian does not need to make every story simple.

---

Inquisitiveness means being willing to ask a second question; and then a third.

Who paid for the artwork?

Who selected the subject?

Who owned the materials?

Who controlled the building?

Who possessed the necessary skills?

Who had legal authority?

Who had economic power?

Who had artistic influence?

Only then do we begin to understand a Renaissance commission. Michelangelo could see a figure in stone. The historian must learn to see the relationships around the stone.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- what a commission was.
- why patrons were important to Renaissance artists.
- why Michelangelo became frustrated with the tomb of Julius II.
- how the original tomb plan changed.
- the different kinds of power held by patrons and artists.

- why contracts and letters are useful historical sources.
- why primary sources still need to be evaluated.
- who you think had the most power in a Renaissance commission.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. A Commission Was an Economic Agreement

A Renaissance commission often involved:

**Patron requests work**

↓

**Artist agrees to create it**

↓

**Payment and conditions are arranged**

↓

**Materials and labour are organised**

↓

**Work is produced**

↓

**Finished work is delivered or installed**

A commission connected artistic production with economic decisions.

---

## 2. Different People Held Different Forms of Power

| Person or Group | Possible Form of Power |
|---|---|
| Patron | Money and control of the commission |
| Pope or civic government | Formal authority |
| Artist | Specialist skill and creative judgement |
| Guild or institution | Rules and professional expectations |
| Public audience | Reputation and public response |

Power was not always held by only one person.

---

# 3. Contracts Create Obligations

A contract may identify responsibilities.

For example:

**The patron may be expected to:**

- provide payment.
- supply or fund materials.
- provide access to the work site.

**The artist may be expected to:**

- complete agreed work.
- use particular materials.
- meet agreed conditions.

When agreements change, disputes may occur.

---

# 4. Primary Sources Have Perspectives

A Renaissance contract may provide direct evidence about an agreement.

A letter may provide direct evidence of a writer's concerns.

However, every source must still be evaluated.

Ask:

**Origin** – Who created the source?

**Purpose** – Why was it created?

**Perspective** – What viewpoint does it reveal?

**Limitation** – What can the source not tell us?

---

# 5. Historical Judgements Require Evidence

A historian should not decide a dispute simply because one person is more famous.

A strong judgement considers:

- the agreement.
- the sequence of events.
- the available evidence.

- different perspectives.
- the limits of the sources.

A conclusion may also acknowledge uncertainty.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. What is a patron?
2. What is a commission?
3. Why did Michelangelo need people to pay for materials?
4. Why might Michelangelo and a patron disagree?
5. Who do you think should help decide what an artwork looks like: the artist, the patron, or both? Explain.

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## Years 3–4

1. How did a commission connect art and economics?
2. What kind of power did a patron have?
3. What kind of influence did Michelangelo have?
4. Why might Michelangelo and Pope Julius II have different perspectives about the tomb?
5. What information would you want before deciding who was responsible for a disagreement?

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## Years 5–6

1. Explain why a Renaissance commission created mutual dependence between an artist and a patron.
2. What relationship can you infer between financial resources and artistic production?
3. Why is a contract useful evidence for historians?
4. Why should a historian still evaluate a primary source such as Michelangelo's own letter?
5. Develop a balanced conclusion: **Who held the greatest power in a Renaissance artistic commission – the patron or the artist?**

---

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Artist and Patron

Fold a page into two parts.

### The Patron

Draw a patron speaking to an artist.

Label:

**asks**

**pays**

**purpose**

### The Artist

Draw Michelangelo working.

Label:

**skill**

**ideas**

**makes**

Then tell your Home-Tutor: **“The patron and artist both mattered because…”**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral explanation.

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# Years 3–4 – The Dispute over the Tomb

Imagine you are investigating the disagreement over the tomb of Julius II.

Create a table:

| Michelangelo's Perspective | The Patron's Perspective |
|---|---|
| What did Michelangelo want? | What did the patron want? |
| What might frustrate Michelangelo? | What might frustrate the patron? |
| What responsibility did Michelangelo have? | What responsibility did the patron have? |

Then write five questions you would ask before deciding who was responsible for the dispute.

Finish with a conclusion: **I think the dispute was complicated because…**

Use the terms:

**commission**

**obligation**

**perspective**

**evidence**

---

# Years 5–6 – The Michelangelo Commission Case File

Investigate one Michelangelo commission.

Choose:

- the tomb of Julius II.
- *David*.
- the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

Use at least three provided primary and secondary sources.

Include at least one primary source where available, such as:

- a contract.
- a letter.
- a financial record.
- a contemporary account.

Complete the source evaluation table:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective | Evidence about the commission | Limitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

Then identify:

**The patron's authority and responsibilities**

**Michelangelo's responsibilities**

**Financial or material resources involved**

**Changes or disputes**

**Evidence of patron influence**

**Evidence of Michelangelo's artistic influence**

Write an evidence-based response: **Who held the greatest power in this commission: Michelangelo or the patron?**

Your response should:

- use evidence from at least three sources.
- compare different perspectives.
- distinguish between economic, formal and specialist power.

- acknowledge any limitations in the available evidence.
- reach a balanced conclusion.

---

# God's Big Story Reflection

God created human beings to live and work in relationship with one another. Work often involves agreements, responsibilities, promises, resources, authority.

The Fall means these relationships can become difficult. People may become proud. Power may be abused. Promises may be broken. Disagreements may become bitter.

Michelangelo and his patrons remind us that great talent does not remove the need for faithfulness. A gifted person still has obligations. A powerful person still has responsibilities.

A Christian should not ask only: **“What am I allowed to demand?”**

We should also ask: **“What have I promised?”**

**“How should I treat the people who depend upon me?”**

**“Am I using my authority faithfully?”**

“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” – **Philippians 2:4**

Inquisitiveness helps us understand complicated disagreements. Wisdom helps us act faithfully within them.

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## Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact code and wording below are taken from the uploaded HASS F–6 Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students develop questions about Michelangelo, patrons, commissions and historical disputes. |
| **AC9HS2S04** | **discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events** | Students compare the perspectives of Michelangelo and his patrons. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw a simple conclusion about the roles of the artist and patron in a commission. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Students narrate historical events and communicate observations using terms such as patron, commission and artist. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students develop questions to investigate disagreements surrounding Michelangelo's commissions. |
| **AC9HS3S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students analyse the differing responsibilities, interests and perspectives of Michelangelo and his patrons. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students draw conclusions about why Renaissance commission disputes could become complicated. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present an explanation of a commission dispute using historical, civics and economic terminology. |
| **AC9HS5K07** | **how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal** | Students examine how artists, patrons and civic or religious institutions cooperated to produce works intended for public, civic or religious purposes. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | Students examine financial resources, artistic skill and materials as resources necessary for commissioned artistic production. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Michelangelo, patronage and the system of artistic commissions. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students collect and organise evidence from contracts, letters, records and secondary sources concerning a Michelangelo commission. |

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between patronage, financial resources, contractual obligations and artistic production. |
| **AC9HS5S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students explicitly evaluate the origin, purpose, perspective and limitations of sources concerning Michelangelo's commissions. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students develop a balanced evidence-based judgement about the distribution of power between artist and patron. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students organise findings from multiple sources and present an evidence-based historical explanation. |

# Achievement Standard Contribution

The clauses below are taken directly from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards. This lesson continues to develop transferable inquiry, perspectives and source-evaluation skills rather than era-specific Australian history knowledge.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives.”** | Students compare the roles and viewpoints of Michelangelo and a patron. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students form a conclusion about how an artist and patron should share decisions. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales.”** | Narration and the differentiated activity require students to communicate historical observations using relevant terminology. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students formulate investigation questions about the tomb dispute and use provided historical information. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students compare patron and artist perspectives and draw a conclusion about the complexity of the dispute. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students explain the disagreement using terms such as commission, obligation and evidence. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students undertake a commission case study using several historical sources. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students evaluate contracts, letters, records and secondary sources. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students infer relationships between financial resources, authority, obligations and artistic influence. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students weigh competing evidence to judge whether the patron or Michelangelo held greater power. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise a case file and present a structured historical judgement supported by source findings. |

# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 artist and patron explanation | Illustrated work sample and oral response |
| Years 3–4 perspective comparison | Portfolio work sample |
| Years 3–4 investigation questions | Historical inquiry evidence |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation | Source-analysis evidence |
| Commission case file | Organised inquiry evidence |
| Evidence-based power judgement | Achievement Standard evidence |

| TOPIC 6 | IDEAS BEGIN TO TRAVEL |
| --- | --- |

# Lesson 6.1 – History & Civics

## Johannes Gutenberg: The Man Who Made Books Multiply

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate the life and historical significance of Johannes Gutenberg.
- explain why books were difficult and expensive to produce before movable-type printing.
- examine how Gutenberg combined existing knowledge, materials and technologies to solve a problem.
- investigate how printing changed the movement of information and ideas.
- use historical evidence to draw conclusions about Gutenberg's significance to the Renaissance.

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# Key Terminology

**Manuscript** – A handwritten document or book.

**Scribe** – A person who copies texts by hand.

**Movable type** – Individual letters or characters that can be arranged, inked, printed and then reused.

**Printing press** – A machine that applies pressure to transfer inked text or images onto a surface.

**Innovation** – A new or improved method, product or process.

**Mass production** – Producing many copies of an item using an organised and repeated process.

**Literacy** – The ability to read and write.

**Dissemination** – The spreading of information, ideas or knowledge to many people.

---

# Informational Story

## One Page, Then Another

Johannes Gutenberg looked at the page. Letters stood in neat rows. Black ink rested sharply against pale paper. Another page lay nearby; and another; and another.

Each page carried the same words; the same letters; the same order; the same message.

For a modern student, this might not seem remarkable. Open a book, turn a page. There are hundreds of printed words. Buy another copy of the same book. The words are still there.

But Gutenberg lived in a world where producing a book could require months or even years of careful human labour.

A book was not simply written once and then produced in thousands of copies.

Someone had to copy it by hand – page after page, line after line, word after word, letter after letter.

And when one copy was finished, the next copy had to begin again. Gutenberg looked at the printed page. He had asked a dangerous question.

**Does every book really need to be copied this way?**

---

Johannes Gutenberg was born in Mainz, in the region we now call Germany, probably around the end of the fourteenth century.

His family belonged to the city's well-established citizens. Mainz was an important urban centre situated near the River Rhine. The river connected towns and trading centres.

Goods travelled; people travelled; information travelled.

Gutenberg grew up in a world of merchants, craftsmen and organised trades. The details of his early life are incomplete. Historians do not possess a diary in which young Johannes carefully explained every childhood thought. This means historians must work from scattered evidence such as…
Legal records; Financial documents; Later accounts; Objects; Printed books.

Historical investigation often begins with incomplete evidence. We ask what the surviving sources reasonably allow us to know.

---

Gutenberg probably became familiar with metalworking. This was significant because making small, precise objects from metal required specialist skills.

A metalworker needed to understand:

- moulds
- metals
- heat
- tools
- measurement.

Printing would eventually depend upon these skills.

But Gutenberg did not simply invent one completely new object from nothing. This is important. Many great innovations combine earlier ideas in a new way.

Paper already existed; ink already existed; presses already existed. Woodblock printing already existed. Metalworking already existed. Letters certainly existed.

Gutenberg's achievement was to bring processes and materials together into a highly effective system for printing text.

Inquisitiveness sometimes asks: **What completely new thing can I imagine?**

But it can also ask: **What happens if these existing ideas are combined differently?**

---

Before Gutenberg's printing system became successful, books in Europe were commonly copied by hand. Monasteries had preserved and copied manuscripts. Professional scribes also produced texts.

A scribe needed skill. The work demanded concentration. Imagine copying an entire book with no photocopier, no printer, no computer.

You carefully write one line., then another, then another. Perhaps your eyes are tired. Perhaps the room is dim. Perhaps you accidentally repeat a sentence. Perhaps you skip a line.

The mistake may enter the new copy. A later scribe could then copy your mistake.

Handwritten manuscripts could be beautiful. Some contained magnificent decoration. But copying was slow.

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Books were therefore valuable. The materials cost money. Skilled labour cost money. A large book required enormous effort.

Libraries might contain collections that represented years of work and considerable wealth. This did not mean no one read.

Scholars read; church leaders read; merchants increasingly needed written records.

Universities created demand for texts. But the number of books that could be produced by hand was limited.

The problem became particularly important as European towns, universities and commercial activity grew.

More people wanted written information.

The old method of production could not easily create large numbers of identical copies.

Gutenberg saw a problem.

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People had already experimented with printing. A design could already be carved into a wooden block. Ink could be applied. The block could press the image onto paper. Woodblock printing was useful. But imagine carving an entire page of text into one wooden block. Every letter must be carved. If one word is wrong,

correction may be difficult. When the page is finished, the block represents only that page. To print a new page, another block is required.

Gutenberg's system used **movable type**. Imagine hundreds of small pieces of metal. Each carries a letter.

An **A**, **B, C, a**nd many repeated letters. A man called ‘a printer’ selects the letters. He places them into words. Words become lines. Lines become a page. The page is inked.

Paper is pressed against the type. Then another sheet can be printed, and another. When the required copies are complete, the individual letters can be removed.

The same letters can be rearranged to produce a different page. The type moves. That is why it is called movable type.

---

But the idea created many technical problems. The letters needed to be the correct size. They needed to stand at a consistent height. If one piece of type were too high, it might receive too much pressure. If another were too low, it might fail to print clearly. The metal needed particular characteristics. The letters had to be produced in large quantities. The printer needed many copies of commonly used letters. A page might contain the letter **e** repeatedly. One metal **e** was useless. The printing system required many.

How could identical letters be manufactured accurately?

Gutenberg developed methods involving punches and moulds that allowed pieces of metal type to be produced with remarkable consistency.

His knowledge of metalworking became essential.

---

Then there was ink. The ink used for handwriting did not necessarily behave properly on metal type. Printing needed an ink that would stick to the metal and transfer clearly onto the paper. Gutenberg's printers used an oil-based ink suited to the process.

Then there was pressure. The paper needed to make contact with the type. Press technology was already used in other industries. Presses could apply controlled pressure. Gutenberg adapted the idea for printing.

Type, Ink, Paper, Press, Metalworking, Organisation. Every part of the process was important. Remove one important part and the system becomes less effective.

This is why Gutenberg's achievement was not merely the invention of a single machine. He helped create a **printing system**.

---

Gutenberg's most famous project became a large, printed Bible. Today it is commonly called the **Gutenberg Bible**. The project was extraordinary. The Bible contained hundreds of pages. Thousands upon thousands of pieces of type needed to be arranged. Pages needed to be printed. Sheets needed to dry. The work needed to be checked.

Pages eventually needed to be gathered and bound. This was organised production on a scale very different from a lone scribe copying a manuscript. One printer did not sit down and write the entire Bible with a pen. A team worked within a production process. Printing transformed the organisation of bookmaking.

But Gutenberg needed money. Metal cost money. Paper or vellum cost money. Workers needed support. Equipment required investment. The great printing project could not continue on curiosity alone.

Gutenberg borrowed money from a wealthy Mainz businessman named **Johann Fust**. The relationship eventually ended in a legal dispute. Fust claimed that Gutenberg had failed to meet financial obligations.

A court case followed. The surviving documents provide historians with important information. They also reveal an uncomfortable truth. One of history's most influential inventions was also a business project involving loans, risk and disagreement.

Gutenberg may have possessed technical brilliance. But printing required capital resources. Innovation and economics were connected.

---

The dispute appears to have resulted in Gutenberg losing control of some equipment associated with the printing operation.

Other printers continued the work. Printing did not stop. In fact, the technology spread. This is another fascinating feature of innovation. An inventor may begin a system. But once knowledge spreads, other people adopt it, improve it, modify it. Then carry it to new places.

Printing workshops appeared in European cities. Printers trained workers. Workers moved and books travelled. A technological development became a network.

---

Imagine the difference. A scribe spends months producing one copy of a book. Whereas a printing workshop sets type for a page. Once the type is arranged, many copies can be produced.

The first page requires careful preparation. But the second, tenth or hundredth copy does not require a scribe to rewrite every word.

Printing did not make books effortless. Printers still needed skilled workers. Type needed to be set; errors could still occur. Paper and ink cost money; books still needed binding. But the economics of copying text had changed. The work of arranging a page could now be used to produce many copies.

---

Why was this significant to the Renaissance? Because the Renaissance was filled with people looking for books. Scholars searched for ancient texts. Universities required educational materials. Merchants needed information. Humanists compared writings. Religious thinkers debated theology.

Maps were produced; scientific observations could be recorded; and a new idea could now enter a printing workshop. Then copies could be made, and the copies could travel. A reader in another city could encounter the idea. That reader might respond. His response might also be printed.

Ideas began to move more quickly through networks of readers.

---

However, printing did not automatically make every printed statement true. This is extremely important. A printing press can reproduce wisdom. But it can also reproduce error. A book can teach; but a book can also mislead people into wrong ideas.

A printer can spread careful scholarship. But a printer can also spread false rumours. The technology increased the ability to reproduce information. But it did not guarantee the quality of that information.

Inquisitiveness therefore became even more important.

A reader needed to ask:

Who wrote this?

What evidence is used?

Why was it printed?

Is another perspective available?

Can the claim be checked?

More information creates more opportunity to learn. It can also create more need for discernment.

---

Printers themselves made choices.

What should be printed?

Would people buy it?

Was the book too controversial?

Could printing it create political trouble?

Would church authorities approve?

Was another printer producing a competing edition?

Printing was a business, and printers needed readers. A book that no one purchased could become an economic loss. Therefore, consumer demand affected printing.

Printers sometimes selected works because they believed people wanted them. The readers influenced the printers. The printers influenced the readers.

Information and economics became interconnected.

---

Printing also affected language. In handwritten culture, spelling and wording could vary considerably. Printing large numbers of copies increased the circulation of particular forms of words. Printers made choices about spelling. Editors made choices.

Readers became accustomed to particular forms. Over time, printing contributed to the greater standardisation of written languages. Again, one innovation created effects that extended beyond the original technical problem. Gutenberg wanted to reproduce text effectively.

The consequences touched education, religion, commerce, scholarship, politics and language.

---

Did Gutenberg understand everything his printing system would eventually influence? Probably not. Historical people do not stand outside history and see the whole future. Gutenberg lived in his own time. He dealt with metal, ink, loans, workers, pages, court disputes. He solved practical problems.

Later generations experienced consequences he could not completely predict. This is one reason historians study **significance**.

A person may be significant not because he planned every later result, but because his actions contributed to developments that continued far beyond his own lifetime.

---

Consider Leonardo. He filled notebooks with ideas.

Consider Petrarch. He searched for manuscripts.

Consider Cosimo de' Medici. He supported libraries.

Now consider Gutenberg. Printing changed the scale at which written ideas could be reproduced.

The curious scholar could search for knowledge. The printer could multiply it. This did not end handwritten books. It did not instantly create universal literacy. It did not make knowledge equally available to everyone.

But it changed the possibilities. One page; then another; then another. The words remained the same. Copies moved from city to city. A reader opened a book. A question began.

And somewhere else, another reader opened another copy of the same book.

The age of multiplying ideas had begun.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember about Johannes Gutenberg.

You might explain:

- why books were difficult to produce before printing.
- how scribes copied manuscripts.
- what movable type is.
- why Gutenberg's metalworking knowledge mattered.
- the different parts of Gutenberg's printing system.
- why Gutenberg needed financial support.
- how printing changed the movement of information.
- why printing increased the need for careful thinking and discernment.

- why Gutenberg was historically significant.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Manuscript Production

Before movable-type printing became widespread in Europe, books were commonly copied by hand.

This required:

- a source text
- writing materials
- a trained scribe
- considerable time.

Each additional copy required another copying process.

This limited how quickly many copies of the same text could be produced.

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## 2. Gutenberg Created a System

Gutenberg's printing process depended upon several connected technologies and resources.

**Movable metal type**

Individual letters could be rearranged and reused.

**Moulding and metalworking**

Consistent pieces of type could be produced.

**Suitable ink**

Ink needed to adhere to metal and transfer clearly.

**Press technology**

Controlled pressure transferred the inked text onto paper.

**Paper and other writing materials**

Printing required a surface on which the text could be reproduced.

Gutenberg's innovation was partly the successful combination of these parts into an effective production system.

## 3. Printing Changed Production

Compare the two processes.

| Hand Copying | Movable-Type Printing |
|---|---|
| Text copied by hand | Type arranged into a page |
| Each copy rewritten | One arrangement produces many impressions |
| Slow reproduction | Faster reproduction of multiple copies |
| Variation may enter during copying | Multiple copies can reproduce the same typeset page |
| Depends heavily on scribal labour | Depends on printers, type-setters and organised production |

Printing did not remove human labour.

It changed how human labour was organised.

---

## 4. Innovation and Economic Resources

Gutenberg required:

- metal
- tools
- equipment
- skilled workers
- writing materials
- financial capital.

Johann Fust's investment demonstrates the relationship between innovation and economic resources.

A useful idea may still require capital resources before it can be developed at scale.

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## 5. Historical Significance and Consequences

Gutenberg is historically significant because movable-type printing contributed to:

- increased production of books.
- wider dissemination of written information.
- growth of printing businesses.
- circulation of Renaissance scholarship.
- later religious and political debates.
- greater standardisation of written languages.

This does not mean Gutenberg personally caused every later development.

Historians investigate **relationships and consequences**, rather than making exaggerated claims.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. Who copied books before printing became common?
2. Why did copying a book take a long time?
3. What could Gutenberg reuse after printing a page?
4. Name one thing Gutenberg needed to print a book.
5. How did printing help words travel to more people?

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## Years 3–4

1. Why was hand copying a slow way to produce books?
2. Explain how movable type worked.
3. Why did Gutenberg's metalworking knowledge help him?
4. How was a printing workshop different from one scribe copying a book?
5. What conclusion can you draw about the way printing changed the spread of ideas?

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## Years 5–6

1. Why is it more accurate to describe Gutenberg's achievement as a printing system rather than one isolated invention?
2. What natural, human and capital resources were required for printing?
3. What relationship can you infer between printing and the dissemination of Renaissance ideas?
4. Why did Gutenberg's project depend upon financial capital?
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **How historically significant was Gutenberg's contribution to the Renaissance?**

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# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – One Book or Many Books?

Fold a page into two sections.

### Before Gutenberg

Draw a scribe copying one book by hand.

Label:

**write**

**copy**

**slow**

### Printing

Draw a printing workshop producing several copies.

Label:

**type**

**press**

**many copies**

Tell your Home-Tutor:

**“Printing changed books because…”**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral explanation.

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# Years 3–4 – How Gutenberg's System Worked

Create a labelled process diagram:

**Make Type → Arrange Letters → Add Ink → Apply Pressure → Print Page → Reuse Type**

For each stage:

- draw or add a simple symbol.
- explain what happens.
- identify one worker, tool or material required.

Then answer:

**Why was Gutenberg's printing system an innovation?**

Use the terms:

**movable type**

**printing press**

**production**

**information**

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# Years 5–6 – Gutenberg: Historical Significance Investigation

Investigate Johannes Gutenberg and early European printing using at least three provided primary and secondary sources.

Possible sources may include:

- pages from a Gutenberg Bible.
- documents connected with the Fust legal dispute.
- examples of manuscript pages.
- examples of early printed books.
- secondary historical explanations of early printing.

Complete the source evaluation table:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective | Evidence about printing | Limitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

Then compare manuscript and print production.

| Historical Question | Manuscript Production | Early Printing |
|---|---|---|
| How was text reproduced? | | |
| What human skills were required? | | |
| What capital resources were required? | | |
| How easily could many copies be produced? | | |
| How could information move between places? | | |

Write an evidence-based response:

**How significant was Gutenberg's contribution to the spread of Renaissance ideas?**

Your response should:

- explain Gutenberg's printing system.
- use evidence from historical sources.
- infer relationships between printing and the movement of ideas.
- avoid claiming that Gutenberg alone caused every later change.
- reach a supported judgement about his historical significance.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

Words are important. God chose to reveal His truth through words that were spoken, remembered and written. Human beings use language to teach, persuade, encourage and warn.

The ability to multiply written words can therefore be used for great good. Truth can be taught. Knowledge can be shared.

The Scriptures can be read. But the Fall means words can also spread falsehood.

A printed statement is not true merely because many copies exist. Technology can multiply a message. But it cannot make the message true or wise.

In God's Big Story, restoration calls Christians to seek truth and use communication faithfully.

Inquisitiveness asks: **What does this source say?**

Wisdom asks: **Is it true?**

Service asks: **How should I use what I know?**

*"The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps."* – **Proverbs 14:15**

The printing press multiplied words. Faithful people must still learn to discern them.

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# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The codes and exact wording below are taken from the uploaded Australian Curriculum Version 9 HASS Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2K02** | **how technological developments changed people's lives at home, and in the ways they worked, travelled and communicated** | Students explicitly investigate how movable-type printing changed the work of producing books and the communication of written information. |
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students investigate Gutenberg, manuscripts, printed books and technological change through historical questions. |
| **AC9HS2S03** | **interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present** | Students compare handwritten manuscript production with movable-type printing and interpret examples of historical books and pages. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw a conclusion about how printing changed the production and movement of books. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Narration and differentiated activities require students to communicate observations using terms such as scribe, manuscript and printing press. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students investigate Gutenberg and the development of movable-type printing. |
| **AC9HS3S03** | **interpret information and data displayed in different formats** | Students interpret narrative information, process diagrams and visual examples of manuscripts and printed works. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students compare production processes and conclude how printing influenced the spread of ideas. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present an explanation of Gutenberg's printing process using historical and technological terminology. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | Students identify the materials, skilled labour, financial investment and equipment required to develop and operate Gutenberg's printing system. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Gutenberg, early printing and the system through which books were produced and distributed. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students organise evidence from manuscript examples, early printed pages, legal records and secondary sources. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between printing technology, production scale and the dissemination of Renaissance ideas. |
| **AC9HS5S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students evaluate historical sources concerning Gutenberg and early printing. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students develop a supported judgement about Gutenberg's historical significance. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students present a structured explanation of Gutenberg's significance using evidence and appropriate HASS terminology. |

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# Achievement Standard Contribution

The clauses below are taken directly from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. This lesson has a particularly strong and natural connection with the Year 2 technological-change clause and the transferable HASS inquiry clauses across all age bands.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They identify the effects of changes in technologies on people’s lives.”** | Students identify how printing changed the work of book production and enabled more copies of written information to be produced. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students develop questions, and collect, sort and record related information and data from observations and provided sources.”** | Students compare manuscript copying and printing and organise observations in a before-and-after representation. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives.”** | Students interpret the differences between scribal and print production and consider how the change affected workers and readers. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students conclude how printing changed books and communication. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students investigate Gutenberg's printing system using written and visual information. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse manuscript and print production and draw conclusions about the dissemination of ideas. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students explain the printing process using ideas from historical information and relevant terminology. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students complete a historical significance investigation drawing upon multiple source types. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students evaluate manuscript pages, printed materials, documentary evidence and secondary sources. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students infer relationships between movable-type printing, increased book production and the wider circulation of Renaissance ideas. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students use evidence to judge Gutenberg's historical significance while avoiding exaggerated causal claims. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise comparative and source evidence and present a structured historical explanation. |

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# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 manuscript and printing comparison | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 printing-system diagram | Process interpretation and explanation |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation | Historical inquiry evidence |
| Manuscript-print comparison table | Analysis of historical change |
| Gutenberg historical significance response | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 6.2 – Geography & Economics

## How Printing Travelled Across Europe: Cities, Trade Routes and the Spread of Ideas

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate how geography and trade networks helped printing spread across Europe.
- explain why printing businesses developed in particular cities.
- examine how transport, markets and literacy influenced the movement of books.
- identify interconnections between printers, merchants, universities and readers.
- infer relationships between economic demand and the spread of printed ideas.

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# Key Terminology

**Trade network** – A system of connected places through which goods, money and information move.

**Printing centre** – A city or town where printing businesses become concentrated.

**Market** – A group of people who may want or buy particular goods or services.

**Demand** – The desire or need for a good or service and the willingness to obtain it.

**Distribution** – The process of moving goods from producers to users or buyers.

**Interconnection** – A relationship between people, places or systems.

**Urban centre** – A town or city that serves as an important place for population, business or services.

**Commercial route** – A route used for the movement of goods and business activity.

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# Informational Story

## The Printer Who Packed His Tools

A young printer stood inside a Mainz workshop. Around him were cases of metal type – with letters, numbers, punctuation marks. The type was small. A single piece could fit between his fingers. But together, thousands of pieces could produce a book.

The young printer had learned how to arrange lines of text. He knew how to prepare ink. He understood the press. He had watched sheets emerge carrying rows of identical words.

Now he faced a question. Should he stay in Mainz? Or should he take his knowledge somewhere else?

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Johannes Gutenberg's printing work had begun in Mainz. But printing did not remain there. Within decades, printing workshops appeared in cities across Europe…..  cities like Strasbourg, Cologne, Basel, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Venice, Rome, Paris, Lyon, London.

The technology moved remarkably quickly. But machines do not walk from city to city. A printing press did not wake up one morning, leave Mainz and travel to Venice.

People carried knowledge. Printers moved. Apprentices completed training and moved to other towns. Business partners heard about new opportunities. Merchants transported books. Investors provided money.

The spread of printing was a geographical story about the movement of people, skills and goods.

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Suppose you were a printer in the fifteenth century. Where should you establish a workshop? You would need to ask questions like…

Are there readers in the city?

Is there a university nearby?

Are scholars buying books?

Are church institutions purchasing texts?

Do merchants need printed materials?

Can paper be obtained?

Can books be transported to other towns?

Are there wealthy patrons?

Will local authorities permit the work?

Is another printer already operating nearby?

A printing workshop was both a technological enterprise and a business. So location mattered.

---

This helps explain why many printing centres developed in important urban areas. Cities brought people together. A city might contain:

- scholars
- clergy
- merchants
- government officials

- teachers
- students.

These people used written materials for different purposes….

A university student might need a textbook.

A priest might seek a theological work.

A merchant might require a practical handbook.

A scholar might want a newly printed classical text.

A government office might use printed announcements.

A city created a concentration of potential readers.

In economic language, it created a **market**.

---

The city of **Venice** became one of Europe's great printing centres. Why Venice?

You have already encountered Venice as an important trading city. Ships arrived from different places. Merchants moved goods. The city had extensive commercial connections. It also had skilled craftspeople and investors. Books printed in Venice could enter existing trading networks. A merchant already transporting cloth, glass or other goods might also move books.

The same routes that carried physical products could carry printed ideas. Trade routes became information routes.

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Imagine a newly printed book in Venice. The printer has completed several hundred copies. The books cannot all remain in the workshop. They need readers.

A merchant purchases some copies. The books are packed. Then they travel by ship or overland route. Some reach another Italian city. Others travel north.

A bookseller displays them. A scholar sees the title. He buys a copy. The scholar reads it. He discusses it with another person. Perhaps that person writes a response or review of the book, and that response might eventually be printed too.

The geography of ideas depends partly upon the geography of transport.

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The River Rhine was also important for the spread of information and books. Mainz was situated near the Rhine. The river connected many settlements and commercial centres.

Rivers could function as transport corridors. Moving goods over long distances by land could be expensive and difficult. Water transport often provided important connections. Printers and booksellers could benefit from established routes.

Again, geography created opportunities. A printing workshop needed to produce books. But the books also needed to leave the workshop.

---

Paper was another important resource. European paper production had grown before Gutenberg's printing system became widespread. Paper was generally less expensive than parchment, which was made from prepared animal skins.

Printing large numbers of books required large quantities of writing material. A printer needed reliable access to paper. Paper mills were often located where water could help power equipment used in the production process. This meant geography affected printing even before a page reached the press.

Water, paper production, transport, cities, markets. Each formed part of a wider system.

---

Printers also followed universities. Universities created communities of readers. Professors taught, students studied, scholars compared texts. A university town could produce demand for books.

Before printing, students sometimes copied texts themselves or relied upon manuscript production systems. Printing changed the possibilities. Multiple students could use printed copies of the same text. The copies were not always cheap. But a printer could produce more copies than a scribe could write by hand in the same period.

A university therefore created an attractive market.

---

Consider the printer's questions. What should be printed? A magnificent Bible required enormous resources. Not every printer could begin with such a project. Smaller books could be produced – religious texts, classical works, legal books, practical guides, calendars, pamphlets, and grammars (a ‘grammar’ was a book of the principles or rules of an art, science, or technique).

A printer needed to predict what readers wanted. This is an economic decision. If a printer produced hundreds of copies of a book that no one purchased, the business could lose money.

Type-setting required labour. Paper cost money; ink cost money; and workers needed payment. The printer therefore watched the market…..

What are scholars discussing?

What books are students seeking?

What controversy has begun?

What text is difficult to find?

What might people buy?

Inquisitiveness became part of business.

---

Printers could also create demand. A person cannot buy a book he does not know exists. Printers and booksellers advertised works. Title pages became more important. Catalogues could list available books. Books were displayed. Readers discovered texts they had not previously sought.

The market influenced printers. Printers also influenced the market. Economic relationships often move in more than one direction.

---

One of the most important Venetian printers was **Aldus Manutius**. Aldus lived after Gutenberg and built upon the possibilities printing had created. He became known for producing important Greek and Latin texts. He worked with scholars. He published editions of classical authors. His printing business became connected with Renaissance humanism.

Aldus also produced smaller books that were easier to carry than enormous volumes. A reader could travel with a book. Printed knowledge became more portable. Once again, a technological development created further questions….

Could books be smaller? Could type be designed differently?

Could scholars work directly with printers?

Could ancient texts be edited and compared before printing?

Innovation continued.

---

But printed books did not spread equally to everyone. Many people in Europe could not read. Books still cost money. Some people lived far from major commercial networks. Language could create barriers. A Latin book might be useful to a scholar but inaccessible to a person who could only read a local language.

The spread of printing therefore depended upon several conditions….

**Technology** – Could books be produced?

**Transport** – Could books move?

**Markets** – Were people willing and able to obtain them?

**Literacy** – Could people read them?

**Language** – Could readers understand them?

The existence of printing alone did not guarantee equal access to information.

---

Printers responded to language. Books increasingly appeared in vernacular languages – the languages people commonly spoke – Italian, German, French, English, other European languages.

A book printed in a language familiar to more local readers could reach a different market. This had important consequences. More people could encounter religious, political and literary ideas without relying completely upon Latin.

However, historians should be careful. Printing did not instantly make everyone literate. Nor did Latin disappear. Change occurred unevenly. Some regions changed faster than others.

Some groups gained greater access before others. Historical change is often a process rather than a single moment.

---

The movement of printers also spread technical knowledge. A trained printer might leave one city. He carried no internet tutorial; no online course; no video instruction.

He carried knowledge in his mind and hands, and knew how type should be arranged. He understood the press, recognised good ink, and knew how to organise a workshop. When he established a new business, he could train apprentices. Those apprentices could later move again.

This is called **knowledge transfer**. A skill moves because people teach other people.

The technology spread through human networks.

---

Now imagine Europe as a map covered in dots – Mainz, Venice, Paris, Basel, Nuremberg, London. Each dot is a printing centre.

Now draw lines between the dots. The lines are like the roads, rivers, sea routes, merchant connections, university networks, church connections.

The printing revolution was not simply one machine in one room. It became a network of places. Books travelled along the lines. Printers travelled along the lines. Ideas travelled along the lines.

---

Printing also created new economic occupations. Type founders produced type. ('Type-founders' are designers and makers of metal letters etc for printing.) Paper makers produced paper. Printers operated presses. Compositors arranged type. Correctors checked texts. Illustrators created images. Binders assembled books. Booksellers sold them. Merchants distributed them.

One technological development supported many forms of work.

The printing industry became an economic system.

---

What happened when a printed idea reached a new city? Perhaps nothing. The book might sit unread. Perhaps a reader disagreed. Perhaps a teacher used it. Perhaps a preacher quoted it. Perhaps a ruler banned it. Perhaps a scholar wrote a response.

Printing increased the possibility that ideas could cross geographical boundaries. But it did not control how readers responded. This is important.

Communication is not simply the movement of information from a producer to a passive person. Readers interpret and ask question. They may accept or reject the idea, and then discuss it with others.

A printed book enters a community of thinking people.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Europe had changed. Printing presses operated in numerous cities. Large numbers of books had been produced. The writings of ancient authors circulated in printed editions. Maps could be reproduced. Religious works travelled. Political arguments could spread.

Printers had become important participants in the movement of ideas.

The Renaissance hunger for knowledge had found a powerful distribution system.

---

Gutenberg had worked in Mainz. But Gutenberg's significance cannot be understood by looking only at Mainz. His printing system entered a world already connected by trade. Printers followed routes. Books entered markets. Cities became centres of production. Readers created demand. New printers copied and improved the process.

The technology moved because Europe was a network of places and people.

An inquisitive geographer asks: **Where did printing spread?**

An economist asks: **Why did printing businesses develop there?**

A historian asks: **What changed when printed ideas reached new readers?**

Together, the questions reveal a much larger story. Ideas had always travelled. Now they could travel carrying hundreds of identical pages.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- why printing spread beyond Mainz.
- why cities were good locations for printing workshops.
- why Venice became an important printing centre.
- how rivers and trade routes helped books move.
- why universities created demand for books.
- why printers needed to think about markets.
- how knowledge of printing travelled between people.
- why printing did not give everyone equal access to books.
- how trade routes became routes for ideas.

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# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Location Influences Economic Activity

Printers needed access to:

- readers
- materials
- transport
- workers
- financial resources.

Cities often provided these conditions.

Important printing centres therefore developed in urban and commercial locations.

---

## 2. Trade Networks Can Carry More Than Goods

A trade network may carry:

- materials
- finished products
- people
- money
- information
- knowledge.

Books could move through existing commercial networks.

The movement of goods and the movement of ideas became interconnected.

---

## 3. Markets and Demand

A **market** includes people who may want to obtain a good or service.

Printers considered possible readers such as:

- students
- scholars
- clergy
- merchants
- government officials.

The demand for particular books influenced what printers produced.

## 4. Economic Systems Create Different Roles

Printing supported specialised occupations.

| Economic Role | Contribution |
|---|---|
| Paper maker | Produces paper |
| Type founder | Produces metal type |
| Compositor | Arranges type |
| Printer | Operates printing process |
| Corrector | Checks text |
| Binder | Assembles books |
| Bookseller | Sells books |
| Merchant | Helps distribute books |

A printed book was the product of interconnected human resources.

---

## 5. Interconnections Can Be Inferred

Students may infer a relationship such as:

**University → more readers → greater demand for books → opportunity for printers**

Or:

**Trade routes → easier distribution → larger market → growth of printing businesses**

An inferred relationship is a relationship supported by information and evidence, even when a source does not state it in exactly those words.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. Name one city where printing developed.
2. Why did printers need readers?
3. How could books travel between cities?
4. Who sold printed books?
5. How were a printer and a reader connected?

---

## Years 3–4

1. Why were cities good places for printing businesses?
2. How did trade routes help printed books spread?
3. Why might a university create opportunities for a printer?
4. Why did printers need to think about what readers wanted?
5. What conclusion can you draw about the connection between places and the spread of ideas?

---

## Years 5–6

1. Explain why Venice's geography and commercial networks supported printing.
2. What relationship can you infer between literacy, demand and book production?
3. How did the movement of skilled printers contribute to the spread of printing technology?
4. Why is it inaccurate to say that printing alone gave everyone equal access to information?
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **Why did printing spread rapidly through some European cities and networks?**

---

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – How Did the Book Travel?

Draw a simple journey:

**Printer → Merchant → Road or Ship → Bookseller → Reader**

Add a picture and label for each stage.

Then tell your Home-Tutor:

**“The book travelled because people and places were connected.”**

Explain one connection.

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral explanation.

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## Years 3–4 – Why Did Printers Choose Cities?

Choose a Renaissance printing city such as:

- Mainz
- Venice
- Nuremberg
- Basel
- Paris.

Using a provided map and information sources, investigate:

| Question | Finding |
| --- | --- |
| Where was the city? | |
| What transport connections did it have? | |
| Who might buy books there? | |
| What materials or workers did printers need? | |
| How could books leave the city? | |

Create an annotated map showing the city and at least three important connections.

Write a conclusion:

**This city became a useful place for printing because…**

---

# Years 5–6 – Mapping the European Printing Network

Using a map of Europe and teacher-provided sources, investigate the spread of printing during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Identify at least six printing centres.

For each centre, collect information about:

- location
- transport connections
- commercial importance
- universities or scholarly communities where relevant
- likely markets for printed works.

Organise your evidence:

| Printing Centre | Geographical Advantage | Economic or Social Market | Connections with Other Places |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | |

Create an annotated map showing:

- printing centres
- rivers
- important sea routes
- major commercial routes
- arrows representing the movement of books or printing knowledge.

Then identify at least three inferred relationships.

For example:

Cities connected with major trade networks often provided printers with access to larger distribution markets.

Write an evidence-based response:

**Why did printing spread rapidly through particular European cities and networks?**

Your response should use geographical and economic evidence from your investigation.

---

# God's Big Story Reflection

God created human beings to live in relationship. People teach one another. They exchange ideas. They travel, and speak to others, and write their ideas for others to read.

The world is filled with interconnections. Printing made some of these connections more powerful. A message could travel farther. A book could enter another city. A reader could encounter an idea from a person he had never met.

This created opportunities for truth and learning. But the Fall means human networks can also spread error. A false idea can travel the same road as a true one. A harmful book can be carried on the same ship as a wise book.

Restoration therefore requires both communication and discernment. Christians should value opportunities to learn from people and places beyond their immediate community.

But we must also ask careful questions about the ideas we receive.

"Test everything; hold fast what is good." – **1 Thessalonians 5:21**

Inquisitiveness follows the connections. Wisdom tests what travels along them.

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## Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded Australian Curriculum Version 9 HASS Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2K03** | **how places can be spatially represented in geographical divisions from local to regional to state/territory, and how people and places are interconnected across those scales** | Students map printing centres and trace connections between printers, merchants, cities and readers. The lesson develops understanding that places can be connected beyond the local scale. |
| **AC9HS2S02** | **collect, sort and record information and data from observations and from provided sources, including unscaled timelines and labelled maps or models** | Students collect and represent information about the journey of printed books using pictorial sequences and labelled maps. |
| **AC9HS2S03** | **interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present** | Students interpret information about historical book distribution and how printed materials moved between places. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw conclusions about how connected people and places helped books travel. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Students communicate observations about printers, merchants and readers using relevant geographical and economic terms. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students investigate why particular Renaissance cities became centres of printing. |

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS3S02** | **locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources, including annotated timelines and maps** | Students locate a printing centre and record information about its geographical and economic connections on an annotated map. |
| **AC9HS3S03** | **interpret information and data displayed in different formats** | Students interpret maps, written sources, process relationships and information tables. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students analyse location, markets and transport connections and conclude why a city became important for printing. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present a geographical explanation using evidence from maps and information sources. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | Students identify human resources such as printers and compositors, and capital resources such as presses and equipment, within the printing economy. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate the European printing network as a geographical and economic system. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students locate and organise map, geographical and historical evidence concerning multiple European printing centres. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students identify geographical patterns in the location of printing centres and infer relationships between trade, transport, markets, literacy and print production. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students draw a supported conclusion explaining why printing spread rapidly through particular cities and networks. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students present findings through an annotated map and evidence-based geographical-economic explanation. |

# Achievement Standard Contribution

The clauses below are quoted from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. This lesson particularly develops geographical interconnections, organisation of information, interpretation of mapped information and inferred relationships.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They identify how people and places are interconnected both at local and broader scales.”** | Students trace the movement of printed books between printers, merchants, cities, booksellers and readers. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students develop questions, and collect, sort and record related information and data from observations and provided sources.”** | Students sequence the journey of a printed book and record information about connected people and places. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students draw a conclusion about how connections helped printed information travel. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students investigate a Renaissance printing centre using map and historical information. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse geographical and economic conditions and conclude why a city was suitable for printing. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students use mapped and written source information to explain the development of a printing centre. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students investigate six or more printing centres using maps and provided historical sources. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students identify location patterns and infer relationships between commercial routes, urban markets, literacy and the growth of printing. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students use geographical and economic evidence to explain the spread of printing through European networks. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise findings in a comparison table, annotated map and written explanation. |

# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 book-journey sequence | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 printing-city investigation | Geographical inquiry work sample |
| Annotated map | Mapping evidence |
| Years 5–6 printing-network investigation | HASS inquiry evidence |

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
| --- | --- |
| Inferred relationships | Information-analysis evidence |
| Evidence-based explanation | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 6.3 – Civics, Economics & Historical Investigation

## Who Controlled the Printed Word? Printers, Authorities and the Battle over Ideas

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate why rulers, church authorities and civic leaders became concerned about printed material.
- explain how printing changed the balance of power between writers, printers, authorities and readers.
- examine the purposes of licensing, censorship and restrictions on printing.
- identify different historical perspectives about the control of information.
- evaluate evidence and draw conclusions about who should decide which ideas may be printed and circulated.

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# Key Terminology

**Censorship** – The restriction or suppression of information, ideas or publications judged unacceptable by an authority.

**Licence** – Official permission to perform an activity or produce something.

**Authority** – A person or organisation with recognised power to make or enforce decisions.

**Pamphlet** – A short, printed work, usually containing information or arguments about a particular subject.

**Circulation** – The movement or distribution of printed material among readers.

**Propaganda** – Information designed to influence people's opinions or actions, often by presenting a particular viewpoint strongly.

**Perspective** – A person's particular way of understanding an event, problem or issue.

**Public opinion** – The ideas and attitudes held by members of a community about public issues.

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# Informational Story

## The Page the Ruler Feared

The printer held the page in his hand. It was small, thin, and light. It could be folded, hidden beneath a coat, placed inside a bag, and carried through a city gate.

The page did not contain gold. It did not contain a type of sword. It contained words.

And somewhere in Europe, a ruler was afraid of it. Why? Because one page could become one hundred pages. One hundred pages could reach one hundred readers. Those readers could talk, argue, disagree, and ask questions.

A printed page could travel farther than the voice of the person who wrote it. The printing press had solved one problem. How can many copies of written words be produced?

But it had created another question. **Who should control what is printed?**

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Before printing became widespread, authorities had certainly been concerned about ideas. Rulers had opposed critics. Church leaders had condemned teachings they regarded as false. Books had sometimes been restricted. Writers could be punished.

Printing did not invent disagreement. But printing changed the scale at which written arguments could circulate. Imagine a person writing a controversial statement by hand. One copy exists. Perhaps another person copies it. Then another. The idea may spread a little bit.

Now imagine the same statement being printed hundreds of times. Copies leave the workshop. A merchant carries some; a student carries another; a preacher reads one; and a bookseller sells several of them.

The original writer no longer knows where every copy has gone.

Information has entered a network. For authorities, this created a problem.

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A city government might ask: What if someone prints a false accusation against a public official?

A church leader might ask: What if a printer distributes teaching we believe is dangerous or heretical?

A ruler might ask: What if a pamphlet encourages people to rebel?

A printer might ask: Why should a government decide what people are allowed to read?

A scholar might ask: How can new ideas be discussed if authorities silence every disagreement?

A citizen might ask: How do I know whether the printed claim is true?

Printing gave different people different concerns. The same press could appear to be: a tool of education,

a business opportunity, a danger to public order, a means of reform, or a machine for spreading lies.

The person’s perspective mattered.

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Printers soon discovered that the printed word could bring both opportunity and danger. A popular pamphlet could sell and spread rapidly. A printer who recognised public interest in a controversy might earn more money by printing stories about that tropic. But a controversial publication could also bring punishment.

Authorities in different European cities established different rules. Some required official permission before particular books could be printed. Some granted privileges to certain printers. Some prohibited specified books. Some inspected texts. Some punished printers who produced forbidden material.

The details differed across time and place. But one principle appeared repeatedly.

Authorities recognised that printed information could influence people.

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Why did permission matter? Suppose a ruler says: "No book may be printed until an official has examined it." The official reads the text. If the work is approved, printing may proceed. If it is rejected, the printer must not produce it. This is called **prior restraint** or pre-publication censorship.

From the authority's perspective, the system may protect society from dangerous or false material. From the writer's perspective, it may prevent legitimate criticism. The same system can be described very differently.

A ruler may call it protection. A critic may call it control.

Historians investigate both the stated purpose and the way a system actually operated.

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The Roman Catholic Church became increasingly concerned about printed theological works. The Renaissance had encouraged renewed study of ancient texts. Humanist scholars compared manuscripts. Printers produced editions of the Bible and works by early Christian writers. Questions were being asked.

Then, during the sixteenth century, disputes over Christian teaching became far more intense. You will investigate these events more closely in later topics. For now, one thing is important. Printing allowed theological arguments to travel rapidly.

A sermon preached in one town might be heard by hundreds of people. A printed version could reach readers in many towns. A theological disagreement could become a European controversy.

Church authorities understood this. So did reformers. Both sides used printing.

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This is important. Printing was not the property of one movement. Catholic writers printed books. Protestant reformers printed books. Governments printed proclamations. Critics printed pamphlets. Scholars printed classical texts. Printers produced entertainment.

A printing press had no beliefs of its own. The people using it selected the words. Technology can magnify human choices. The press could reproduce careful scholarship; or it could reproduce an angry accusation.

It could print Scripture; or it could print a lie.

The machine multiplied. Human beings decided what to multiply.

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The printer therefore held a complicated position. Imagine owning a printing workshop. A man enters. "I have written a pamphlet," he says. You read it.

The pamphlet attacks an important official. You ask: "Is this accusation true?"

The writer replies: "Of course." But he provides little evidence.

You know the pamphlet will probably sell. People love controversy. If you print it, you may earn money. But you may also spread a false accusation.

Or perhaps the accusation is true. If you refuse to print it because you fear the official, you may help conceal wrongdoing.

What should the printer do? Printing created ethical decisions.

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Economic pressures also mattered. Paper cost money. Workers expected payment. A press needed to operate. A printer needed customers. A book that sold well could support the workshop. This might encourage printers to produce popular material. But popularity does not guarantee truth.

A shocking rumour may attract more attention than a careful explanation. A fierce argument may sell more copies than a balanced discussion. The economic desire to sell information can influence what information is produced.

This was true in the age of printing. And this principle remains worth investigating today.

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Printers also sometimes received special **privileges**. An authority might grant a printer the exclusive right to print a particular work for a period.

Why?

Preparing a book could require considerable investment. A printer paid for paper. Workers set the type. Errors were corrected. The press produced copies.

Then another printer might obtain a copy of the finished book and quickly print a competing edition. The first printer carried much of the initial cost. The competitor might benefit from that work. A contract between author and printer could say only this printer will be allowed to print the author’s book, and so this could privilege could protect the first printer's economic interest.

But privileges could also give authorities greater control over the printing trade.

Economic protection and political regulation could overlap.

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Printers sometimes used secrecy. A controversial work might be printed without clearly identifying the printer. A false place of publication might be given. Books could be smuggled across borders. People hid pamphlets. Authorities searched for forbidden works.

The movement of books became a contest. A government restricted. A printer found another route. An authority banned a book. A reader sought a copy. A border was watched. A merchant concealed printed sheets among other goods.

Trade networks that helped legal books travel could also help prohibited books travel.

Geographical interconnection made complete control difficult.

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One small pamphlet could be particularly powerful. Large books were expensive. They took time to produce. Pamphlets were shorter. They could often be printed more quickly, and used less paper. They could respond to current controversies. A writer might hear an argument today and produce a reply soon afterwards. The reply could circulate. Then another writer could respond.

Printed debate began to move rapidly. This contributed to the growth of what we might call **public opinion**. More people could encounter arguments about public and religious questions. They could discuss them.

People did not suddenly gain equal political power. But ideas circulating among readers could influence communities.

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Authorities therefore had a difficult problem. Consider a genuinely dangerous lie. Suppose someone prints a false statement claiming that a particular group is secretly poisoning the city's water. Fear spreads; a crowd forms; then innocent people are attacked.

Should the government intervene? Most people would probably say yes. Now consider a pamphlet accusing the government of wasting public money.

The government declares: "This publication is dangerous." But what if the accusation is supported by evidence? Should the government be permitted to silence the criticism?

Now the question becomes harder. The word **dangerous** can describe a real threat. But it can also become an excuse for powerful people to avoid scrutiny.

This is why systems controlling information require careful investigation.

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Historians ask:

… Who made the rule?

… What material was restricted?

… What reason was given?

… Who benefited?

… Who was punished?

… What perspectives survive?

… Did the restriction prevent harm?

… Did it also silence legitimate debate?

Historical judgement requires evidence.

It is easy to say: "All censorship is wise."

It is equally easy to say:

"Every restriction is tyranny."

The historical evidence may reveal something more complicated.

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Imagine three people.

The first is a ruler facing rebellion.

He says:

"Printed lies are encouraging violence. I must protect the city."

The second is a writer exposing government corruption.

She says:

"The ruler calls my work dangerous because he fears the truth."

The third is an ordinary citizen.

He says:

"Both sides print accusations. How do I know whom to believe?"

Each person sees the problem differently.

The ruler values order.

The writer values the freedom to challenge authority.

The citizen needs trustworthy information.

A good historical investigation does not simply choose the loudest person.

It identifies the values, interests and evidence connected with each perspective.

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Printing also raised questions about responsibility.

Who is responsible for a false printed claim?

The writer?

The printer?

The seller?

The reader who repeats it?

Suppose the printer says:

"I only operated the press."

Is that enough?

Suppose the writer says:

"I only asked questions."

But the questions were designed to spread a rumour.

Suppose a reader says:

"I only shared what I read."

Does the act of repeating a claim create responsibility?

The technology made communication easier.

It also made questions of responsibility more urgent.

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The Renaissance love of inquiry encouraged people to examine old ideas.

Scholars asked whether a manuscript was accurate.

Artists investigated nature.

Engineers tested designs.

Printers developed new methods of reproduction.

But inquisitiveness without truth can become mere fascination.

The goal is not simply to collect more claims.

A wise reader learns to ask:

Who created this?

What evidence supports it?

What is the purpose?

What perspective is being presented?

Is important information missing?

Can the claim be compared with another source?

These are historical inquiry questions.

They are also habits of discernment.

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By the sixteenth century, European authorities could not ignore printing.

Words moved.

Arguments multiplied.

Religious disagreements crossed borders.

Political criticisms circulated.

Printers became participants in public life, whether they intended to or not.

The person who controlled a press possessed a new kind of influence.

Not the power of a king.

Not the authority of a bishop.

Not the wealth of the Medici.

The printer possessed the capacity to reproduce a message.

That capacity changed the relationship between ideas and power.

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So who controlled the printed word?

The writer chose words.

The printer chose whether to print.

The patron or investor might provide money.

Authorities made laws.

Booksellers distributed copies.

Merchants carried them.

Readers interpreted them.

No single person controlled the entire network.

That was precisely the problem for those who wanted complete control.

Once a page entered the network, it could travel.

The ruler feared the page because he could not always know where it would go.

The printer valued the page because it could find readers.

The historian studies the page because it reveals a struggle over ideas, authority and responsibility.

And the inquisitive student asks:

**Who wanted this printed?**

**Who wanted it stopped?**

**And why?**

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# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- why authorities became concerned about printed material.
- how printing changed the scale at which ideas could travel.
- what censorship and licensing were.
- why a printer might choose to produce controversial material.
- how money could influence printing decisions.
- why pamphlets were useful in public debates.
- why the word *dangerous* could be difficult to interpret.
- the different perspectives of rulers, writers, printers and readers.
- who you think controlled the printed word.

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# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Printing Changed the Power of Communication

Printing allowed many copies of the same message to be produced.

This meant a writer's words could reach people whom the writer had never met.

A simplified relationship is:

**Writer → Printer → Multiple Copies → Distribution → Readers → Discussion**

Authorities could no longer focus only upon the original speaker or writer.

They also needed to consider the circulation of printed copies.

## 2. Why Authorities Regulated Printing

Historical authorities might claim that restrictions were needed to:

- protect public order.
- prevent rebellion.
- prevent false accusations.
- protect religious teaching.
- control material judged immoral or dangerous.

However, restrictions might also:

- prevent criticism of powerful people.
- limit discussion.
- protect established institutions.
- silence minority perspectives.

Historians examine how a particular restriction actually operated.

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## 3. Economic Interests Influenced Printing

Printers operated businesses.

They needed to consider:

- production costs
- paper
- wages
- equipment
- consumer demand
- the risk of unsold books.

Popular controversies could create markets for pamphlets and books.

This means economic incentives could influence which ideas were reproduced.

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## 4. Perspectives Reflect Roles and Interests

| Historical Person | Possible Concern |
|---|---|
| Ruler | Political stability and public order |
| Church authority | Protection of religious teaching |
| Writer | Ability to communicate an argument |
| Printer | Business survival and freedom to print |
| Bookseller | Demand and sales |
| Reader | Access to reliable information |

A perspective explains how a person may view an issue.

It does not automatically prove the person correct.

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## 5. Historical Inquiry Requires Source Evaluation

When examining a printed source, ask:

**Origin** – Who created or printed it?

**Purpose** – Why was it produced?

**Perspective** – What viewpoint does it present?

**Evidence** – What information supports its claims?

**Limitation** – What can it not tell us?

A source may be historically valuable even when its claims are biased or false.

For example, a propaganda pamphlet may not provide reliable evidence about the people it attacks.

But it may provide strong evidence about the beliefs or strategies of the person who created it.

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# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. Why could a ruler be worried about a printed page?
2. What is censorship?
3. Why might a printer want to sell a popular pamphlet?
4. Why should a reader ask whether printed words are true?
5. Who was involved in helping printed words reach readers?

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## Years 3–4

1. Why was a printed argument different from one handwritten copy?
2. Why might a government want to examine books before they were printed?
3. Why might a writer disagree with censorship?
4. How could money affect a printer's decision about what to print?
5. What questions should a reader ask before believing a controversial pamphlet?

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## Years 5–6

1. Explain how printing changed the relationship between information and political power.
2. What relationship can you infer between consumer demand and the production of controversial printed material?
3. Why might the stated purpose of censorship differ from its actual effect?
4. Why can a biased pamphlet still be a useful historical source?
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **Who should have held responsibility for the circulation of printed ideas – the writer, printer, authorities or readers?**

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# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Who Helped the Words Travel?

Create five picture cards:

**Writer**

**Printer**

**Merchant or Bookseller**

**Reader**

**Ruler**

Place the cards in a sequence or connection map.

Use arrows to show how a written message might travel.

Then choose two people and explain:

**“This person cared about the printed page because…”**

Your Home-Tutor may record your oral explanation.

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## Years 3–4 – Four Perspectives on a Printed Pamphlet

Imagine a pamphlet has criticised the rulers of a Renaissance city.

Read the four perspectives.

**The ruler:**
"This pamphlet may cause disorder and turn citizens against the government."

**The writer:**
"The people need to know what their rulers are doing."

**The printer:**
"Many people want to read this pamphlet, but I may be punished if I print it."

**The reader:**
"I want to know the truth, but I do not know whether the claims are accurate."

Complete the table:

| Person | What does the person value or fear? | What questions should we ask about this perspective? |
|---|---|---|
| Ruler | | |
| Writer | | |
| Printer | | |
| Reader | | |

Then answer:

**Which person faces the most difficult decision? Explain your conclusion.**

Use the terms:

**authority**

**perspective**

**censorship**

**evidence**

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# Years 5–6 – The Printed Word Case File

Investigate one historical example of a printed work that faced restriction, censorship or official opposition during the Renaissance or Reformation period.

Your teacher may provide a case study involving:

- a religious pamphlet.
- a controversial theological text.
- a prohibited book.
- a political publication.
- a printer investigated or punished for a publication.

Use at least three primary and secondary sources.

Complete the source evaluation table:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective | Evidence about the dispute | Limitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Then investigate:

### What was printed?

### Who created or supported it?

### Who opposed or restricted it?

### What reasons were given for the restriction?

### What economic interests were involved?

### How did the printed material circulate?

### What perspectives can be identified?

### What evidence supports or challenges each perspective?

Write an evidence-based response:

**Was the restriction of this printed work primarily intended to protect the community, protect an institution, or protect political or religious power?**

Your answer may conclude that several motives were present.

Use evidence from your sources and acknowledge limitations in the available evidence.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

Words can carry truth.

Words can also carry lies.

The power to communicate therefore brings responsibility.

The Bible repeatedly warns about false testimony, careless words and deception.

It also records prophets and apostles speaking truth even when powerful people wanted them to remain silent.

The Fall means authorities can misuse power.

Writers can misuse words.

Businesses can place profit above truth.

Readers can repeat claims without careful thought.

God's work of restoration calls us towards truth, wisdom and service.

The Christian does not ask only:

**“Am I allowed to say this?”**

We should also ask:

**“Is it true?”**

**“Is it just?”**

**“What evidence do I have?”**

**“What effect might my words have upon another person?”**

“The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.” – **Proverbs 18:17**

Inquisitiveness listens.

Then it examines.

Then it seeks truth.

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# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded Australian Curriculum Version 9 HASS Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2K02** | **how technological developments changed people’s lives at home, and in the ways they worked, travelled and communicated** | Students investigate how printing changed communication by allowing written arguments and information to circulate in multiple copies over greater distances. |
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students ask questions about printed pages, printers, rulers and the control of information. |
| **AC9HS2S04** | **discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events** | Students discuss the differing perspectives of rulers, writers, printers and readers concerning printed material. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw conclusions about why different people cared about printed words and the responsibilities associated with communication. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Students communicate historical observations using terms such as printer, ruler, censorship and authority. |
| **AC9HS3K06** | **who makes rules, why rules are important in the school and/or the local community, and the consequences of rules not being followed** | Students examine why authorities created rules governing printing and consider the purposes and consequences of those rules. The Renaissance context develops the transferable civics concept that recognised authorities establish and enforce rules. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students develop historical inquiry questions concerning censorship and the competing interests of rulers, writers, printers and readers. |

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS3S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students analyse four contrasting perspectives on a controversial printed pamphlet. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students use perspective analysis to judge which historical person faced the most difficult decision. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present an explanation using historical and civics terms such as authority, censorship and evidence. |
| **AC9HS5K07** | **how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal** | Students investigate how writers, reform groups and other communities could use printed material to organise, persuade and advance shared religious, political or civic goals. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate historical systems controlling printed information and the people involved in disputes about publication. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students collect and organise evidence concerning a censored or restricted printed work from multiple source types. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between printing, consumer demand, public discussion, political power and attempts to control circulation. |
| **AC9HS5S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students explicitly evaluate the origin, purpose and perspective of sources connected with a printing dispute. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students develop a supported judgement concerning the motives behind the restriction of a printed work. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students present a historical explanation using source findings, competing viewpoints and relevant HASS terminology. |

# Achievement Standard Contribution

The Achievement Standard clauses below are taken directly from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. This lesson intentionally develops the transferable inquiry, perspective and evidence-evaluation requirements that can be revisited throughout the 12-unit sequence.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They identify the effects of changes in technologies on people’s lives.”** | Students identify that printing changed communication by enabling many copies of written ideas to circulate among readers. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives.”** | Students identify why writers, printers, rulers and readers could hold different perspectives about a printed work. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students draw conclusions about why people cared about controlling or sharing printed information. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales.”** | Narration and the connection-map task require students to communicate historical observations using relevant terminology. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students frame questions about a controversial pamphlet and examine provided historical perspectives. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse the concerns and values of a ruler, writer, printer and reader and draw a supported conclusion. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students explain a printing dispute using ideas from historical information and civics terminology. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students undertake a case-file investigation of a restricted or censored Renaissance or Reformation publication. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students evaluate primary and secondary sources associated with the selected publication dispute. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students infer relationships between printing, markets, circulation, public debate and attempts by authorities to regulate information. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students weigh competing explanations for why a printed work was restricted and form an evidence-based judgement. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise a historical case file and present a source-supported explanation that recognises competing perspectives and possible multiple motives. |

# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 communication connection map | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 perspective table | Perspective-analysis evidence |

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Years 3–4 supported conclusion | Portfolio evidence |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation | Historical inquiry evidence |
| Printed-word case file | Source organisation and analysis |
| Evidence-based censorship judgement | Achievement Standard evidence |

| TOPIC 7 | RETURNING TO THE SOURCES |
|---|---|

# Lesson 7.1 – History & Civics

## Desiderius Erasmus: The Scholar Who Asked Whether the Text Was Right

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate the life and historical significance of Desiderius Erasmus.
- explain why Renaissance humanists searched for older manuscripts and compared texts.
- examine how Erasmus used scholarship, language and printing to question accepted ideas.
- investigate different perspectives concerning criticism and reform.
- evaluate historical sources and draw conclusions about Erasmus's contribution to the Renaissance and Reformation era.

---

# Key Terminology

**Humanist** – In the Renaissance context, a scholar who studied language, literature and writings from the ancient world and emphasised close study of original texts.

**Manuscript** – A handwritten document or book.

**Textual comparison** – Examining different copies or versions of a text to identify similarities and differences.

**Translation** – Expressing words or ideas from one language in another language.

**Satire** – Writing that uses humour, exaggeration or irony to criticise foolishness or wrongdoing.

**Reform** – Change intended to correct problems or improve an institution or practice.

**Clergy** – People formally appointed to religious ministry or leadership.

**Source** – Evidence used to investigate the past or answer a historical question.

# Informational Story

## The Word in the Manuscript

Erasmus leaned over the page.

Beside him lay another manuscript.

Then another.

The words were almost the same.

Almost.

He looked again.

One manuscript used a particular word.

Another contained a slightly different form.

A later copy appeared to contain wording that made Erasmus pause.

He reached for his notes.

For centuries, Christian scholars had copied biblical manuscripts by hand.

Most scribes worked carefully.

But scribes were human.

A letter might be omitted.

A word might be repeated.

A note written beside the text might later be copied into the body of a manuscript.

Small differences could appear.

Erasmus stared at the pages.

He did not ask: **Which manuscript is easiest to accept?**

He asked: **Which wording is most likely to be earlier?**

It was a scholar's question.

It was also a question that could make people uncomfortable.

---

Desiderius Erasmus was born in the Netherlands, probably in 1466.

His early life was difficult.

His parents died while he was still young.

Erasmus received an education and eventually entered a religious community.

But the life expected of him did not entirely suit his restless and scholarly mind.

Erasmus wanted books.

Languages.

Libraries.

Conversation.

He wanted to travel.

Most of all, he wanted to study.

He became one of the great scholars of Renaissance Europe.

---

Erasmus belonged to the intellectual movement commonly called **Renaissance humanism**.

Today, the word *humanism* can be used in several different ways.

It is important not to simply take a modern meaning and place it into Renaissance history.

Many Renaissance humanists were Christians.

They studied ancient Greek and Roman literature.

They valued grammar, rhetoric, history and moral philosophy.

Some believed that careful study of languages and original texts could strengthen Christian scholarship.

A phrase associated with humanist learning was: **ad fontes**

It means: **to the sources…** or **back to the sources**.

Do not simply repeat what someone else says a writer said.

Read the writer.

Do not rely only upon a poor translation.

Study the language.

Do not assume every copied text is identical.

Compare manuscripts.

Erasmus loved this approach.

He travelled through Europe.

Paris.

England.

Italy.

Basel.

He met scholars.

He examined libraries.

He corresponded with educated people across different countries.

Printing had made scholarly communication more powerful.

Letters still travelled slowly compared with modern communication.

But books and printed editions could now reach scholars in many places.

Erasmus became part of an international network of learning.

He was not the ruler of a city. He did not command an army. His influence came through words.

---

During his visits to England, Erasmus became friends with thinkers such as **Thomas More**.

More was a lawyer, scholar and public official.

The two men enjoyed serious conversation and humour.

Erasmus later wrote a famous work commonly known in English as *The Praise of Folly*.

It was a satire.

In the work, Folly speaks.

Through humour and irony, Erasmus criticised foolishness in society.

He mocked scholars who loved complicated arguments but lacked wisdom.

He criticised clergy who neglected genuine Christian living.

He attacked superstition.

He challenged pride.

Satire allowed Erasmus to expose problems through humour.

But humour can be dangerous.

The person laughing may say:

"How clever!"

The person being criticised may say:

"How insulting!"

---

Why did Erasmus criticise the Church?

Erasmus remained a Catholic.

He did not originally seek to divide Western Christianity into competing churches.

He wanted reform.

He believed there were real problems.

Some clergy were poorly educated.

Some religious practices had become confused with superstition.

Some scholars spent enormous energy debating minor questions.

Erasmus wanted Christians to return to the teaching of Christ.

He wanted better education; better preaching; better scholarship.

For Erasmus, reform should begin with truth and learning.

---

This leads us back to manuscripts.

The New Testament had been written in Greek.

But Western European scholars commonly used the Latin Bible.

Erasmus believed scholars should study the Greek text.

He worked to produce a printed Greek New Testament accompanied by a revised Latin text.

In 1516, his edition appeared.

This was an enormous scholarly achievement. But it was not perfect.

Erasmus worked quickly.

The manuscript evidence available to him was limited.

In some places, he made decisions that later scholars would question.

His first edition contained errors.

Erasmus revised later editions.

This is important.

An inquisitive scholar is not a person who never makes a mistake.

An inquisitive scholar is willing to return to the evidence.

---

Imagine the difficulty.

Erasmus had several manuscripts.

They did not always agree in every small detail.

Which reading should he use?

He considered language. He compared evidence. He examined grammar. He looked at the writings of earlier Christian scholars. He made judgements.

Today, scholars studying ancient texts use far more manuscripts and highly developed methods of textual criticism.

They also possess technologies Erasmus could never have imagined.

But Erasmus helped strengthen a scholarly habit: **compare the sources.**

---

Printing greatly increased the influence of his work.

A handwritten scholarly correction might remain in one library.

A printed Greek New Testament could reach scholars in different countries.

Readers could compare Erasmus's edition with other texts.

Disagreements could spread. So could improvements.

Printing multiplied both scholarship and criticism.

Erasmus had entered the world Gutenberg helped create.

---

Not everyone welcomed the questions.

Suppose you have used a particular wording for many years.

A scholar arrives and says: "I have compared earlier manuscripts. We should examine whether this wording is accurate."

How might you react?

Perhaps with interest.

Perhaps with gratitude.

Or perhaps with suspicion.

"Are you saying our teachers were wrong?"

"Are you attacking the Church?"

"Why do you always question things?"

Erasmus discovered that textual questions could become political and religious questions.

Evidence does not exist in an empty room.

People have traditions.

Institutions have authority.

Scholars have reputations.

A new argument may affect all of them.

---

Erasmus also worked on new editions of early Christian writers.

He wanted readers to examine what earlier teachers had actually written.

Again: **to the sources**.

This humanist habit influenced many later scholars.

Among those who read Erasmus's Greek New Testament was a German monk named **Martin Luther**.

Luther would ask questions far more confrontational than Erasmus wanted.

Soon Europe entered one of the greatest religious conflicts in its history.

---

At first, some people expected Erasmus to support Luther strongly.

After all, Erasmus had criticised corruption.

He had called for reform. He had challenged poor scholarship. He had encouraged study of Scripture.

But Erasmus was cautious. He disliked division. He feared violence. He valued learning and persuasion.

He believed Luther's manner could be too aggressive.

Luther, on the other hand, believed the issues were too important for endless cautious discussion.

Two inquisitive men could ask serious questions and still disagree profoundly about what should happen next.

---

Eventually Erasmus and Luther publicly disagreed over the question of human free will.

Erasmus wrote cautiously. Luther responded forcefully.

The disagreement revealed their different temperaments and theological positions.

Erasmus preferred careful argument and moderation. Luther often wrote with extraordinary intensity.

Erasmus feared that reckless conflict could destroy Christian unity. Luther feared that excessive caution could protect serious error.

How should a historian judge them? Not by pretending they were the same. Not by simply choosing the person whose personality we prefer.

We examine their writings; their context; their purposes; their beliefs; their consequences.

---

Erasmus occupied an uncomfortable position.

Some Catholics believed he had encouraged the questions that produced the Reformation.

Some Protestants believed he was too afraid to follow the truth where it led.

A saying later circulated that Erasmus had laid the egg that Luther hatched.

Erasmus rejected the accusation. The image is memorable.

But historical significance must be investigated more carefully than a clever saying.

Did Erasmus cause the Reformation?

No single scholar caused such an enormous historical development.

But did his scholarship, criticism and printed Greek New Testament contribute to a world in which reformers asked new questions?

Certainly.

Historical causes often form networks.

Printing.

Humanism.

Political rivalries.

Church problems.

Biblical scholarship.

Economic interests.

Personal convictions.

Many factors interacted.

Erasmus was one part of that larger story.

---

Erasmus's life also raises an important question about criticism.

Is it enough to identify a problem?

Suppose a scholar notices corruption. He writes about it. He mocks it. He proposes education. But the institution changes slowly.

Should the scholar become more forceful?

Should he remain within the institution?

Should he separate?

Should he compromise to preserve peace?

These are not simple questions.

Erasmus's critics accused him of hesitation.

His supporters saw wisdom in his caution.

Perspective changes interpretation.

---

There is also a difference between **inquisitiveness** and mere suspicion.

Erasmus did not say: "Everything we inherited must be false."

That would not be scholarship. He studied. He compared. He learned languages. He examined evidence.

Sometimes the traditional wording was supported. Sometimes a question remained. Sometimes a correction was needed.

Good inquiry does not begin with the conclusion that everyone before us was foolish. It begins with humility.

**Let us look carefully.**

---

Think about the manuscripts on Erasmus's desk.

One page. Another page. A different word.

He could have ignored the difference. No controversy. No difficult question. No need to make a judgement.

But Erasmus looked again.

Why is this different?

Which source is earlier?

What does the Greek mean?

How did an earlier writer understand the passage?

A tiny textual difference could lead to hours of work.

This was not curiosity for entertainment.

It was disciplined inquiry.

---

Erasmus sometimes complained that he wanted Scripture to be known more widely.

He believed ordinary Christians should know Christ's teaching.

His work contributed to a growing emphasis upon biblical study.

Yet, like every historical person, Erasmus lived within his own time.

He possessed limitations. He made errors. He could be sarcastic. He sometimes tried to avoid being trapped by one political or theological group. His independence frustrated people.

But perhaps that independence also allowed him to keep asking questions others wanted him to stop asking.

---

By the time Erasmus died in 1536, Europe was divided by religious conflict.

The Reformation was underway.

Printing presses produced theological arguments from competing sides.

Rulers made political and religious decisions.

Church institutions responded.

Erasmus did not create the world that followed exactly as he wanted it.

Historical consequences rarely obey the intentions of one person.

Yet Erasmus had helped teach Europe an important Renaissance habit.

Go back.

Read.

Compare.

Question.

Examine.

Do not merely repeat a claim because it is familiar.

Look at the source.

---

Petrarch had searched for forgotten manuscripts.

Gutenberg helped books multiply.

Erasmus compared the texts.

The Renaissance love of inquiry was becoming increasingly powerful.

Soon the questions would move beyond libraries.

They would enter churches.

Palaces.

Universities.

Town squares.

And the next man in our story would take a question about Church teaching and place it before the public.

His name was Martin Luther.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember about Erasmus.

You might explain:

- what *ad fontes* means.
- why Renaissance humanists studied old manuscripts.
- why Erasmus learned Greek.
- how he compared different manuscript sources.
- why *The Praise of Folly* could make people uncomfortable.
- why Erasmus wanted reform.
- how printing increased the influence of his scholarship.
- why Erasmus and Martin Luther eventually disagreed.
- why Erasmus was historically significant.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. *Ad Fontes* – Returning to the Sources

Renaissance humanists often emphasised close study of earlier texts.

The phrase **ad fontes** means **to the sources**.

A scholar might:

- locate older manuscripts.
- study the original language.
- compare different copies.
- examine the historical context.
- consult early writers.

This is closely related to historical inquiry.

Rather than relying only upon a later person's claim, researchers investigate the available evidence.

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## 2. Manuscripts Can Differ

Before printing, texts were copied by hand.

Copyists could make errors such as:

- missing a word.
- repeating a word or line.
- changing spelling.
- accidentally altering wording.

This does not mean every manuscript was unreliable.

It means scholars compare manuscripts to understand how a text was transmitted.

Erasmus used textual comparison when preparing his Greek New Testament.

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## 3. Printing Changed Scholarship

Printing allowed a scholarly edition to be circulated among many readers.

This created a relationship:

**Source comparison → Scholarly edition → Printing → Wider readership → Further comparison and debate**

Other scholars could inspect Erasmus's decisions.

Scholarship became more interconnected.

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# 4. Reform and Perspective

Erasmus believed there were problems within the Church.

He called for:

- education.
- moral reform.
- better biblical knowledge.
- improved scholarship.

However, he disagreed with some reformers about methods and theology.

A person's support for reform does not mean that person agrees with every proposed change.

Historians identify the particular beliefs and perspectives of historical individuals.

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# 5. Historical Significance Is Usually Multi-Causal

It is too simple to claim:

**“Erasmus caused the Reformation.”**

A stronger historical explanation identifies several interacting developments.

For example:

**Renaissance scholarship**

- 

**Printing**

- 

**Church problems**

- 

**Political conditions**

- 

**Theological disagreement**

- 

**Individual reformers**

↓

**Reformation developments**

Historical inquiry often involves identifying relationships among several causes.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. What did Erasmus like to study?
2. What does *ad fontes* mean?
3. Why could handwritten copies sometimes be different?
4. How did printing help Erasmus's ideas travel?
5. Why did Erasmus ask questions about old texts?

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## Years 3–4

1. Why did humanist scholars want to study original or early sources?
2. How could a copying error enter a manuscript?
3. Why was learning Greek important to Erasmus?
4. Why might Church leaders have felt uncomfortable when Erasmus criticised problems?
5. What conclusion can you draw about Erasmus's approach to learning?

---

## Years 5–6

1. Explain how textual comparison reflects Renaissance inquisitiveness.
2. Why is it inaccurate to claim that Erasmus alone caused the Reformation?
3. What relationship can you infer between printing and the growth of scholarly debate?
4. Why might Erasmus and Luther have interpreted the need for reform differently?
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **How significant was Erasmus in preparing the intellectual conditions for the Reformation?**

---

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Look Again

The Home-Tutor provides two very short copies of the same sentence. One copy contains two or three simple differences.

For example:

**Copy A:**
The boy carried the book to the library.

**Copy B:**
The boy carried a book into the library.

Circle or point to the differences.

Then explain:

**“Erasmus compared old copies because…”**

Create a picture of Erasmus looking at two manuscripts.

Label:

**look**

**compare**

**question**

**source**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral explanation.

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# Years 3–4 – Back to the Sources

Imagine three people make the following claim:

“Erasmus wanted to destroy the Church.”

You are a historical investigator.

Develop at least five questions you would ask before accepting the claim.

For example:

- Who made the claim?
- When was it written?
- What did Erasmus himself write?

Then use provided extracts or secondary information about Erasmus to organise evidence.

| Evidence | What does it suggest about Erasmus? |
|---|---|
| Erasmus criticised clergy | |
| Erasmus produced a Greek New Testament | |
| Erasmus remained within the Catholic Church | |
| Erasmus disagreed with Luther | |

| Evidence | What does it suggest about Erasmus? |
|---|---|
| Erasmus called for reform | |

Write a conclusion:

**The claim that Erasmus wanted to destroy the Church is accurate / partly accurate / inaccurate because…**

Use the terms:

**source**

**evidence**

**perspective**

**reform**

---

# Years 5–6 – Erasmus and the Historical Source Investigation

Investigate the question:

**How significant was Erasmus in preparing the intellectual conditions for the Reformation?**

Use at least four primary and secondary sources.

Sources may include:

- extracts from Erasmus's writings.
- pages or information concerning his Greek New Testament.
- correspondence.
- writings from supporters or critics.
- later historical interpretations.

Complete the source evaluation table:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective | Evidence about Erasmus | Limitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

Then organise evidence under the following categories:

## Erasmus and humanist scholarship

### Erasmus and biblical texts

### Erasmus and criticism of Church problems

### Erasmus and printing

### Erasmus's disagreements with reformers

### Other causes of the Reformation

Create a causal relationship diagram showing Erasmus as **one part of a larger network of causes**.

Then write an evidence-based response:

**How significant was Erasmus in preparing the intellectual conditions for the Reformation?**

Your response should:

- evaluate evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- explain Erasmus's contribution.
- identify other important historical factors.
- avoid claiming that Erasmus alone caused the Reformation.
- reach a supported judgement about his historical significance.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

Christians believe that truth matters because God is true.

Human beings, however, are affected by the Fall.

We misunderstand.

We make mistakes.

We repeat claims.

Sometimes we defend familiar ideas because questioning them feels uncomfortable.

Erasmus reminds us that faithful inquiry can require us to return to the source and look carefully.

But inquisitiveness also requires humility.

Erasmus's own editions contained errors.

He needed to revise them.

The person who asks questions must also be willing to have his own conclusions questioned.

Restoration calls us towards truth, wisdom and faithful service.

We should ask:

**What is the source?**

**Have I understood it correctly?**

**What evidence supports my conclusion?**

**Am I willing to correct an error?**

“The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.” – **Proverbs 20:5**

Inquisitiveness looks beneath the repeated claim.

Wisdom returns to the evidence.

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# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded Australian Curriculum Version 9 HASS Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students ask questions about Erasmus, manuscripts and historical claims concerning his intentions and significance. |
| **AC9HS2S03** | **interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present** | Students compare short textual examples and use provided sources to understand why Erasmus examined different manuscript copies. |
| **AC9HS2S04** | **discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events** | Students consider why Erasmus, his critics and later reformers could hold different perspectives about reform and scholarship. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students use interpretations of provided information to draw conclusions about Erasmus's questioning of texts. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Narration and activities require students to communicate observations about Erasmus using terms such as manuscript, source and reform. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students develop historical inquiry questions before accepting a claim about Erasmus. |
| **AC9HS3S03** | **interpret information and data displayed in different formats** | Students interpret narrative information, evidence tables and provided historical source material. |
| **AC9HS3S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students analyse evidence concerning Erasmus and identify differences between his perspective and those of critics or reformers. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students judge whether a claim about Erasmus is accurate, partly accurate or inaccurate based on evidence. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present a historical conclusion using source evidence and terms such as perspective, reform and evidence. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Erasmus, humanist scholarship and the broader developments associated with the Reformation. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students collect and organise information from Erasmus's writings, manuscript-related evidence and historical interpretations. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between humanism, source study, printing, Church criticism and later Reformation developments. |
| **AC9HS5S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students explicitly evaluate sources about Erasmus to determine origin, purpose and perspective. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students develop an evidence-based judgement about Erasmus's historical significance. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students organise evidence into thematic categories and present a source-supported historical explanation. |

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# Achievement Standard Contribution

The exact Achievement Standard clauses below are drawn from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards. This lesson deliberately strengthens transferable historical inquiry skills while contributing to the broader Renaissance understanding of significant people and interacting historical developments.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students develop questions, and collect, sort and record related information and data from observations and provided sources.”** | Students compare textual examples and use provided historical information to investigate Erasmus's approach to sources. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives.”** | Students consider that Erasmus and other historical people could hold different perspectives about criticism and reform. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students conclude why Erasmus compared manuscript copies and returned to sources. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales.”** | Students use narration and relevant historical terminology to communicate observations about Erasmus. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students formulate questions to test a historical claim and organise evidence concerning Erasmus. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse information about Erasmus's criticism, scholarship and relationship with reformers and draw a supported conclusion. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students use evidence and relevant terminology to explain Erasmus's intentions and approach to reform. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students undertake a structured historical significance investigation using several source types. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students evaluate Erasmus's writings, correspondence and later historical interpretations. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students infer relationships between humanist scholarship, printing, biblical textual study and Reformation developments. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students weigh Erasmus's contribution against other causes and develop a supported judgement about his significance. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students categorise findings, construct a causal relationship diagram and present a source-supported historical explanation. |

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# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 textual comparison | Observation and illustrated work sample |
| Years 3–4 historical claim investigation | Inquiry work sample |
| Years 3–4 evidence-based conclusion | Portfolio evidence |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation | Historical source-analysis evidence |
| Causal relationship diagram | Analysis of inferred relationships |
| Erasmus historical significance response | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 7.2 – Geography & Economics

## Why Basel Became a City of Scholars, Printers and Ideas

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate why Basel became an important Renaissance centre of scholarship and printing.
- explain how rivers, trade routes and urban connections influenced the movement of people and ideas.
- examine how printers, scholars, merchants and universities depended upon one another.
- identify relationships between economic demand, skilled human resources and the production of books.
- use geographical and economic information to draw conclusions about why Erasmus chose Basel as an important place for his work.

---

# Key Terminology

**Basel** – A city on the River Rhine that became an important centre of printing and scholarship during the Renaissance.

**River route** – A river used to connect places and move people or goods.

**Urban centre** – A town or city that serves as an important place for population, business and services.

**University** – An institution of advanced learning and scholarship.

**Human resources** – The knowledge, skills and labour of people.

**Capital resources** – Produced resources such as tools, buildings and equipment used to make goods or provide services.

**Economic interconnection** – A relationship in which the economic activities of people or places affect one another.

**Scholarly network** – A group of scholars connected through travel, correspondence, books and shared study.

---

# Informational Story

## The City Beside the Rhine

Erasmus arrived in Basel carrying work.

Not stone. Not wool. Not boxes of spices.

He carried words. Notes. Corrections. Questions. Manuscripts.

Basel stood beside the River Rhine. Boats travelled along the river. Merchants moved goods. Travellers entered the city.

News arrived. Letters arrived. Books arrived.

And in Basel, Erasmus found something he urgently needed. Printers.

---

A scholar can spend years studying a text.

He can compare manuscripts.

Correct errors.

Write explanations.

But if the finished work remains on one desk, its influence may be small.

Erasmus wanted readers.

He wanted scholars in different countries to examine his work.

He wanted ancient texts to be studied.

He wanted Christian teachers to read carefully.

Printing could multiply his words.

But not every city possessed the same printing resources.

A scholar needed the right place.

Basel had become one of those places.

---

Why?

Look at the map.

Basel sits near the meeting point of regions we now associate with Switzerland, France and Germany.

The River Rhine passes through the city.

The Rhine was one of Europe's great river routes.

Follow it north and it connects with cities and commercial regions.

Roads also linked Basel with other parts of Europe.

Travellers moving between northern and southern regions could pass through important routes near the city.

Basel was not an isolated village.

It was connected.

Geographers call this **interconnection**.

The characteristics and location of one place can connect it with many others.

For printers and scholars, connections mattered.

---

Imagine a printer who has produced two hundred copies of a book.

He now has a problem.

Where are the readers?

If the books remain piled in his workshop, the business fails.

He needs booksellers.

Merchants.

Transport routes.

Cities.

Universities.

Church communities.

Readers.

A printing business depends not only upon making books.

It depends upon distributing them.

Basel's location provided access to wider commercial networks.

A book printed beside the Rhine could begin a long journey.

---

One copy might travel north.

Another west.

A merchant might carry books to a trade fair.

A scholar could purchase a copy and take it home.

A university teacher might recommend a text to students.

A church leader might read a theological work.

A printer in another city might hear about the book.

Information moved through people.

The river did not read Erasmus.

But the river helped connect Erasmus's books with readers.

Geography influenced the spread of ideas.

---

Basel also had a university.

The University of Basel had been founded in the fifteenth century.

A university created a community interested in written knowledge.

Teachers needed texts.

Students needed books.

Scholars discussed language.

Law.

Theology.

Medicine.

The arts.

A university did not guarantee that every citizen became a scholar.

But it concentrated readers and educated people in one place.

For a printer, this created a possible market.

For a scholar, it created a community.

For a city, it attracted human resources.

---

Human resources are not simply workers who lift or carry things.

A person's knowledge is also a resource.

Consider a scholarly printer.

He needs to understand the printing process.

But when producing a Greek text, he may also need people who understand Greek.

A corrector checks the text.

A typesetter must identify letters.

An editor examines wording.

A scholar compares sources.

The printing of a difficult ancient text requires specialised knowledge.

This meant that Renaissance scholarly printing depended upon skilled communities.

---

One of Basel's important printers was **Johann Froben**.

Froben became closely associated with Erasmus.

Their relationship demonstrates how scholarship and printing could work together.

Erasmus studied texts.

Froben printed books.

But the relationship was more complicated than:

**Erasmus writes. Froben pushes a button.**

There was no button.

A major scholarly edition required organisation.

Manuscripts had to be obtained.

Erasmus prepared texts.

Printers arranged type.

Corrections were made.

Proofs were examined.

Paper was needed.

Ink was prepared.

Pages were printed.

Books were assembled.

Then the books were sold and distributed.

Scholarship entered an economic production system.

---

Froben was not merely helping Erasmus as a personal favour.

He operated a printing business.

He needed successful publications.

Erasmus was already a well-known scholar.

Readers wanted his books.

A new work by Erasmus could attract attention.

This created an economic relationship.

Erasmus needed a skilled printer.

Froben benefited from an important author.

The scholar and printer were interconnected.

---

Suppose Froben printed a work no one wanted.

Paper had still been used.

Workers had still spent time setting type.

Ink had still been used.

The press had still operated.

Unsold books meant financial loss.

Printers therefore paid attention to demand.

What are scholars reading?

Which ancient writers are becoming popular?

What religious debate is attracting attention?

Which author has a strong reputation?

A printer made decisions about ideas.

But he also made decisions about markets.

This could create tension.

A scholar might want an enormous book filled with difficult Greek.

The printer might ask:

"How many people will buy it?"

The scholar might say:

"But the text is important."

The printer might reply:

"Important books still require paper."

A Renaissance printing workshop existed between learning and economics.

Both mattered.

---

Erasmus's Greek New Testament was printed in Basel by Froben in 1516.

The work is sometimes discussed as though Erasmus quietly produced a perfect text after years of peaceful study.

The reality was more hurried.

Froben apparently wanted the edition produced quickly.

Another printed Greek New Testament project existed elsewhere in Europe.

Competition mattered.

Froben had a reason to publish.

Erasmus worked rapidly.

The result was historically important.

It also contained mistakes.

Here we see an economic influence upon scholarship.

Speed can affect quality.

Competition can encourage innovation.

Competition can also create pressure.

The historian asks:

**How did the circumstances of production affect the final work?**

---

This is an economic question as much as a historical one.

A producer faces limited resources.

Time is limited. Money is limited. Workers are limited. Materials are limited. Choices must be made.

Should the printer delay publication for more correction? Or publish before a competitor?

Should more paper be purchased? How many copies should be printed?

Should the book be large and expensive? Or smaller and cheaper?

Each decision affects the finished product.

---

Erasmus also benefited from the growing network of correspondence among Renaissance scholars.

He wrote letters to people across Europe.

His letters travelled.

Scholars recommended manuscripts.

They discussed language.

They criticised editions.

They asked questions.

A scholar in one city could contribute to work produced in another.

This was a **scholarly network**.

The printing network and the scholarly network overlapped.

A scholar wrote.  A printer produced. A merchant transported. A reader responded.

The response travelled back.

Knowledge moved in circles.

---

Consider the difference between Petrarch and Erasmus.

Petrarch had searched for forgotten manuscripts in an age before printing had transformed European book production.

A discovered text might need to be copied by hand.

Erasmus lived in a later stage of the Renaissance.

He could study a text and work with printers who produced many copies.

The question had changed.

Petrarch asked: **Can the old text be found?**

Erasmus also asked: **Which wording is best supported?**

Then the printer asked: **How quickly can it be produced?**

The bookseller asked: **Where can it be sold?**

The reader asked: **What does it say?**

One text connected many people.

---

Basel's geography helped these networks.

The city stood in a region where different cultural and linguistic areas met.

Travellers from different places could enter.

Commercial routes connected the city.

The Rhine supported movement.

Printing businesses attracted writers.

Writers attracted printers.

Successful printers attracted skilled workers.

Skilled workers strengthened the printing industry.

Economists might describe this as a form of concentration.

A particular activity becomes established in a place.

Related people and businesses gather there.

The place becomes known for that activity.

---

We can see similar patterns elsewhere.

Carrara became associated with marble.

Florence became associated with banking, cloth and art.

Venice became associated with maritime trade and printing.

Basel became an important centre for scholarship and printing.

Places develop characteristics partly because of:

- natural features.
- location.
- transport.
- existing industries.
- skilled people.
- institutions.
- economic decisions.

No single factor explains everything.

---

Would Erasmus have produced exactly the same work if he had remained alone in a remote village?

Probably not. This is an inference. We cannot travel into another version of history and test it. But we can examine the conditions.

Erasmus needed manuscripts. He needed learned contacts. He needed printers. He needed readers.

He needed routes through which books and letters could travel. Basel provided several of these advantages.

The city became part of Erasmus's historical significance.

---

Sometimes history focuses so strongly upon the famous person that the place disappears.

We say:

"Erasmus produced a Greek New Testament."

True.

But where?

With whom?

Using which resources?

Under what pressures?

Through which printer?

How did copies reach readers?

The geographical and economic context helps complete the historical explanation.

---

The same principle applies to many achievements.

A scientist needs equipment.

An inventor may need investors.

A writer needs a way to reach readers.

An artist needs materials.

A teacher needs students.

A scholar needs sources.

Human ability matters.

But human achievement often develops within networks of places and resources.

---

Basel provided Erasmus with a place where ideas could become printed objects.

A Greek word that Erasmus examined could be placed into type.

Ink could cover the metal.

Paper could receive the impression.

The page could dry.

The book could be bound.

A merchant could carry it.

A scholar could open it in another city.

Then another question could begin.

---

Erasmus did not choose Basel because the scenery was pleasant.

He chose to work there repeatedly because Basel offered important connections. Printers. Scholars. Routes. Readers.

A Renaissance city was more than buildings inside a wall.

It was part of a network.

An inquisitive geographer sees the routes.

An economist sees the exchange.

A historian sees the ideas travelling through both.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- where Basel was located.
- why the River Rhine was important.
- how Basel's location helped connect it with other places.
- why universities created opportunities for printers.
- who Johann Froben was.
- why Erasmus and Froben depended upon one another.
- how competition could affect printing decisions.
- what a scholarly network was.
- why Basel was an important place for Erasmus.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Location and Interconnection

The location of a place can influence its activities.

Basel was connected with:

- the River Rhine.
- regional road networks.
- nearby European territories.
- merchant routes.
- scholarly networks.

These connections helped people, goods and ideas move between places.

---

## 2. Universities Create Concentrations of Human Resources

A university brings together:

- teachers.
- students.
- scholars.
- specialist knowledge.

These people may create demand for:

- books.
- writing materials.
- accommodation.
- teaching.
- specialist services.

Institutions can therefore influence the economic and social characteristics of a place.

---

# 3. Printers and Scholars Were Economically Interconnected

Erasmus provided:

- scholarship.
- edited texts.
- reputation.
- works that readers wanted.

Froben provided:

- a printing workshop.
- capital resources.
- skilled workers.
- production organisation.
- distribution connections.

Neither performed exactly the same role.

But the work of each affected the other.

---

# 4. Competition Can Influence Production

Economic competition may encourage people to:

- produce more quickly.
- improve products.
- develop new methods.
- seek new markets.

But competition may also create pressure.

For example:

**Competition → pressure for speed → reduced correction time → possible errors**

Students should investigate both possible benefits and costs.

---

## 5. Places Develop Economic Characteristics

A place may become associated with a particular activity because several factors interact.

For Basel:

**Location**

- 

**Transport connections**

- 

**University**

- 

**Skilled printers**

- 

**Scholars**

- 

**Markets for books**

↓

**Important printing and scholarly centre**

This is an example of an inferred relationship between place and human activity.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. What river flowed through Basel?
2. Why did Erasmus need a printer?
3. Who was Johann Froben?
4. How could a book leave Basel and reach another city?
5. Why was Basel a useful place for Erasmus?

---

## Years 3–4

1. How did the River Rhine help connect Basel with other places?
2. Why could a university help a printing business?

3. What did Erasmus provide to Froben?
4. What did Froben provide to Erasmus?
5. What conclusion can you draw about why scholars and printers gathered in cities?

---

## Years 5–6

1. Explain how Basel's geographical location supported printing and scholarship.
2. What relationship can you infer between universities and markets for printed books?
3. How were Erasmus and Froben economically interconnected?
4. How might competition have influenced the production of Erasmus's 1516 Greek New Testament?
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **Why did place matter to Erasmus's historical influence?**

---

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Erasmus's Book Journey

Draw five pictures:

**Erasmus**

↓

**Froben's Printing Workshop**

↓

**Book**

↓

**Boat or Merchant**

↓

**Reader**

Add a label to each picture.

Then tell your Home-Tutor:

**“Basel helped Erasmus's ideas travel because…”**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral explanation.

---

# Years 3–4 – Why Basel?

Use a provided map of Europe and locate:

- Basel
- the River Rhine
- Mainz
- Paris
- Venice.

Create an annotated map of Basel.

Show:

- the river.
- routes connecting the city with other places.
- a university.
- a printing workshop.
- books moving to readers.

Then complete the table:

| Basel Feature | How it helped scholars or printers |
|---|---|
| River Rhine | |
| Connected location | |
| University | |
| Skilled printers | |
| Readers and markets | |

Write a conclusion:

**Basel became an important Renaissance centre because…**

Use the terms:

**location**

**interconnection**

**scholar**

**printer**

---

# Years 5–6 – Erasmus and Basel: A Geographical-Economic Investigation

Investigate why Basel became an important place for Erasmus and Renaissance printing.

Use a map and at least three provided primary and secondary sources.

Sources may include:

- maps of Rhine trade and transport routes.
- information about the University of Basel.
- information about Johann Froben's printing business.
- correspondence involving Erasmus.
- information about Erasmus's 1516 New Testament edition.
- historical explanations of Basel's printing industry.

Organise your evidence:

| Factor | Evidence | How did this support scholarship or printing? |
|---|---|---|
| Geographical location | | |
| River connections | | |
| Urban markets | | |
| University | | |
| Skilled human resources | | |
| Capital resources | | |
| Printing competition | | |
| Distribution networks | | |

Then create a relationship diagram showing:

**Place → Resources → People → Production → Distribution → Readers**

Identify at least three inferred relationships.

For example:

The presence of scholars and students likely increased demand for printed texts.

Write an evidence-based explanation:

**Why did Basel become an important place for Erasmus's scholarship and historical influence?**

Your explanation should use both geographical and economic evidence.

---

# God's Big Story Reflection

God places people in communities.

We do not learn alone.

Erasmus depended upon scholars who shared manuscripts.

He depended upon printers.

Printers depended upon skilled workers.

Booksellers depended upon transport.

Readers depended upon all of them.

The Fall can lead us to celebrate one famous person while ignoring the people and places that helped make his work possible.

Restoration encourages gratitude, humility and faithful cooperation.

We should ask:

**Who has helped me learn?**

**What resources has God provided?**

**How can I use my place and opportunities to serve others?**

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another.” – **1 Peter 4:10**

Inquisitiveness notices the connections.

Wisdom learns to value them.

---

# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded Australian Curriculum Version 9 HASS Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2K03** | **how places can be spatially represented in geographical divisions from local to regional to state/territory, and how people and places are interconnected across those scales** | Students locate Basel and represent its connections with other European places through rivers, routes, books and people. |
| **AC9HS2S02** | **collect, sort and record information and data from observations and from provided sources, including unscaled timelines and labelled maps or models** | Students use labelled maps and sequence diagrams to record geographical connections and the journey of Erasmus's printed work. |
| **AC9HS2S03** | **interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present** | Students interpret information about Basel, river routes and printing and use those sources to explain historical interconnections. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw a conclusion about why Basel was a useful place for Erasmus and his books. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Students use narration and geographical-economic terminology to communicate observations about Erasmus and Basel. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students investigate the question of why Basel became an important Renaissance centre. |
| **AC9HS3S02** | **locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources, including annotated timelines and maps** | Students locate Basel and other European centres and record geographical information on an annotated map. |
| **AC9HS3S03** | **interpret information and data displayed in different formats** | Students interpret maps, written information, tables and relationship diagrams. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students analyse Basel's location, institutions and printing resources and conclude why scholars and printers gathered there. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present a geographical explanation of Basel's importance using terms such as location, interconnection, scholar and printer. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | Students investigate the human resources of scholars and skilled printers and the capital resources of printing workshops and equipment. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Basel as a geographical, scholarly and economic system connected with Erasmus's work. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students organise evidence from maps, correspondence, institutional information and historical explanations. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between Basel's location, university, skilled human resources, book markets and printing industry. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students draw an evidence-based conclusion explaining why Basel contributed to Erasmus's historical influence. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students organise geographical and economic findings and present a source-supported explanation. |

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# Achievement Standard Contribution

The exact clauses below are drawn from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards. This lesson primarily contributes to geographical interconnection, interpretation of information and inferred relationships.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They identify how people and places are interconnected both at local and broader scales.”** | Students identify connections between Erasmus, Basel, printers, transport routes and readers in other places. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students develop questions, and collect, sort and record related information and data from observations and provided sources.”** | Students sequence the journey of Erasmus's work from scholar to printer to reader. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students conclude why Basel helped Erasmus's ideas travel. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students locate Basel and record information from maps and historical material about its connections and institutions. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse Basel's geographical and economic characteristics and draw a conclusion about its importance as a Renaissance centre. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students use mapped and written information to explain why Basel attracted scholars and printers. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students complete a structured investigation using maps, correspondence and historical sources. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students infer relationships between geographical location, universities, human resources, markets and printing production. |

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students evaluate geographical and economic evidence to explain why Basel mattered to Erasmus's influence. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise evidence in a factor table and relationship diagram before presenting a source-supported explanation. |

---

# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 Erasmus book journey | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 annotated Basel map | Geographical mapping evidence |
| Years 3–4 Basel factors table | Information interpretation evidence |
| Years 5–6 geographical-economic investigation | HASS inquiry evidence |
| Inferred relationship diagram | Analysis evidence |
| Evidence-based Basel explanation | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 7.3 – Civics, Economics & Historical Investigation

## Should Scholars Be Allowed to Criticise Powerful Institutions? Erasmus, Reform and the Responsibility to Question

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate why Erasmus criticised problems within powerful religious and educational institutions.
- explain how institutions, authorities and scholars can hold different responsibilities and perspectives.
- examine the difference between criticism intended to reform and criticism intended merely to attack.
- evaluate historical sources to determine origin, purpose and perspective.
- draw evidence-based conclusions about the responsibilities of people who question powerful institutions.

---

# Key Terminology

**Institution** – An established organisation or system with an important role in society.

**Authority** – The recognised power or right to make decisions and enforce expectations.

**Criticism** – The act of identifying and examining problems, weaknesses or faults.

**Reform** – Change intended to correct a problem or improve a practice or institution.

**Accountability** – The responsibility to explain decisions and actions and to accept examination of them.

**Satire** – Writing that uses humour, irony or exaggeration to expose foolishness or wrongdoing.

**Perspective** – A particular way of understanding an issue or event.

**Evidence-based conclusion** – A judgement supported by relevant evidence.

---

# Informational Story

## The Scholar at the Door

Imagine a large stone building.

The doors are heavy.

The walls are old.

Generations of people have entered.

Important decisions have been made there.

Teachers have taught.

Leaders have spoken.

Rules have been established.

The institution is respected.

Then a scholar arrives.

He knocks on the door.

"There is a problem," he says.

The people inside look at one another.

Some are concerned.

Others are annoyed.

One asks:

"Who are you to criticise us?"

The scholar replies:

"I have been reading."

This is, in a simple way, part of the story of Erasmus.

---

Erasmus lived within the Roman Catholic Church.

He had been educated in religious institutions.

He knew clergy.

He studied Christian writings.

He travelled among scholars and church leaders.

He did not stand completely outside the Church pointing at strangers.

He criticised an institution to which he belonged.

This made his position complicated.

It also made some of his criticisms difficult to ignore.

Erasmus had seen problems.

Some clergy were poorly educated.

Some preachers relied upon foolish stories.

Certain religious practices seemed to him to encourage superstition rather than genuine Christian faith.

Scholars sometimes debated questions so complicated and useless that ordinary Christians gained little wisdom from them.

Erasmus asked:

**Has the purpose been forgotten?**

---

Institutions exist for reasons.

A university exists to support learning.

A court exists to administer justice.

A government has responsibilities towards a community.

A church exists for worship, teaching and ministry.

A guild regulates aspects of skilled work.

But institutions are made up of people.

People can become careless.

Rules can become more important than purpose.

Leaders can protect their status.

Workers can continue doing something simply because:

**We have always done it this way.**

Inquisitive people sometimes notice when the practice and the purpose no longer seem to match.

---

Erasmus used scholarship to investigate.

He returned to Scripture.

He studied Greek.

He read early Christian writers.

He compared texts.

Then he looked at some practices around him.

The questions became uncomfortable.

Did this teaching accurately reflect the text?

Did this religious custom help people understand Christ?

Were clergy being properly educated?

Were scholars seeking wisdom or merely displaying cleverness?

Erasmus did not invent every criticism he made.

Other people also recognised problems.

But printing gave his criticisms a wider audience.

---

One of Erasmus's most famous methods was satire.

In *The Praise of Folly*, Erasmus allowed "Folly" to speak.

Folly praised foolish behaviour.

Of course, the reader was not meant to agree.

The humour exposed the problem.

Imagine a lazy student saying:

"I am the most excellent student because I never waste time studying."

The statement is ridiculous.

That is the point.

Satire can reveal foolishness by exaggerating it.

Erasmus used this method to criticise different groups.

Scholars.

Clergy.

Monks.

Rulers.

Even people who thought themselves very wise.

Few escaped completely.

---

But satire creates risks.

Suppose you are a faithful priest trying to serve your community.

Then you read a satire mocking foolish clergy.

You may laugh because you recognise a genuine problem.

Or you may become angry.

"People will think all priests are foolish."

Now suppose you are a poorly educated priest who benefits from people's ignorance.

The same satire may make you uncomfortable for a different reason.

The writer cannot completely control how readers respond.

A criticism may be fair in one part and exaggerated in another.

The reader must investigate.

---

Powerful institutions often respond to criticism in different ways.

One response is:

**Listen.**

Is the criticism accurate?

What evidence is offered?

Does something need to change?

Another response is:

**Defend.**

Perhaps the criticism is false.

Perhaps the writer has misunderstood.

Perhaps the institution possesses evidence the critic has ignored.

A third response is:

**Silence.**

Stop the criticism.

Punish the writer.

Ban the work.

The important question is not whether an institution responds.

The question is whether the response is wise and just.

---

Consider a school.

A student claims:

"The assessment process is unfair."

Should the school instantly agree?

No.

The claim should be investigated.

Should the school instantly punish the student for questioning the school?

That may also be unwise.

A responsible leader asks:

What happened?

What evidence exists?

Was the process followed?

Is there another perspective?

Does anything need correction?

Institutions require authority.

But responsible authority should also be willing to examine evidence.

---

Erasmus believed reform was necessary.

But he did not believe every institution should simply be destroyed.

This distinguished him from some later critics.

Erasmus wanted improvement.

Education.

Better scholarship.

Moral seriousness.

Greater attention to Scripture.

He wanted people to understand the teachings of Christ.

His question was often:

**How can this be corrected?**

This is different from asking:

**How can I make everyone distrust everything?**

Inquisitiveness can serve reform.

Suspicion can simply produce destruction.

The difference may lie in purpose, method and evidence.

---

Yet an institution may accuse every critic of being destructive.

Imagine a leader saying:

"Anyone who questions us is attacking the community."

That statement protects the institution from examination.

It assumes criticism and disloyalty are the same thing.

But are they?

A doctor who identifies a disease is not attacking the patient.

A builder who discovers a crack in a wall may be protecting the house.

A faithful friend may warn another person about a foolish decision.

Criticism can be an act of service.

But only when it seeks truth and is handled responsibly.

---

Erasmus himself was not always gentle.

His satire could be sharp.

His wit could wound.

A person may have an accurate criticism but communicate it poorly.

This raises another question.

Does the truth of a criticism excuse every method used to communicate it?

Suppose a scholar discovers a genuine problem.

He exaggerates.

He humiliates people.

He assumes motives he cannot prove.

He spreads accusations without checking them.

The original concern may be real.

But the method may damage the credibility of the criticism.

Truth and method both matter.

---

When the Reformation began, this problem became even more serious.

Martin Luther criticised Church teaching and practice much more directly.

Printed works moved rapidly.

Supporters and opponents attacked one another.

Religious disagreement became connected with political power.

Rulers became involved.

Cities chose sides.

Violence followed in some places.

Erasmus feared the growing conflict.

He had wanted reform.

He did not want Europe torn apart.

Some people accused him of cowardice.

They said he asked questions but refused to act decisively.

Others believed his moderation was wise.

Again, perspective mattered.

---

Suppose Erasmus looked at Luther and thought:

**You are turning necessary reform into dangerous conflict.**

Suppose Luther looked at Erasmus and thought:

**You recognise the problem but lack the courage to confront it.**

Both men could point to evidence.

Both men had different priorities.

Erasmus valued Christian unity and careful scholarship.

Luther believed fundamental matters of truth were at stake.

Their disagreement was not simply caused by one man being inquisitive and the other not.

They asked different questions.

They gave different weight to different dangers.

---

This is one of the challenges of historical investigation.

We know what happened later.

Erasmus did not.

Luther did not.

The Pope did not.

A city council did not.

Historical people made decisions without knowing every consequence.

A historian must avoid saying:

"They should obviously have known what would happen."

It was not obvious to them.

We investigate what they knew at the time.

What evidence did they have?

What did they fear?

What responsibilities did they believe they carried?

This is called understanding historical context.

Institutions also possess resources.

The Church of Erasmus's time had buildings.

Libraries.

Schools.

Universities.

Officials.

Financial resources.

Political connections.

These resources could support enormous good.

Books could be preserved.

Students could be educated.

The poor could receive assistance.

Missionary work could be supported.

But resources can also strengthen resistance to change.

A powerful organisation may be able to ignore criticism more easily than a weak one.

Economic and institutional power can affect whose voice is heard.

---

Printing changed this relationship.

Erasmus did not need to stand before every church leader in Europe.

His book could travel.

A criticism could cross borders.

Readers could encounter the argument beyond the immediate control of the institution being criticised.

Printing created a new kind of public accountability.

But it also created new dangers.

A false accusation could travel just as easily.

Therefore, the growing power of criticism increased the importance of evidence.

---

Imagine four statements.

**Statement One:**
"The institution is powerful, so it must be right."

This is poor reasoning.

Power does not prove truth.

**Statement Two:**
"The critic is brave, so the critic must be right."

Also poor reasoning.

Courage does not prove accuracy.

**Statement Three:**
"The institution is old, so it should never change."

Age alone does not prove perfection.

**Statement Four:**
"The practice is old, so it must be wrong."

That is equally weak.

An inquisitive historian asks for evidence.

---

How should we investigate a criticism?

First, identify the claim. What exactly is the critic saying?

Not: "Erasmus hated religion." That is too vague.

Perhaps the actual claim is: "Erasmus argued that some clergy were poorly educated."

Now we have something to investigate.

Second, examine the evidence.

What examples does the critic provide?

Third, identify the critic's purpose.

Does Erasmus want reform?

Does a political rival want to weaken an opponent?

Fourth, seek another perspective.

How did the criticised people respond?

Finally, draw a conclusion.

Was the criticism supported?

Partly supported?

Exaggerated?

Unsupported?

A precise question produces a better investigation.

---

Consider Erasmus's criticism of poor education among some clergy.

A historian might investigate:

What education was required?

What did Erasmus himself observe?

What did other writers say?

Were reform programs attempted?

Did Church leaders also recognise the problem?

If several different sources identify similar concerns, the historian has stronger grounds for concluding that a genuine issue existed.

This is how evidence builds.

---

But history also teaches humility. A source survives. Another disappears.

A powerful person's letters may be preserved. The poor person's complaints may never be written. An institution may keep official records. Its critics may leave only fragments.

Or the opposite may occur. A famous satire survives while ordinary examples of faithful work are forgotten. The surviving evidence may overemphasise conflict.

Historians must ask: **Whose voice is missing?**

---

Erasmus wanted Christians to return to the sources.

Perhaps the same habit can be used when investigating institutions.

Do not merely repeat: "Everyone was corrupt."

Return to evidence.

Do not merely repeat: "The institution did nothing wrong."

Return to evidence. Examine. Compare. Ask.

Then conclude carefully.

---

The responsibility also falls upon the critic.

A critic should ask: Is my claim true?

Have I represented the other person fairly?

Do I have evidence?

Am I trying to correct a problem or merely gain attention?

Have I considered the effects of my words?

Could I be wrong?

This last question may be the hardest.

The inquisitive person examines institutions. The truly inquisitive person also examines himself.

---

Erasmus revised his Greek New Testament. He corrected errors.

The scholar who questioned others also needed to accept correction.

That may be one of the most important lessons of inquiry.

It is easy to love questioning when we are asking the questions.

It is harder when someone questions us.

A university must be willing to examine its teaching.

A government must be accountable for decisions.

A church should examine whether its practices are faithful.

A business should investigate complaints.

And the critic must also be willing to place his own claims before the evidence.

---

So, should scholars be allowed to criticise powerful institutions?

The question is larger than Erasmus.

Institutions need order.

Leaders carry responsibilities.

False accusations can cause harm.

But institutions that cannot be questioned can also hide serious problems.

The strongest answer may not be:

**Critics should say anything they like without responsibility.**

Nor:

**Institutions should silence criticism to protect authority.**

Perhaps responsible inquiry requires both freedom and accountability.

The freedom to ask.

The responsibility to use evidence.

The opportunity to respond.

The humility to correct error.

---

Erasmus stood, in a sense, at the door of a powerful institution.

He knocked.

He held manuscripts.

He carried questions.

Some people listened.

Some laughed.

Some became angry.

Later reformers would knock much harder.

But Erasmus had helped make the question respectable:

**What does the source actually say?**

Once that question is asked, even powerful institutions may find themselves required to answer.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- why Erasmus criticised some Church practices.
- what Erasmus hoped reform would achieve.
- how satire worked.
- why institutions might respond differently to criticism.
- the difference between reform and mere attack.
- why Erasmus and Luther viewed reform differently.
- how printing changed public criticism.
- why both institutions and critics should be accountable to evidence.
- whether scholars should be allowed to criticise powerful institutions.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Institutions Have Purposes and Responsibilities

Institutions are organised systems or organisations that perform important roles.

Examples include:

- governments
- churches
- universities
- courts
- schools
- guilds.

An institution usually has:

- recognised leaders
- rules or processes
- resources
- responsibilities.

Historians can investigate whether an institution's practices supported or undermined its stated purpose.

---

## 2. Criticism Can Have Different Purposes

Criticism may seek to:

- correct a problem.
- improve a practice.
- hold leaders accountable.
- persuade people.
- damage an opponent.
- gain attention.

Therefore, historians investigate the **purpose** of a critic as well as the claim being made.

---

# 3. Perspective Influences Responses to Reform

| Person | Possible Perspective |
|---|---|
| Erasmus | Reform is needed, but scholarship and moderation are important. |
| Institutional leader | Criticism may damage trust or authority. |
| Reform supporter | Problems have continued too long and require decisive action. |
| Ordinary member | Reform may be necessary, but conflict may create fear and uncertainty. |

A historian compares perspectives rather than assuming one viewpoint explains the entire event.

---

# 4. Accountability Should Involve Evidence

A claim should be investigated.

A useful process is:

**Identify the claim**

↓

**Locate evidence**

↓

**Identify origin and purpose**

↓

**Compare perspectives**

↓

**Consider limitations**

↓

**Draw a conclusion**

Institutions and critics can both be examined using evidence.

---

## 5. Historical Context Matters

Historical people did not know the future.

When evaluating Erasmus, Luther or Church leaders, students should ask:

- What did the person know at the time?
- What responsibilities did the person believe they held?
- What dangers did the person fear?
- What choices appeared available?

This produces more careful historical judgement.

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# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. What did Erasmus think needed to change?
2. What is criticism?
3. Why might a leader dislike criticism?
4. Why should a critic tell the truth?
5. What should we do before deciding whether a criticism is right?

---

## Years 3–4

1. Why did Erasmus criticise problems in the Church?
2. How is reform different from simply attacking an institution?
3. Why might a church leader and Erasmus have different perspectives?
4. Why should the purpose of a critic be investigated?
5. What conclusion can you draw about the importance of evidence when questioning an institution?

---

## Years 5–6

1. Explain why institutional authority does not automatically prove that an institution is correct.
2. Why does a critic's courage not automatically prove that the criticism is accurate?
3. How did printing change the relationship between critics and powerful institutions?
4. Why is historical context important when comparing Erasmus and Luther?
5. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **What responsibilities should a scholar have when publicly criticising a powerful institution?**

---

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Listen, Check, Respond

The Home-Tutor reads this situation:

A student says, "The class rule is unfair because only some children have to follow it."

Create three picture boxes:

**Listen**

Draw someone hearing the concern.

**Check**

Draw someone asking questions or looking for information.

**Respond**

Draw someone explaining or correcting the problem.

Tell your Home-Tutor:

**“Before deciding, we should…”**

Then explain how Erasmus also wanted people to examine concerns carefully.

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral response.

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## Years 3–4 – Is the Criticism Supported?

Investigate the claim:

**“Erasmus criticised the Church because he wanted to destroy it.”**

Use the lesson and provided sources.

Complete the table:

| Evidence | Supports the claim | Challenges the claim | What does the evidence suggest? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Erasmus criticised some clergy | | | |
| Erasmus produced a Greek New Testament | | | |
| Erasmus called for reform | | | |
| Erasmus remained Catholic | | | |

| Evidence | Supports the claim | Challenges the claim | What does the evidence suggest? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Erasmus disagreed with Luther | | | |

Then identify:

**The origin of the claim**

**The possible purpose of the claim**

**A perspective that might support it**

**A perspective that might reject it**

Write a conclusion:

**The claim is accurate / partly accurate / inaccurate because…**

Use the terms:

**institution**

**reform**

**perspective**

**evidence**

---

# Years 5–6 – The Erasmus Reform Inquiry

Investigate the question:

**Was Erasmus a responsible critic of powerful religious institutions?**

Use at least four primary and secondary sources.

Possible sources include:

- extracts from *The Praise of Folly*.
- Erasmus's letters.
- extracts from his writings about Christian reform.
- contemporary criticism of Erasmus.
- later historical interpretations.

Complete the source evaluation table:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective | Evidence about Erasmus's criticism | Limitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Then organise your findings:

## Problems Erasmus identified

## Evidence Erasmus used

## Methods Erasmus used to communicate criticism

## Reforms Erasmus encouraged

## Criticisms made against Erasmus

## Evidence that Erasmus sought moderation

## Limitations or weaknesses in Erasmus's approach

Develop criteria for **responsible criticism**.

For example:

- uses evidence.
- identifies a specific problem.
- represents opposing perspectives fairly.
- proposes or encourages constructive change.
- accepts scrutiny of its own claims.

Assess Erasmus against your criteria.

Write an evidence-based response:

**Was Erasmus a responsible critic of powerful religious institutions?**

Your response should:

- use evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- evaluate source origin, purpose and perspective.
- acknowledge strengths and limitations in Erasmus's approach.
- use your criteria to support the conclusion.

# God's Big Story Reflection

Because of the Fall, no human institution is perfect.

Governments can fail.

Schools can make mistakes.

Church leaders can act unwisely.

Businesses can treat people unfairly.

Families can also make poor decisions.

This means accountability matters.

But the Fall also affects the critic.

We can be proud.

Unfair.

Angry.

Eager to accuse.

Interested in attention rather than truth.

God's restoration calls both leaders and critics towards truth, humility and service.

The powerful person should be willing to listen.

The critic should speak truthfully.

Both should be willing to examine evidence.

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.” – **Proverbs 27:6**

Sometimes faithful service requires identifying a problem.

But faithful criticism must still be faithful.

Inquisitiveness asks the difficult question.

Wisdom asks it truthfully.

# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded Australian Curriculum Version 9 HASS Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students develop questions about Erasmus, criticism, reform and responses from institutions. |
| **AC9HS2S04** | **discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events** | Students discuss the differing perspectives of Erasmus, institutional leaders, reform supporters and ordinary members. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw conclusions about how concerns should be listened to, checked and responded to. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Students communicate observations about Erasmus and reform using terms such as criticism, institution and evidence. |
| **AC9HS3K06** | **who makes rules, why rules are important in the school and/or the local community, and the consequences of rules not being followed** | Students consider the roles of recognised authorities and why institutions establish rules and processes. The lesson uses this transferable civics concept to examine how authorities respond when their practices or decisions are challenged. |
| **AC9HS3K07** | **why people participate within communities and how students can actively participate and contribute to communities** | Students consider questioning, raising concerns and encouraging constructive reform as ways people may contribute to communities and institutions. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students formulate questions to investigate claims about Erasmus's intentions and criticism. |
| **AC9HS3S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students analyse evidence concerning Erasmus and identify contrasting perspectives about criticism and reform. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students judge whether the claim that Erasmus wanted to destroy the Church is supported by evidence. |
| **AC9HS3S06** | **propose actions or responses to an issue or challenge that consider possible effects of actions** | Students consider appropriate responses to criticism and the possible effects of listening, checking evidence, reforming or silencing concerns. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present explanations of Erasmus's approach using ideas from sources and relevant civics and historical terminology. |
| **AC9HS5K07** | **how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal** | Students examine how scholars and reform-minded members of a religious community sought improvement in education, scholarship and religious practice through shared concerns and reform efforts. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Erasmus, religious institutions and systems of authority and accountability. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students organise evidence from Erasmus's writings, letters, contemporary criticism and historical interpretations. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between institutional power, printing, criticism, reform and public accountability. |
| **AC9HS5S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students explicitly evaluate the origin, purpose and perspective of sources concerning Erasmus's criticism of institutions. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students use evidence and developed criteria to judge whether Erasmus was a responsible critic. |
| **AC9HS5S06** | **propose actions or responses to issues or challenges and use criteria to assess the possible effects** | Students develop criteria for responsible criticism and use those criteria to assess Erasmus's response to institutional problems. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students present a source-supported judgement drawing upon findings and differing historical viewpoints. |

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# Achievement Standard Contribution

The clauses below are taken directly from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. This lesson particularly strengthens the inquiry, perspective, conclusion and proposed-response aspects of the standards.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives.”** | Students identify why a critic and a leader might understand a concern differently. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students propose the process of listening, checking and responding before deciding whether a criticism is justified. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales.”** | Students communicate historical observations about Erasmus using relevant terminology. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats.”** | Students investigate a claim concerning Erasmus and organise provided evidence. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse evidence and competing perspectives before judging whether a claim about Erasmus is accurate. |

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students propose considered actions or responses.”** | Students examine possible institutional responses to criticism and consider the effects of listening, investigation, reform or suppression. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students present an evidence-based explanation of Erasmus's approach to reform. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students conduct a structured historical inquiry into Erasmus as an institutional critic. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students evaluate Erasmus's writings, letters, contemporary reactions and secondary interpretations. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students infer relationships between institutional authority, printed criticism, reform movements and accountability. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students assess Erasmus against developed criteria and draw an evidence-based judgement. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students propose actions or responses and use criteria to assess the possible effects.”** | Students develop criteria for responsible criticism and apply those criteria to Erasmus's historical actions. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise thematic findings and present a structured, source-supported historical explanation. |

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# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 Listen–Check–Respond task | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 claim investigation | Historical inquiry work sample |
| Years 3–4 evidence-based conclusion | Portfolio evidence |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation | Source-analysis evidence |
| Responsible criticism criteria | Decision-making and criteria evidence |
| Erasmus reform judgement | Achievement Standard evidence |

| TOPIC 8 | A QUESTION THAT SHOOK EUROPE |
|---|---|

# Lesson 8.1 – History & Civics

## Martin Luther: The Monk Who Asked, "Where Is That Written?"

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate the life and historical significance of Martin Luther.
- explain why Luther questioned some teachings and practices within the late medieval Church.
- investigate the relationship between religious beliefs, Church authority and political power.
- examine different perspectives concerning Luther and calls for reform.
- use historical sources and evidence to draw conclusions about Luther's significance to the Reformation.

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# Key Terminology

**Reformation** – A period of major religious change in sixteenth-century Europe involving challenges to the teaching and authority of the Roman Catholic Church and the formation of Protestant churches.

**Indulgence** – In late medieval Catholic practice, a remission of temporal punishment associated with sin. Controversies developed concerning their teaching, promotion and connection with financial contributions.

**Doctrine** – A teaching or set of beliefs held by a church or other organisation.

**Authority** – The recognised right or power to teach, govern or make decisions.

**Thesis** – A statement or proposition presented for discussion or argument.

**Excommunication** – Formal exclusion from participation in the sacraments and communion of the Church.

**Diet** – In the Holy Roman Empire, an official political assembly or meeting.

**Conscience** – A person's inner awareness and judgement concerning right and wrong.

---

# Informational Story

## The Question Beside the Church Door

Martin Luther had a question.

At first, it was not a question about creating a new church.

It was not a question about dividing Europe.

It was not a question about becoming one of the most famous men in history.

It was a question about teaching.

**Was this right?**

Luther had heard people speaking about indulgences.

A travelling preacher named Johann Tetzel had become associated with the promotion of indulgences in German territories.

People heard strong claims.

Money was collected.

Some believed that obtaining an indulgence could bring spiritual benefits for themselves or for people who had died.

Luther was disturbed.

He was a priest.

A monk.

A university teacher.

He studied the Bible.

He taught theology.

And he asked:

**What exactly does the Church teach?**

Then:

**What does Scripture say?**

The question would not leave him alone.

---

Martin Luther had been born in 1483 in Eisleben, in the German lands of the Holy Roman Empire.

His father, Hans Luther, hoped his son would become a lawyer.

A legal career could provide respect and opportunity.

Martin was educated.

He studied at university.

He began training in law.

Then, in 1505, his life changed.

Luther was travelling when a violent thunderstorm struck.

Lightning crashed nearby.

Terrified, Luther cried out and vowed that he would become a monk.

Soon afterwards, he entered an Augustinian monastery.

His father was furious.

Years of education had been directed towards law.

Martin had chosen a very different path.

---

Life in the monastery was serious.

Luther prayed.

He fasted.

He confessed sins.

He studied.

He worried.

Luther possessed a very sensitive conscience.

He feared God's judgement.

Had he confessed every sin?

Had he repented deeply enough?

Did he truly love God?

What if some selfish thought remained hidden?

Luther tried harder.

Then harder again.

But the more closely he examined himself, the more sin he believed he saw.

This is important for understanding Luther.

The Reformation did not begin for him as an abstract political plan.

His theological questions were connected with a personal struggle.

**How can a sinful person be right with God?**

---

Luther's leaders recognised his abilities.

He was ordained as a priest.

He continued studying.

Eventually he became a teacher at the University of Wittenberg.

There he lectured on books of the Bible.

Psalms.

Romans.

Galatians.

Luther read carefully.

The Renaissance humanist cry of **ad fontes** – back to the sources – was influencing European scholarship.

Erasmus had produced his printed Greek New Testament.

Scholars were paying renewed attention to biblical languages and early texts.

Luther entered this scholarly world.

He asked questions of the biblical text.

What does this word mean?

How does this passage connect with another?

What is Paul saying about righteousness?

Slowly, Luther's understanding changed.

---

Luther became convinced that a person was justified before God by faith, not by accumulating religious merits.

This became central to his theology.

So when indulgence preaching reached areas near Wittenberg, Luther became increasingly concerned.

He believed ordinary people could misunderstand what was being offered.

Some might believe a financial payment could replace genuine repentance.

Luther thought this was spiritually dangerous.

He wanted debate.

---

In 1517, Luther prepared a series of statements.

There were ninety-five.

History remembers them as the **Ninety-Five Theses**.

They were written in Latin.

This matters.

Latin was the language of scholarly and university debate.

The theses were not originally written as a simple popular pamphlet for every German farmer to read.

Luther was presenting arguments for discussion.

Tradition says that on 31 October 1517, Luther nailed the theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg.

The church door could function as a place for public university notices.

The image has become famous.

Luther.

Hammer.

Nail.

Door.

But historians should be careful.

The story of the posting has been discussed and examined because the earliest surviving evidence is not as simple as the famous picture suggests.

What is much clearer is that Luther sent his concerns to Church authorities and that the theses soon circulated.

Then printing changed everything.

---

Someone translated Luther's arguments into German.

Printers reproduced them.

Copies travelled.

The debate escaped the university.

Readers encountered Luther's criticism.

People discussed indulgences.

Supporters praised him.

Opponents attacked him.

A scholarly dispute became a public controversy.

Gutenberg had died years before.

But the printing system that developed from his work had created a new world.

Luther's words could multiply.

---

Why did the controversy grow so quickly?

Because indulgences were not the only issue.

Questions were already being asked about Church leadership.

Clerical education.

Church wealth.

Religious practices.

Political influence.

Humanist scholars were returning to sources.

Printers were multiplying arguments.

Rulers had their own interests.

German territories formed part of the complicated Holy Roman Empire.

The Reformation grew from many conditions.

Luther did not walk into a peaceful Europe and create every problem by himself.

His challenge entered a world already filled with tensions.

---

Church authorities responded.

At first, some may have considered Luther's arguments another academic dispute.

But Luther continued writing.

The questions became larger.

What authority did the Pope possess?

Could Church councils make errors?

What was the final authority for Christian doctrine?

How is a person justified before God?

What are the sacraments?

One question led to another.

Luther's willingness to investigate did not produce a small correction to indulgence preaching.

It brought him into conflict with the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

---

This is a pattern worth noticing.

Sometimes an inquisitive person asks a question expecting a small answer.

Then the evidence leads to a larger problem.

Suppose you discover one loose stone in a wall.

You examine it.

Behind the stone is a crack.

You follow the crack.

It extends across the building.

The first question was:

**Why is this stone loose?**

The investigation becomes:

**Is the structure sound?**

Luther believed his study of Scripture was revealing deeper theological problems.

Church leaders believed Luther was challenging the unity and authority of the Church.

The dispute intensified.

Pope Leo X eventually condemned several of Luther's teachings.

Luther was ordered to reject them.

He refused.

In 1520, Luther publicly burned a papal document that threatened him with excommunication.

This was no quiet scholarly disagreement.

The act was public.

Symbolic.

Confrontational.

Luther was demonstrating that he rejected the authority being exercised against him.

In 1521, he was excommunicated.

But another authority was also involved.

The Holy Roman Emperor.

---

The Holy Roman Empire was not a single centralised country like a modern nation-state.

It contained many territories.

Princes.

Cities.

Church lands.

Other political jurisdictions.

The Emperor, Charles V, possessed great authority, but he did not simply control every local ruler in the same way a king might directly administer a small kingdom.

German princes had their own interests and powers.

This political structure became extremely important to the Reformation.

Luther lived within a network of political authorities.

---

In 1521, Luther was summoned to the **Diet of Worms**.

Despite the amusing sound of the English word *worms*, Worms was a German city.

A Diet was an official political assembly.

Luther appeared before important political and religious figures.

His books were displayed.

He was asked whether they were his.

Yes.

Would he take back what he had written?

Luther asked for time.

This detail matters.

The famous reformer did not immediately deliver a dramatic speech without hesitation.

He understood the seriousness of the situation.

The following day, Luther responded.

Accounts of his exact wording differ.

The famous sentence:

**“Here I stand, I can do no other”**

has long been associated with the event, but historians debate whether those exact words formed part of his original statement.

The stronger historical evidence records Luther arguing that unless he was convinced by Scripture or clear reason, he could not safely act against his conscience.

Again, source evaluation matters.

The dramatic quotation may be memorable.

The evidence must still be examined.

---

Why was conscience so important to Luther?

He believed he was accountable to God.

If Scripture showed him he was wrong, he said he should be corrected.

But he did not believe that simply being ordered to recant settled the question.

Authority said:

**Withdraw your teaching.**

Luther asked:

**Show me from Scripture and sound reason why I am wrong.**

This conflict reveals two different understandings of authority.

Church leaders emphasised the teaching authority of the Church.

Luther increasingly emphasised Scripture as the highest authority for doctrine.

The disagreement was fundamental.

---

After the Diet of Worms, Charles V declared Luther an outlaw under the Edict of Worms.

This placed Luther in danger.

But he had political protection.

Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, arranged for Luther to be taken secretly to Wartburg Castle.

To many people, Luther seemed to have disappeared.

At the castle, he adopted a disguise.

He grew a beard.

He lived under another identity.

But he continued working.

---

At Wartburg, Luther translated the New Testament into German.

He did not produce the first German translation of Scripture.

That claim would be historically inaccurate.

But Luther's translation became extraordinarily influential.

He used the Greek text.

He wanted ordinary German readers to understand.

He listened to the way people spoke.

He searched for words that communicated clearly.

Then printing multiplied the translation.

The reformer's theological question became connected with language, literacy and communication.

---

Why translate the Bible into German?

Luther believed Christians should encounter Scripture directly.

Church teaching had often been conducted in Latin.

Educated people could study Latin.

Many ordinary people could not.

A German translation increased access for German-speaking readers.

But again, we must avoid exaggeration.

Not everyone could read.

Books still cost money.

Different German dialects existed.

Pastors and teachers remained important.

Nevertheless, the printed German Bible became a powerful tool for teaching and religious change.

---

Luther's translation also influenced the German language.

Printers produced copies.

Readers encountered similar written forms.

Words and expressions circulated across territories.

A theological project had linguistic and cultural consequences.

This is one reason historians study unintended effects.

Luther wanted people to read Scripture.

His translation also contributed to the development of written German.

---

The Reformation spread.

Other reformers emerged.

Some agreed with Luther.

Some disagreed with him.

Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich reached some similar conclusions but differed on important matters.

Later, John Calvin would become influential.

Radical reformers went much further than Luther wanted.

Luther discovered something Erasmus had already feared.

Once people begin questioning powerful institutions, they may not all reach the same answer.

Inquisitiveness can open a debate.

It cannot control every conclusion.

---

Political rulers also made decisions.

Some German princes supported reform.

Why?

The answer differed.

Some may have been convinced by Luther's theology.

Some objected to outside Church influence.

Some saw economic or political advantages.

Some had several motives.

Historical people rarely carry labels explaining the exact percentage of each motivation.

The historian examines actions, correspondence, policies and context.

Then draws cautious conclusions.

---

Luther himself became deeply involved in controversy.

He wrote forcefully.

Sometimes brutally.

His language could be insulting.

His later writings against Jewish people contained vicious attacks that Christians and historians must not excuse or hide.

Luther's historical significance does not make every action admirable.

A person can defend an important truth in one area and sin seriously in another.

Historical study should not turn significant people into flawless heroes.

Nor should it pretend that a person's serious failures erase every effect they had on history.

Evidence requires honest complexity.

Luther also faced conflict during the German Peasants' War.

Many peasants had economic and social grievances.

Some used religious language connected with reform.

Luther initially urged rulers to consider legitimate complaints.

As violence spread, his response became extremely harsh.

He supported forceful suppression of the revolt.

Many peasants died.

Supporters and critics have debated Luther's response ever since.

Was he protecting social order?

Did he betray people who believed reform included them?

Did fear of chaos overwhelm compassion?

Again, the historian must examine context, evidence and perspective.

---

By now, the question beside the church door had become far larger than indulgences.

Churches changed.

Worship changed.

Political alliances changed.

Schools changed.

Books multiplied.

Bibles were translated.

Conflicts erupted.

Families and communities were divided.

The Reformation reshaped Europe.

Did Luther cause all of this?

No.

That would repeat the mistake of explaining a vast historical development through one person alone.

But was Luther historically significant?

Certainly.

His arguments became central to the Reformation.

His writings circulated widely.

His conflict with Church and imperial authorities became a major political and religious event.

His German Bible influenced religious life and language.

His actions helped shape developments that continued long after his death.

---

The inquisitive historian must now ask a difficult question.

What made Luther different from Erasmus?

Both studied texts.

Both criticised problems.

Both used printing.

Both wanted reform.

But Erasmus remained cautious.

Luther confronted authority directly.

Erasmus feared division.

Luther believed some disagreements could not be avoided.

Erasmus wanted to persuade.

Luther sometimes seemed ready to fight with words.

Which approach was wiser?

The answer may depend upon the particular issue.

Caution can prevent unnecessary conflict.

Caution can also delay necessary action.

Courage can confront wrongdoing.

Courage without wisdom can become recklessness.

Character requires more than one virtue.

---

Luther's story began with questions.

How can a person be right with God?

What does Scripture teach?

Are people being misled?

What authority should govern Christian doctrine?

The questions did not remain inside Luther's study.

Printing carried them.

Political conditions protected them.

Readers repeated them.

Opponents answered them.

New questions followed.

---

Perhaps that is what authorities feared.

Not simply Luther's answer.

The question itself.

**Where is that written?**

Once people begin asking for sources, claims must be examined.

But the question must also be asked of Luther.

Where is your evidence?

Have you interpreted it correctly?

Are you representing your opponent fairly?

What consequences may follow?

Inquisitiveness is not permission to question everyone except ourselves.

---

Martin Luther stood before powerful authorities.

He believed conscience could not be safely forced against God's truth.

His opponents believed his teaching threatened the unity and authority of the Church.

The Emperor feared disorder within the Empire.

German rulers considered religious and political interests.

Printers saw readers.

Ordinary people heard arguments they may never previously have encountered.

Everyone entered the controversy from a different position.

The historian's task is not merely to shout:

**Luther was brave!**

Or:

**Luther was dangerous!**

The historian asks:

What did he claim?

What evidence did he use?

Who opposed him?

Why?

What changed?

What were the consequences?

Then we draw a conclusion.

---

Martin Luther began as a monk with a troubled conscience.

He became a university teacher with difficult questions.

He became a reformer whose words crossed Europe.

The question beside the church door became a question before popes, princes and an emperor.

And Europe would never be quite the same.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember about Martin Luther.

You might explain:

- why Luther became a monk.
- the question that troubled him about being right with God.
- why indulgence preaching concerned him.
- what the Ninety-Five Theses were.

- how printing affected the controversy.
- why Luther came into conflict with Church authority.
- what happened at the Diet of Worms.
- why Frederick the Wise protected Luther.
- what Luther did at Wartburg Castle.
- why Luther was historically significant.
- why historians should avoid treating Luther as either a flawless hero or a simple villain.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Historical Questions Can Grow

Luther's early controversy concerned indulgences.

But his investigation led to larger questions:

**Indulgence teaching**

↓

**Repentance and forgiveness**

↓

**How is a person justified before God?**

↓

**What does Scripture teach?**

↓

**Who has authority to determine Christian doctrine?**

An investigation may reveal that one issue is connected with a larger system.

---

## 2. The Reformation Had Multiple Causes

It is historically inadequate to say:

**“Martin Luther caused the Reformation.”**

A stronger explanation recognises several interacting factors.

These included:

- concerns about Church practices and leadership.
- Renaissance humanism and *ad fontes* scholarship.
- increased study of biblical languages.
- printing.
- political structures within the Holy Roman Empire.
- the interests of rulers and cities.
- theological disagreement.
- the actions of individual reformers.

These factors interacted.

---

# 3. Different Forms of Authority Came into Conflict

| Authority | Claim or Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Church authority | Teaching and governing the Church |
| Papal authority | Leadership within the Roman Catholic Church |
| Imperial authority | Political order within the Holy Roman Empire |
| Territorial princes | Government within their territories |
| Scripture, in Luther's argument | Highest authority for Christian doctrine |
| Conscience | Personal responsibility to act according to what one believes is true before God |

The Reformation involved disputes about both **belief** and **authority**.

---

# 4. Source Evaluation Protects Historical Accuracy

Several famous Luther stories require careful investigation.

For example:

- the exact circumstances surrounding the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses.
- the exact wording of Luther's speech at Worms.

A memorable quotation should not be treated as reliable simply because it is famous.

Ask:

**What is the earliest evidence?**

**Who recorded it?**

**How close was the source to the event?**

**Do different accounts agree?**

---

## 5. Historical Significance Does Not Mean Moral Perfection

Historians can conclude that Luther was historically significant while also examining his serious failings.

Historical judgement should recognise:

- achievements.
- influence.
- consequences.
- weaknesses.
- harmful actions.

A balanced historical account does not require us to hide uncomfortable evidence.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. Why did Martin Luther become a monk?
2. What teaching about indulgences worried Luther?
3. What did Luther write in 1517?
4. How did printing help Luther's ideas travel?
5. Why did Luther translate the New Testament into German?
6. Tell one reason Luther was important in history.

---

## Years 3–4

1. Why did Luther's study of the Bible lead him to ask new questions?
2. How did the Ninety-Five Theses become a wider public controversy?
3. Why did Luther and Church leaders disagree about authority?
4. Why was the protection of Frederick the Wise important?
5. Why should historians investigate famous quotations about Luther?
6. What conclusion can you draw about Luther's historical significance?

---

## Years 5–6

1. Explain why the Reformation cannot be attributed to Luther alone.
2. What relationship can you infer between printing and the growth of Luther's controversy?
3. How did the political structure of the Holy Roman Empire affect Luther's ability to survive and continue his work?
4. Why is the conflict at the Diet of Worms partly a conflict about different understandings of authority?
5. How should historians deal with evidence of Luther's serious moral failures while assessing his historical significance?
6. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **How significant was Martin Luther to the development of the Reformation?**

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Luther's Question Travels

Create a five-part picture sequence:

**Luther Studies**

↓

**Luther Asks a Question**

↓

**Luther Writes**

↓

**Printers Make Copies**

↓

**People Read and Discuss**

Label each picture.

Then tell your Home-Tutor:

**“Luther's question became important because…”**

Use the words:

**question**

**printing**

**Bible**

**reform**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral narration.

---

## Years 3–4 – One Question Leads to Another

Create a question chain beginning with:

**Were people understanding indulgences correctly?**

Use arrows to show how Luther's questions became larger.

Include:

- repentance.
- forgiveness.
- Scripture.
- Church teaching.
- authority.

Then investigate two perspectives.

| Luther's Perspective | Church Authority's Perspective |
|---|---|
| What did Luther believe was wrong? | Why were Luther's teachings viewed as dangerous? |
| What authority did Luther emphasise? | What authority did Church leaders emphasise? |
| What did Luther want examined? | What did Church leaders want Luther to do? |

Write a conclusion:

**The conflict became larger because…**

Use the terms:

**Reformation**

**authority**

**perspective**

**evidence**

---

# Years 5–6 – Luther's Historical Significance Investigation

Investigate the question:

**How significant was Martin Luther to the development of the Reformation?**

Use at least four primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources might include extracts from:

- the Ninety-Five Theses.
- Luther's writings concerning justification or Scripture.
- the papal response to Luther.
- the Edict of Worms.
- Luther's letters.
- Luther's German Bible.

Complete the source evaluation table:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective | Evidence about Luther or the Reformation | Limitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Then organise your evidence under the following headings:

## Conditions that existed before Luther

## Luther's theological questions

## Printing and circulation

## Church responses

## Political protection and the Holy Roman Empire

## Luther's translation work

## Other reformers and other causes

## Harmful or controversial aspects of Luther's actions and writings

Create a multi-causal diagram.

Place:

**The Reformation**

in the centre.

Around it, show the different developments and people that contributed to its growth.

Use arrows to show inferred relationships.

Then write an evidence-based response:

**How significant was Martin Luther to the development of the Reformation?**

Your response should:

- evaluate primary and secondary sources.
- explain Luther's particular contribution.

- identify other significant causes.
- examine political and technological factors.
- distinguish historical significance from moral perfection.
- reach a balanced, evidence-based conclusion.

---

# God's Big Story Reflection

Luther's central questions concerned truth, sin, forgiveness and authority.

Christians believe God's Word is true.

But human beings are affected by the Fall.

Church leaders can make mistakes.

Scholars can make mistakes.

Reformers can make mistakes.

We can become proud of being the person who asks questions.

We can assume that opposition proves we are right.

Luther's life warns us against such simple conclusions.

He demonstrated courage in challenging powerful authorities.

He also wrote words that were cruel, sinful and harmful.

A Christian view of history does not need to hide either reality.

God's work of restoration calls us to seek truth with humility.

We should ask:

**What does God's Word say?**

**Have I understood it faithfully?**

**Am I willing to be corrected?**

**Am I speaking truth in a way that honours God and recognises the dignity of others?**

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” – **Proverbs 1:7**

Inquisitiveness asks the question.

Wisdom remains teachable while seeking the answer.

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# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded Australian Curriculum Version 9 HASS Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2K02** | **how technological developments changed people's lives at home, and in the ways they worked, travelled and communicated** | Students investigate how printing changed communication by allowing Luther's theses, writings and translated biblical texts to circulate more broadly. |
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students investigate Luther, the Ninety-Five Theses, the Diet of Worms and the development of the Reformation through historical questions. |
| **AC9HS2S04** | **discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events** | Students discuss differing perspectives held by Luther, Church leaders, political rulers and other participants in Reformation events. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw conclusions about why Luther became historically significant and how his questions spread. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Students narrate Luther's historical story and use subject-specific terms including reform, authority and printing. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students develop and pursue questions concerning Luther, Church teaching and competing claims to authority. |
| **AC9HS3S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students analyse Luther's perspective and the perspective of Church authorities concerning reform and authority. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students analyse the development of Luther's controversy and draw conclusions concerning his significance. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students explain the development of the Reformation controversy using historical and civics terminology. |
| **AC9HS5K07** | **how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal** | Students examine how supporters of reform, printers, scholars and sympathetic political rulers acted within networks to advance shared religious and institutional goals. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Luther, Reformation developments and the religious and political systems surrounding his actions. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students locate and organise source evidence concerning Luther's writings, Church responses, imperial decisions and Reformation developments. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between humanist scholarship, printing, political structures, religious disagreements and the spread of the Reformation. |
| **AC9HS5S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students evaluate writings by Luther, official Church and imperial documents, and later historical interpretations. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students develop an evidence-based judgement concerning Luther's historical significance to the Reformation. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students organise a multi-causal historical investigation and present a balanced explanation drawing on source evidence and viewpoints. |

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# Achievement Standard Contribution

The exact clauses below are drawn from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. This lesson contributes particularly to transferable historical inquiry, perspectives, source evaluation, inferred relationships and evidence-based conclusions.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **"They identify the effects of changes in technologies on people's lives."** | Students identify how printing enabled Luther's questions, writings and German New Testament to reach more readers. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **"They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives."** | Students identify that Luther and Church authorities understood the conflict and questions of authority differently. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **"Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals."** | Students draw conclusions about why Luther's questions became historically important. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **"Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales."** | Narration and the sequence activity require students to communicate historical observations using relevant Reformation terminology. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **"Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats."** | Students trace the growth of Luther's questions and organise information concerning competing perspectives. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **"They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions."** | Students compare Luther's perspective with that of Church authorities and conclude why the dispute expanded. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **"Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations."** | Students explain the developing conflict using terms including Reformation, authority, perspective and evidence. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **"Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources."** | Students undertake a structured investigation of Luther's historical significance using a range of historical sources. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **"They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives."** | Students evaluate Luther's writings, Church and imperial documents, and secondary historical interpretations. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **"Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships."** | Students infer relationships between printing, political protection, humanist scholarship, religious controversy and the spread of Reformation ideas. |

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students weigh Luther's contribution against other historical causes and reach a balanced judgement about his significance. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise evidence into causal categories, construct a multi-causal diagram and present a source-supported historical explanation. |

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# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 Luther question sequence | Illustrated work sample and oral narration |
| Years 3–4 question chain | Historical cause-and-effect evidence |
| Years 3–4 perspective comparison | Perspective-analysis work sample |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation | Historical inquiry evidence |
| Multi-causal Reformation diagram | Analysis of inferred relationships |
| Luther historical significance response | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 8.2 – Geography & Economics

## The Significance of Wittenberg: Rivers, Princes and the Spread of Luther's Ideas

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate how the location and political geography of Wittenberg influenced Luther's work.
- explain how the Holy Roman Empire's political structure affected the spread of Reformation ideas.
- examine the role of universities, printing businesses and transport networks.
- identify relationships between political protection, economic resources and the movement of ideas.
- use geographical and economic evidence to draw conclusions about why Luther's questions spread beyond Wittenberg.

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# Key Terminology

**Wittenberg** – A German town in Saxony where Martin Luther taught at the university and became a leading figure in the Reformation.

**Holy Roman Empire** – A complex political collection of territories in central Europe under an emperor but governed in many places by princes, bishops, cities and other local authorities.

**Territory** – An area of land governed or controlled by a particular authority.

**Elector** – One of a small number of powerful rulers in the Holy Roman Empire with the right to participate in choosing the emperor.

**Political geography** – The study of how land, territories, borders and political authority are organised.

**Transport network** – Connected routes used to move people, goods or information.

**Market** – People who may want or buy particular goods or services.

**Interconnection** – A relationship linking people, places or systems.

---

# Informational Story

## The Small Town with a Very Large Question

Wittenberg was not Rome.

It was not Venice.

It was not Florence.

It did not possess the wealth of the Medici.

It did not dominate Mediterranean trade.

It was not one of Europe’s greatest cities.

Yet in 1517, a question raised in Wittenberg began to travel across Europe.

How?

Martin Luther taught at the university there.

He preached there.

He wrote there.

Printers worked nearby.

A powerful prince protected him.

Trade and transport routes connected German towns.

The Holy Roman Empire contained many different political authorities.

One small town sat inside a very large network.

Wittenberg mattered because of where it was.

But it also mattered because of the people and institutions located there.

---

Wittenberg stood on the River Elbe.

The Elbe connected towns and regions across central Europe.

Rivers were important transport routes.

Boats could carry goods.

Travellers moved between settlements.

Messages and printed works could enter wider networks.

The river did not cause the Reformation.

But geography influenced how people and goods moved.

A book printed in Wittenberg was not trapped inside the town walls.

It could leave.

---

Wittenberg also belonged to the territory of **Electoral Saxony**.

This is important.

To understand Luther's story, students must resist the temptation to imagine Germany as one united modern country in 1517.

It was not.

The German-speaking lands formed part of the **Holy Roman Empire**.

The Empire contained hundreds of territories and political jurisdictions over time.

Some were ruled by princes.

Some by bishops.

Some were free imperial cities.

Some territories were large.

Others were tiny.

The emperor stood above the Empire politically, but he did not directly manage every town and territory.

Local rulers possessed real authority.

This complicated political geography would become extremely important to Luther.

---

Wittenberg's ruler was **Frederick III, Elector of Saxony**, commonly remembered as Frederick the Wise.

Frederick was one of the Empire's electors.

He was politically important.

He had helped establish the University of Wittenberg in 1502.

Universities could increase the importance of a town.

Teachers came.

Students came.

Books were needed.

Accommodation was needed.

Food was purchased.

Ideas were discussed.

A university created both intellectual and economic activity.

---

Martin Luther became part of that university community.

He lectured in theology.

Students listened.

Other scholars discussed his ideas.

The university provided Luther with an institutional position.

He was not simply an unknown traveller shouting questions in a marketplace.

He was a doctor of theology and a university professor.

His role gave him access to scholarly debate.

It also gave people reasons to read what he wrote.

---

Universities create networks.

A student arrives from one region.

He studies for several years.

Then he returns home.

What does he carry?

Perhaps books.

Perhaps letters.

Perhaps new questions.

Perhaps strong opinions.

The student becomes a route through which ideas travel.

A university is therefore more than buildings.

It is a network of people moving in and out.

---

Now add printing.

Wittenberg developed an active print industry during the Reformation.

Luther wrote quickly.

Printers recognised that people wanted his works.

Pamphlets could be produced.

Sermons could be printed.

Arguments could circulate.

Some printers profited from the demand for Reformation texts.

This created an economic relationship.

Luther supplied writing that readers wanted.

Printers supplied production.

Booksellers and merchants helped move printed works.

Readers created demand.

---

Imagine a Wittenberg printer.

The door opens.

A new manuscript arrives from Luther.

The printer looks at it.

Another theological argument.

Will people read it?

Almost certainly.

Typesetters begin work.

Individual letters are arranged.

Paper is prepared.

Ink is used.

Pages are printed.

Workers fold sheets.

Copies leave the workshop.

The printer earns income.

Then another Luther work arrives.

The Reformation is becoming a printing market.

---

This does not mean printers agreed with every word they printed.

Some may have been strong supporters of reform.

Others may also have recognised a commercial opportunity.

A popular controversy creates readers.

Readers create demand.

Demand influences production.

Economists investigate these relationships.

Printing helped spread Luther’s ideas.

Interest in Luther’s ideas also helped printing businesses.

The influence moved in both directions.

---

Luther understood the power of printed communication.

He wrote in Latin for scholars.

But he also increasingly wrote in German.

Why?

Latin connected educated readers across Europe.

German could reach a different audience.

Of course, not every German-speaking person could read.

And spoken German varied greatly between regions.

But printed German pamphlets could reach literate lay readers who did not understand Latin.

Luther’s choice of language expanded the possible market for his arguments.

Language became part of distribution.

---

Consider two books.

The first is a large, expensive Latin theological volume.

Its likely readers include scholars and clergy.

The second is a short German pamphlet on a current controversy.

It is cheaper to produce.

It is easier to carry.

It may be read aloud to others.

The audiences differ.

Printers could respond to these different markets.

The Reformation spread not only because of what Luther said.

The form, language and size of printed works also mattered.

---

Wittenberg became increasingly associated with Luther.

This changed the town.

Students were attracted to the university.

Printers became active.

Visitors arrived.

Reformation supporters came to hear Luther and his colleague **Philip Melanchthon**.

The town's characteristics changed because of the people associated with it.

This is a geographical relationship.

**Places influence people.**

Wittenberg gave Luther a university, political territory and connections.

But:

**People also influence places.**

Luther's presence changed Wittenberg's reputation and economic activity.

---

Now we must add Frederick the Wise.

Frederick did not immediately declare himself a Protestant reformer in 1517.

His motivations are debated and should be investigated carefully.

But he protected the rights and interests of his university professor.

Frederick objected to Luther being taken away without appropriate hearing.

After the Diet of Worms, Frederick arranged Luther's protective "kidnapping" and concealment at Wartburg Castle.

This political protection mattered enormously.

---

Imagine that Luther had lived in a territory ruled by someone who immediately arrested him and handed him to his opponents.

Would Luther's later work have developed in the same way?

Probably not.

This is an historical inference.

We cannot repeat the past as an experiment.

But the evidence shows that Frederick's protection gave Luther time and safety.

At Wartburg, Luther worked on his German New Testament.

He continued writing.

His ideas continued circulating.

Political geography affected religious history.

---

The structure of the Holy Roman Empire also made the situation complicated.

Emperor Charles V wanted religious and political order.

Luther had been declared an outlaw.

But enforcing imperial decisions across many territories depended upon political realities.

Princes possessed authority.

Local governments made decisions.

The Empire also faced external threats and political conflicts.

Charles had many concerns.

The emperor was powerful.

But power was distributed.

This created spaces in which Reformation ideas could survive.

Some princes supported Luther.

Some opposed him.

Some cities adopted reform.

Others remained Catholic.

A traveller could move from one territory into another and encounter different religious policies.

The political map became increasingly connected with religious change.

---

This is called **political geography**.

A political map shows more than land.

It shows:

- borders
- territories
- rulers
- jurisdictions
- centres of authority.

The way political space is organised can affect historical events.

Luther's safety depended partly upon which territory he was in.

A printer's freedom could depend upon the city or ruler governing the workshop.

A prohibited book in one place might be printed in another.

Ideas could cross borders even when authorities disagreed.

---

Trade routes helped this movement.

A merchant carrying ordinary goods might also carry books.

Students carried pamphlets.

Travellers shared news.

Booksellers moved printed material.

The same network that connected markets also connected arguments.

A road did not care whether the book was Catholic or Protestant.

A river did not inspect theology.

People made those decisions.

Transport networks simply created the possibility of movement.

---

Printers outside Wittenberg also reproduced Luther’s works.

This is critical.

Luther did not need to send a new handwritten copy to every reader.

One printed work reached another city.

A printer saw demand.

Another edition appeared.

The message multiplied beyond Luther’s direct control.

This makes exact numbers difficult for historians.

Different editions appeared.

Some named printers.

Others did not.

Bibliographical evidence can help historians trace how widely a text circulated.

---

A historian might compare printing locations.

Where were Luther’s works printed?

How many editions appeared?

What languages were used?

Which cities had major printing industries?

Where did rulers support reform?

Where were books prohibited?

Patterns may appear.

This is where historical evidence, geography and economics meet.

---

Why would a ruler support reform?

There was no single reason.

Some rulers were genuinely persuaded by Reformation theology.

Others had concerns about Church authority.

Some were interested in greater control of religious institutions within their territories.

Economic issues could matter.

Church land and wealth mattered.

Political independence mattered.

Family alliances mattered.

Historians should avoid saying:

“The princes supported Luther because they wanted money.”

That may explain some decisions in some contexts.

It cannot explain every ruler.

Equally, it would be simplistic to say every prince acted only from pure religious conviction.

Historical motives are often mixed.

---

Frederick the Wise is a good example.

He protected Luther.

But historians investigate why.

Was he personally convinced by Luther?

Was he protecting the University of Wittenberg?

Was he defending Saxon rights against outside interference?

Did he value proper political procedures?

Several factors may have influenced him.

A careful conclusion may recognise uncertainty.

---

Economic resources also mattered to the Reformation.

Universities needed funding.

Printers needed capital.

Paper was required.

Workers needed wages.

Booksellers needed markets.

Travellers needed roads and inns.

Political rulers controlled resources.

Religious institutions owned property.

Ideas do not float above material life.

They travel through paper.

Ink.

Boats.

Roads.

Buildings.

Money.

Human labour.

---

Wittenberg demonstrates this clearly.

Luther’s theology was central to his message.

But his historical influence depended upon circumstances beyond theology alone.

A university gave him a position.

Printing gave him reach.

German-language writing widened his audience.

Transport networks helped works move.

Political fragmentation created different jurisdictions.

Frederick gave protection.

Readers created demand.

---

This does not mean Luther’s ideas spread only because of geography or economics.

People actually believed the ideas mattered.

Readers were persuaded.

Preachers taught them.

Opponents answered them.

Religious conviction drove many decisions.

A strong historical explanation does not replace belief with economics.

It examines how different factors interacted.

---

Imagine four versions of Luther's story.

**Version One:**
Luther changed Europe because he was brave.

Too simple.

**Version Two:**
Printing caused the Reformation.

Too simple.

**Version Three:**
German princes supported Luther only to gain wealth.

Too simple.

**Version Four:**
Luther's religious questions spread within a network of universities, printers, transport routes and politically divided territories, while rulers and readers responded for differing religious, political and economic reasons.

The fourth explanation is less dramatic.

It is also more historically useful.

---

This is the work of an inquisitive historian.

Follow the connections.

Luther to Wittenberg.

Wittenberg to its university.

The university to students.

Luther to printers.

Printers to readers.

Readers to markets.

Wittenberg to Saxony.

Saxony to Frederick.

Frederick to imperial politics.

Roads and rivers to other cities.

One question becomes part of a network.

---

Stand on the banks of the Elbe.

Imagine a boat moving along the river.

A small package is among the goods.

Inside are printed pages.

Perhaps they carry Luther’s words.

Somewhere else, a reader is waiting.

The reader does not know Luther.

Luther does not know the reader.

Wittenberg is far away.

But the pages arrive.

A new question begins.

The Reformation was theological.

It was political.

It was economic.

It was geographical.

And Wittenberg, the small town beside the river, stood at the centre of the network.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- where Wittenberg was located.
- why the River Elbe mattered.
- why the University of Wittenberg was important.
- how students helped ideas travel.
- why printers were interested in Luther's writing.
- how German-language pamphlets reached different readers.
- why Frederick the Wise was important to Luther.
- how the Holy Roman Empire's political structure affected the Reformation.
- why geography, economics and politics all helped Luther's ideas spread.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Political Geography Affects Historical Events

The Holy Roman Empire contained many territories and centres of authority.

This meant:

- the emperor possessed authority.
- territorial princes also possessed significant power.
- cities and church territories could have different political arrangements.
- laws and religious policies could differ between places.

The location of a person within a particular territory could affect the protection or opposition that person experienced.

---

## 2. Universities Create Intellectual and Economic Activity

A university attracts:

- teachers
- students
- scholars.

These people require:

- books
- housing
- food
- services.

A university may therefore influence both the intellectual and economic characteristics of a town.

The University of Wittenberg helped create a community in which Luther's questions could be discussed.

---

## 3. Printing Responded to Demand

Printers needed readers.

Luther’s writings attracted attention.

This created a relationship:

**Religious controversy**

↓

**Reader interest**

↓

**Demand for printed works**

↓

**Printers produce more editions**

↓

**Wider circulation**

↓

**More readers and debate**

Economic demand helped increase the circulation of Reformation writings.

---

## 4. Language Influences Markets and Audiences

Latin connected educated European readers.

German writings could reach literate German-speaking audiences who did not read Latin.

Different languages could reach different markets.

The choice of language influenced who could directly access a printed work.

---

## 5. Historical Developments Are Interconnected

A useful relationship diagram is:

**Luther’s questions**

- 

**University networks**

- 

**Printing**

- 

**Transport routes**

- 

**Political protection**

- 

**Holy Roman Empire’s territorial structure**

- 

**Reader demand**

↓

**Wider spread of Reformation ideas**

No single factor explains the whole historical development.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. What river was Wittenberg near?
2. Where did Luther teach?
3. How did printers help Luther?
4. Who protected Luther?
5. How could Luther’s books travel to another place?
6. Why was Wittenberg important?

---

## Years 3–4

1. Why could a university help ideas spread?
2. How did students connect Wittenberg with other places?
3. Why were printers interested in Luther’s writings?
4. How did Frederick the Wise affect Luther’s life?
5. Why did different territories respond differently to Luther?
6. What conclusion can you draw about the importance of Wittenberg’s connections?

## Years 5–6

1. Explain how the political geography of the Holy Roman Empire affected Luther's survival and influence.
2. What relationship can you infer between public controversy, reader demand and printing production?
3. Why might Luther's use of German have expanded the possible market for his writings?
4. How did Frederick the Wise's political authority function as a resource for Luther?
5. Why is it inadequate to explain the spread of the Reformation through printing alone?
6. Develop an evidence-based conclusion: **Why did Wittenberg become an important centre for the spread of Luther's ideas?**

---

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – From Wittenberg to a Reader

Create a journey map.

Include:

**Luther at Wittenberg**

↓

**Printer**

↓

**Book or Pamphlet**

↓

**River, Road or Traveller**

↓

**Reader in Another Place**

Draw arrows between each stage.

Tell your Home-Tutor:

**"Luther's ideas travelled because…"**

Use the words:

**Wittenberg**

**printer**

**travel**

**reader**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral explanation.

---

# Years 3–4 – Why Wittenberg?

Use a provided map to locate:

- Wittenberg
- the River Elbe
- Electoral Saxony
- Worms
- Wartburg Castle.

Create an annotated map.

Add symbols for:

- university
- printing workshop
- river route
- Frederick the Wise
- books travelling.

Then complete the table:

| Wittenberg Feature | How it helped Luther or his ideas |
|---|---|
| River connection | |
| University | |
| Students and scholars | |
| Printers | |
| Frederick the Wise | |
| Location in Electoral Saxony | |

Write a conclusion:

**Wittenberg became important to the Reformation because…**

Use the terms:

**location**

**authority**

**interconnection**

**printing**

---

# Years 5–6 – Mapping Luther's Reformation Network

Investigate the geographical, political and economic network that enabled Luther's ideas to spread.

Use maps and at least three provided primary and secondary sources.

Investigate:

- Wittenberg and the River Elbe.
- Electoral Saxony.
- the University of Wittenberg.
- major printing centres that reproduced Luther's writings.
- Wartburg Castle.
- political territories of the Holy Roman Empire.
- routes by which printed works travelled.

Organise your evidence:

| Factor | Evidence | Relationship to the Spread of Luther's Ideas |
|---|---|---|
| Wittenberg's location | | |
| University | | |
| Printing industry | | |
| Reader demand | | |
| Language | | |
| Transport routes | | |
| Frederick the Wise | | |
| Political structure of the Empire | | |

Create an annotated map and network diagram.

Your diagram should show at least five inferred relationships.

For example:

The territorial authority of Frederick the Wise provided Luther with protection that allowed him to continue writing.

Then write an evidence-based explanation:

**Why did Wittenberg become an important centre for the spread of Luther's ideas?**

Your explanation should use geographical, political and economic evidence and avoid attributing the Reformation to one factor alone.

---

# God’s Big Story Reflection

God places people in particular times and places.

Luther did not choose the entire political structure of the Holy Roman Empire.

He did not invent the River Elbe.

He did not invent printing.

He did not establish Wittenberg University.

Yet these circumstances became part of his story.

This reminds us of **providence**.

God works within history through people, places and circumstances.

At the same time, the Fall means political structures, businesses and institutions may be used wisely or selfishly.

A printer may spread truth or error.

A ruler may protect justice or protect personal interests.

A scholar may ask a faithful question or become proud of his own opinions.

Restoration calls us to use the opportunities and resources God gives us faithfully.

“And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” – **Esther 4:14**

Inquisitiveness asks why a place matters.

Wisdom recognises that opportunities bring responsibility.

---

## Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded HASS F–6 Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2K03** | **how places can be spatially represented in geographical divisions from local to regional to state/territory, and how people and places are interconnected across those scales** | Students locate Wittenberg within Electoral Saxony and the wider Holy Roman Empire and trace connections between towns, territories and readers. |
| **AC9HS2S02** | **collect, sort and record information and data from observations and from provided sources, including unscaled timelines and labelled maps or models** | Students sequence and map the movement of Luther’s writings from Wittenberg to readers in other places. |
| **AC9HS2S03** | **interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present** | Students interpret map and historical information concerning Wittenberg, transport and the movement of printed works. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw conclusions about why Wittenberg was important to Luther and the spread of his ideas. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Students communicate historical and geographical observations using terms such as Wittenberg, printer, territory and reader. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students investigate why Wittenberg became significant in the Reformation. |
| **AC9HS3S02** | **locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources, including annotated timelines and maps** | Students locate Wittenberg, the Elbe, Worms and Wartburg Castle and record information on an annotated map. |

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS3S03** | **interpret information and data displayed in different formats** | Students interpret maps, tables, narrative information and relationship diagrams. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students analyse Wittenberg's location, university, printers and political protection and draw a conclusion about its importance. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present a geographical-historical explanation using terms including location, authority, interconnection and printing. |
| **AC9HS5K07** | **how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal** | Students examine networks of scholars, printers, rulers and reform supporters who cooperated around shared religious or institutional goals. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | Students examine human resources such as scholars and printers and capital resources such as printing presses, university facilities and transport infrastructure. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate Wittenberg, the Holy Roman Empire and the printing and political systems connected with Luther. |
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students organise geographical, political and historical evidence using maps and multiple source types. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between political geography, university networks, printing, reader demand and the movement of Reformation ideas. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students develop a supported conclusion explaining why Wittenberg became an important Reformation centre. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students organise findings in an annotated map, network diagram and evidence-based geographical-economic explanation. |

# Achievement Standard Contribution

The exact Achievement Standard clauses below are drawn from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. This lesson primarily develops geographical interconnection, inquiry, analysis of inferred relationships and evidence-based explanation.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **"They identify how people and places are interconnected both at local and broader scales."** | Students trace connections from Luther and Wittenberg to printers, transport routes and readers in other places. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **"Students develop questions, and collect, sort and record related information and data from observations and provided sources."** | Students organise the journey of Luther's printed ideas through a pictorial connection map. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **"Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals."** | Students conclude why Wittenberg and its connections helped Luther's ideas travel. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **"Students develop questions and locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources and formats."** | Students locate important Reformation places and record information on an annotated map. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **"They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions."** | Students analyse geographical, institutional and political information and draw a conclusion about Wittenberg's importance. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **"Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations."** | Students present a geographical and historical explanation using mapped evidence and relevant terminology. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **"Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources."** | Students undertake a structured geographical-political investigation using maps and historical sources. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **"Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships."** | Students infer relationships among territory, political protection, transport, universities, printing and reader demand. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **"They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions."** | Students evaluate multiple factors and conclude why Wittenberg became an important Reformation centre. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **"Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations."** | Students organise evidence in a factor table, map and network diagram and present a source-supported explanation. |

# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 Luther idea journey | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 annotated Reformation map | Geographical mapping evidence |
| Years 3–4 Wittenberg factor table | Information interpretation evidence |
| Years 5–6 Reformation network investigation | HASS inquiry evidence |
| Network diagram and inferred relationships | Analysis evidence |
| Evidence-based Wittenberg explanation | Achievement Standard evidence |

# Lesson 8.3 – Civics, Economics & Historical Investigation

## Who Had the Right to Decide? Luther, Princes and the Question of Religious Authority

**Character Focus:** Inquisitiveness

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# Learning Intentions

Students will:

- investigate how religious and political authority overlapped during the Reformation.
- explain why rulers became involved in disputes about Church teaching and practice.
- examine different perspectives concerning who should determine religious belief within a territory.
- investigate how shared beliefs encouraged people to cooperate around civic and religious goals.
- evaluate historical evidence and draw conclusions about the relationship between conscience, authority and political power.

---

# Key Terminology

**Authority** – The recognised right or power to make decisions, teach, govern or enforce rules.

**Jurisdiction** – The area or group over which a person or institution has recognised authority.

**Territorial ruler** – A prince or other ruler who governs a particular political territory.

**Conscience** – A person's inner awareness and judgement concerning right and wrong.

**Religious uniformity** – A situation in which people within a community or territory are expected to follow the same religious beliefs or practices.

**Civic goal** – An aim people work towards for the benefit or organisation of a community.

**Alliance** – An agreement or relationship in which people or groups cooperate.

**Compromise** – An agreement in which different sides each accept some conditions in order to resolve a disagreement.

---

# Informational Story

## The Prince's Question

The prince sat at the table.

Before him lay letters.

Reports.

Petitions.

Printed books.

Arguments from theologians.

Complaints from clergy.

Advice from political officials.

Some people in his territory supported Martin Luther.

Others rejected Luther completely.

Some wanted churches changed.

Others wanted the old practices preserved.

The prince was not a theologian.

Yet the question had reached his council chamber.

**What should happen in my territory?**

He could not avoid the issue.

If he supported reform, he might anger the emperor.

If he opposed reform, he might anger many of his own subjects.

If he did nothing, the disagreements might continue to grow.

A question that had begun in a university had become a question for government.

Who had the right to decide?

---

The Reformation created a crisis of authority.

Martin Luther argued that Scripture held the highest authority for Christian doctrine.

The Roman Catholic Church taught that Christ had given authority to the Church and that Scripture should be understood within its teaching and tradition.

These were not small differences.

They affected the entire structure of Christian life.

Who could define doctrine?

Who could appoint clergy?

Who could organise worship?

Who controlled church property?

Who had authority to discipline religious teachers?

These questions were theological.

But they also affected governments.

---

Modern students may find this difficult to imagine.

In contemporary Australia, people belong to many different churches and religious communities.

Governments do not usually decide which church every citizen must attend.

But sixteenth-century Europe was different.

Religion was deeply connected with public life.

Church festivals shaped the calendar.

Church buildings stood at the centre of communities.

Church institutions owned land.

Clergy taught.

Baptisms, marriages and burials were recorded through churches.

Religious belief and social order were closely connected.

For many rulers, religious disagreement was not merely a private argument.

They feared it might divide the community itself.

---

Suppose two groups in the same city each declare:

**Our teaching is true.**

The first group controls the existing churches.

The second group demands reform.

Who may preach?

Who may use church buildings?

Who receives church income?

Which worship service will be held?

Who trains new ministers?

Who teaches children?

These are practical questions.

A religious disagreement can quickly involve property, education, money and public order.

Rulers therefore became involved.

---

Some German princes supported Luther.

Their motives differed.

For some, religious conviction mattered greatly.

They believed Reformation teaching was true.

Others also valued greater independence from outside Church authorities.

Some wanted more influence over church affairs in their own territories.

Church lands and financial resources could also become part of political calculations.

Historical motives are rarely identical in every person.

The inquisitive historian must resist the sentence:

**“The princes supported Luther because…”**

Usually the better question is:

**“Which factors influenced this particular prince?”**

---

Frederick the Wise had protected Luther.

After Frederick's death, other Saxon rulers moved more openly towards Reformation changes.

Elsewhere, different rulers made different decisions.

Some territories remained strongly Catholic.

Others adopted Lutheran reforms.

Political borders increasingly affected religious experience.

A traveller could leave one territory and enter another where church life was organised differently.

Political geography and religious identity became connected.

---

Emperor Charles V faced an enormous challenge.

He was Holy Roman Emperor.

He was also ruler of extensive lands beyond the German territories.

He faced conflict with France.

The Ottoman Empire threatened parts of central Europe.

Political rivalries demanded attention.

At the same time, German religious division was growing.

Charles wanted Christian unity.

He remained committed to Catholicism.

He also wanted political order within the Empire.

But he could not simply stand in every German town and personally enforce religious policy.

The territorial princes possessed significant political power.

---

In 1529, an imperial assembly met at Speyer.

Earlier political arrangements had allowed rulers some room in dealing with religious questions.

At the 1529 Diet of Speyer, pressure increased against further Lutheran reform.

Several princes and representatives of free cities formally protested.

From this protest came the word **Protestant**.

At first, the term referred particularly to those who protested the imperial decision.

Over time, it became a broader name associated with Reformation churches and movements.

A political protest helped create a religious label.

History often connects words with events in unexpected ways.

Why did the princes protest?

They believed questions of faith and conscience could not simply be settled by majority vote or imperial order.

They argued that they were accountable before God.

This echoed one of Luther's own major concerns.

But there was a problem.

If a prince claimed freedom of conscience against the emperor, what about the ordinary person living under the prince?

Did the subject also have freedom to disagree with the prince?

The question becomes uncomfortable.

---

Imagine a Lutheran prince saying:

**The emperor must not force Catholic practice upon my territory.**

Now imagine one of the prince's subjects saying:

**Then you must not force Lutheran practice upon me.**

What should the prince answer?

The Reformation raised powerful questions about conscience.

But sixteenth-century rulers did not generally develop modern ideas of complete religious liberty.

Many Protestant rulers expected religious conformity within their territories.

Many Catholic rulers did the same.

People often defended freedom for their own beliefs more readily than freedom for beliefs they considered dangerous.

This is an important historical complexity.

---

At the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, Lutheran rulers and cities presented a statement of belief known as the **Augsburg Confession**.

Philip Melanchthon, Luther's scholarly colleague, played a major role in preparing it.

The document explained Lutheran teaching.

It was also a political act.

Princes and cities publicly identified themselves with a shared religious position.

They were no longer isolated individuals asking private questions.

They were becoming an organised group.

Shared beliefs encouraged cooperation.

---

This demonstrates a civics principle.

People with shared beliefs or values may work together towards a common goal.

The Protestant princes wanted to preserve their ability to practise and organise Reformation Christianity.

They formed political relationships.

They communicated.

They presented shared statements.

Eventually, several Protestant rulers and cities formed the **Schmalkaldic League**.

The League was a defensive alliance.

Its members agreed to cooperate against threats to their religious and political position.

Belief had become connected with organised civic and political action.

---

Why form an alliance?

One small territory might be vulnerable.

Several territories working together possessed more resources.

More soldiers.

More political influence.

More bargaining power.

An alliance allows members to combine resources around a common goal.

But alliances also create obligations.

If one member is attacked, must the others help?

Who contributes money?

Who leads?

What happens when members disagree?

Cooperation can increase power.

It can also create new complications.

---

The Schmalkaldic League demonstrates the relationship between belief, political authority and resources.

The princes shared important religious concerns.

They also governed territories.

Those territories possessed people.

Money.

Land.

Military resources.

Political alliances.

A theological disagreement now had armies standing behind it.

This is where the Reformation becomes particularly dangerous.

Words can become laws.

Laws can become enforcement.

Political enforcement can become war.

---

Charles V eventually fought against the Schmalkaldic League.

In 1547, imperial forces defeated the League at the Battle of Mühlberg.

Charles appeared to have gained a major victory.

But the religious problem did not disappear.

Military victory could defeat an army.

It could not automatically persuade every person's conscience.

This reveals a limitation of political power.

A ruler can require outward behaviour.

A ruler may punish.

A ruler may close a church.

But can a ruler command belief?

Suppose a prince declares:

**You must believe this.**

A citizen may attend the required church.

He may repeat the expected words.

But has the prince changed the citizen's heart?

This is the problem of conscience.

Luther had argued that faith could not be created by force.

Yet Lutheran rulers later used political authority to establish religious systems.

Catholic rulers did the same.

The tension remained.

---

After years of political and military conflict, the **Peace of Augsburg** was reached in 1555.

The settlement did not establish modern religious freedom.

Instead, it accepted a practical political arrangement within the Holy Roman Empire.

The religion of a territory would generally follow the religion of its ruler, particularly between Catholicism and Lutheranism.

A Latin phrase later associated with the arrangement was:

**cuius regio, eius religio**

Meaning approximately:

**whose realm, his religion**.

In simple terms, the ruler's religion strongly influenced the territory's official religion.

---

This was a compromise.

Catholic rulers could maintain Catholic territories.

Lutheran rulers could maintain Lutheran territories.

The Empire recognised a degree of religious division.

The settlement helped reduce immediate conflict.

But it left significant problems.

Other Protestant groups were not fully included.

Individual religious freedom remained limited.

A person's religious life could depend heavily upon the territory in which he lived.

Political geography again shaped belief and practice.

---

Imagine three people reacting to the Peace of Augsburg.

A Lutheran prince says:

**At last, the emperor recognises my territory's right to follow our confession.**

A Catholic prince says:

**My territory can remain faithful to the Catholic Church.**

An ordinary person who disagrees with the ruler says:

**But what about my conscience?**

The same compromise appears different depending upon perspective.

---

Historians should ask what a compromise was designed to solve.

The Peace of Augsburg attempted to manage political and religious conflict between major groups within the Empire.

It was not designed as a declaration that every individual should choose any religion without consequence.

Judging the agreement requires understanding its historical context.

But understanding context does not mean refusing to identify its limitations.

A strong historical conclusion can do both.

---

The Reformation also affected church property.

When a territory adopted Protestant reform, monasteries might be closed.

Church lands might be reorganised.

Income previously connected with Catholic institutions could be redirected.

Some resources supported schools.

Some supported governments.

Some benefited political elites.

Again, motives and consequences differed between places.

Religious reform could create economic redistribution.

This gave rulers another reason to become involved.

---

Suppose a monastery owns large areas of land.

A prince adopts Lutheran reform.

The monastery is dissolved.

Who now controls the land?

Who receives the income?

What happens to the monks?

What happens to the poor people who received assistance there?

What happens to the school the monastery operated?

Institutional change affects resources and services.

Reformation history therefore includes economics.

---

Education became particularly important to reformers.

Luther and Melanchthon believed Christians should be taught.

Schools were encouraged.

Children needed literacy.

Pastors required education.

Printed catechisms could teach basic Christian doctrine.

Rulers and civic leaders sometimes supported school development.

This is another example of people with shared beliefs working towards a goal.

Religious reform influenced civic institutions.

---

But schooling also raised authority questions.

Who decides what children are taught?

Church leaders?

Parents?

Town councils?

Princes?

Teachers?

The Reformation did not remove questions of authority.

It rearranged them.

Power shifted from some institutions to others.

---

An inquisitive historian does not simply ask:

**Did the Reformation reduce Church power?**

We ask:

**Where did the power go?**

Some authority moved towards territorial rulers.

Some moved towards city councils.

Some churches gained new governing structures.

Pastors and theologians gained influence.

Political rulers often became deeply involved in religious organisation.

Reform changed systems.

It did not create a world without authority.

---

This is an important civics lesson.

When one authority is challenged, a society still needs ways to make decisions.

Suppose a group says:

**The old system is wrong.**

The next question is:

**What will replace it?**

Who makes rules?

Who appoints leaders?

Who controls resources?

Who resolves disputes?

Revolution and reform both create questions of governance.

---

Luther's challenge to Church authority helped open these questions.

He insisted that God's Word stood above human authorities.

But when princes supported the Reformation, they gained major roles in shaping church life within their territories.

This created both protection and danger.

A friendly prince could protect reformers.

A prince could also use religious change to strengthen his own political control.

Power always requires examination.

---

Consider Frederick the Wise.

His protection allowed Luther to survive.

That political authority created space for inquiry.

Now consider a ruler who imprisons every religious critic.

The same kind of political office can be used differently.

The question is not simply:

**Does the ruler have power?**

It is:

**How is that power being used?**

---

By the middle of the sixteenth century, Europe was changing.

The question was no longer merely:

**Is Luther right about indulgences?**

The larger questions included:

Who determines doctrine?

What is the relationship between Church and ruler?

Can an emperor require religious uniformity?

Can a prince choose the religion of a territory?

What rights belong to individuals?

Can political alliances be formed around religious belief?

Can military force settle questions of conscience?

The Reformation had become a civic and political crisis.

---

Perhaps the prince at the table now looks more tired.

The letters remain.

Reports remain.

Theologians disagree.

The emperor sends instructions.

Citizens make requests.

Resources must be managed.

The prince still faces the question:

**What should happen in my territory?**

History does not offer him a simple answer.

But the historian can investigate the decision he made.

What did he believe?

What authority did he possess?

What resources were involved?

Whose voices were heard?

Who benefited?

Who lost?

What were the consequences?

Inquisitiveness looks beyond the famous reformer.

It examines the rulers.

The cities.

The alliances.

The confessions.

The laws.

The ordinary people living under them.

Luther asked where Church teachings were written.

The Reformation eventually forced Europe to ask another question:

**Who has the right to decide what an entire community must believe?**

That question would continue long after Luther's death.

---

# Narration

Without looking back at the story, narrate what you remember.

You might explain:

- why rulers became involved in religious disputes.
- why religious disagreement created practical civic problems.
- what happened at the Diet of Speyer in 1529.
- how the word *Protestant* became connected with the protest.
- what the Augsburg Confession was.
- why Protestant princes formed alliances.
- why political power could not easily control conscience.
- what the Peace of Augsburg attempted to achieve.
- why the settlement did not create complete religious freedom.
- how the Reformation affected political authority and economic resources.

---

# Optional Discussion Topics or Knowledge Summary

**[This next section is a summary of key ideas for the parent/tutor if leading discussion; but if it seems to labour the point or take away from the enjoyment of the lesson, just skip to the Thinking Questions and Activities.]**

## 1. Religious and Political Authority Overlapped

In sixteenth-century Europe, religious institutions were closely connected with:

- education
- property
- public worship
- marriage
- community life
- political authority.

Religious change therefore created civic and political questions.

A ruler could not always treat religious disagreement as a completely private matter.

---

## 2. Shared Beliefs Can Lead to Civic Cooperation

Protestant princes and cities shared important religious and political concerns.

They:

- presented common statements.
- formed alliances.
- combined resources.
- defended shared goals.

This demonstrates how people and communities with shared beliefs may work together towards a civic goal.

---

## 3. Cooperation Creates Power and Obligations

An alliance can increase:

- political influence
- military strength
- shared resources.

But members may also need to:

- provide assistance.
- contribute money or soldiers.
- accept shared decisions.

Cooperation involves both benefits and responsibilities.

## 4. Political Authority and Conscience Are Different

Political authorities may control:

- laws
- public institutions
- property
- penalties.

But inward belief cannot always be forced.

This raises the question:

**What are the limits of political authority over conscience?**

The Reformation made this one of Europe's major political problems.

---

## 5. Compromise May Solve One Problem but Leave Others

The Peace of Augsburg reduced immediate conflict between Catholic and Lutheran rulers.

However, it did not:

- create complete individual religious freedom.
- include every Protestant group equally.
- permanently resolve European religious conflict.

Students should assess historical responses using criteria.

For example:

**Did the settlement reduce immediate conflict?**

**Did it protect different communities?**

**Did it respect individual conscience?**

A proposal may succeed according to one criterion and fail according to another.

---

# Thinking Questions

## Foundation–Year 2

1. Why did princes become involved in Church disagreements?
2. What did the Protestant princes do when they shared the same concerns?
3. What is an alliance?

4. Can a ruler easily make someone believe something in his or her heart?
5. Why might two people think differently about the same religious rule?
6. What question would you ask the prince in the story?

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## Years 3–4

1. Why did religious change affect more than church services?
2. Why did some princes cooperate with one another?
3. What civic goal did Protestant rulers share?
4. Why might an alliance help a group?
5. Why did the Peace of Augsburg solve some problems but not others?
6. What conclusion can you draw about the relationship between political authority and religious belief?

---

## Years 5–6

1. Explain why the Reformation became a political as well as a theological conflict.
2. What relationship can you infer between shared beliefs and the formation of the Schmalkaldic League?
3. How could economic resources influence a ruler's response to religious reform?
4. Why is the Peace of Augsburg best understood as a political compromise rather than complete religious liberty?
5. Develop criteria for judging whether a government response to religious disagreement is effective and just.
6. Using your criteria, develop an evidence-based conclusion: **Did the Peace of Augsburg provide a good solution to the religious divisions of the Holy Roman Empire?**

---

# Differentiated Activities

## Foundation–Year 2 – Different People, Different Decisions

Create three picture cards:

**The Emperor**

**The Prince**

**The Citizen**

Under each person, draw or write one thing that person might care about.

For example:

**Emperor – keeping the Empire together**

**Prince – making decisions in his territory**

**Citizen – following his or her beliefs**

Then answer: **Why might these three people disagree?**

Tell your Home-Tutor: **"People can have different perspectives because…"**

The Home-Tutor may record the student's oral explanation.

---

# Years 3–4 – Why Did the Princes Work Together?

Investigate the Protestant princes and cities who cooperated during the Reformation.

Create a shared-goal diagram.

In the centre write:

**Protect Reformation Churches and Territories**

Around the centre include:

- shared beliefs
- political concerns
- protection from attack
- combined resources
- public statements.

Then complete the table:

| Possible Action | Possible Benefit | Possible Problem |
|---|---|---|
| Work alone | | |
| Form an alliance | | |
| Obey the emperor | | |
| Seek a compromise | | |

Answer:

**Which action do you think offered the strongest response to the Protestant princes' challenge?**

Explain the possible effects of your choice.

Use the terms:

**civic goal**

**alliance**

**authority**

**consequence**

---

# Years 5–6 – The Peace of Augsburg Decision Inquiry

Investigate the question:

**Did the Peace of Augsburg provide a good solution to the religious divisions of the Holy Roman Empire?**

Use at least four provided primary and secondary sources.

Possible sources may include:

- extracts from the Protestation at Speyer.
- extracts from the Augsburg Confession.
- information about the Schmalkaldic League.
- the Peace of Augsburg.
- maps showing Catholic and Lutheran territories.
- historical interpretations of the settlement.

Complete the source evaluation table:

| Source | Origin | Purpose | Perspective | Evidence about authority or religious division | Limitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Then develop assessment criteria.

Your criteria might include:

| Criterion | Question |
|---|---|
| Reduction of conflict | Did the settlement reduce immediate political or military conflict? |
| Political practicality | Could the arrangement operate within the Holy Roman Empire? |
| Protection of communities | Did major religious communities gain protection? |
| Individual conscience | Could individuals freely follow their own religious convictions? |
| Long-term stability | Did the arrangement resolve religious division for the future? |

Assess the Peace of Augsburg.

| Criterion | Evidence | Strong / Partial / Weak |
|---|---|---|
| Reduction of conflict | | |

| Criterion | Evidence | Strong / Partial / Weak |
|---|---|---|
| Political practicality | | |
| Protection of communities | | |
| Individual conscience | | |
| Long-term stability | | |

Create an annotated political map showing:

- the Holy Roman Empire.
- selected Catholic territories.
- selected Lutheran territories.
- political borders.
- major Reformation locations.

Then write an evidence-based response:

**Did the Peace of Augsburg provide a good solution to the religious divisions of the Holy Roman Empire?**

Your response should:

- evaluate primary and secondary sources.
- explain the political and religious problem.
- use criteria to assess the settlement.
- identify different perspectives.
- recognise both achievements and limitations.
- reach a supported conclusion.

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# God's Big Story Reflection

Authority is necessary.

Families need leadership.

Churches need faithful oversight.

Governments need people who make decisions.

Communities need order.

But all human authorities are affected by the Fall.

A ruler may use power selfishly.

A church leader may resist correction.

A reformer may become proud.

A group seeking freedom may refuse freedom to others.

The Reformation reminds us that human beings often recognise injustice most clearly when it affects themselves.

Christians are called to something deeper.

Jesus taught His followers to do to others as they would have others do to them.

That principle asks difficult questions.

**Do I want freedom to question others but refuse to be questioned?**

**Do I demand respect for my conscience while ignoring another person's conscience?**

**Do I use authority to serve or simply to control?**

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them." – **Matthew 7:12**

Inquisitiveness asks who has authority.

Wisdom asks how that authority should be used.

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# Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 Content Description Mapping

The exact codes and wording below are taken from the uploaded HASS F–6 Content Descriptions document.

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS2S01** | **develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present** | Students develop questions about rulers, Reformation events, alliances and the authority to make religious decisions. |
| **AC9HS2S04** | **discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events** | Students discuss how emperors, princes and citizens could hold different perspectives concerning religious authority and conscience. |
| **AC9HS2S05** | **draw conclusions and make proposals** | Students draw conclusions about political authority and consider how rulers might respond to religious disagreement. |
| **AC9HS2S06** | **develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms** | Students use narration and terms such as authority, prince, alliance and conscience to communicate observations about the past. |
| **AC9HS3K07** | **why people participate within communities and how students can actively participate and contribute to communities** | Students investigate why groups of rulers and cities participated together to defend shared beliefs and political interests and consider how participation contributes to collective goals. |
| **AC9HS3S01** | **develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues** | Students investigate political and religious authority during the Reformation. |
| **AC9HS3S04** | **analyse information and data, and identify perspectives** | Students analyse the perspectives of emperors, princes and ordinary citizens concerning religious decisions. |
| **AC9HS3S05** | **draw conclusions based on analysis of information** | Students analyse political responses and draw conclusions about the relationship between authority and belief. |
| **AC9HS3S06** | **propose actions or responses to an issue or challenge that consider possible effects of actions** | Students compare possible responses available to Protestant rulers and consider the likely benefits and problems of each action. |
| **AC9HS3S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms** | Students present explanations of political cooperation and Reformation authority using relevant HASS terminology. |
| **AC9HS5K07** | **how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal** | The lesson explicitly examines Protestant princes and cities cooperating through confessions, political protest and alliances to protect shared religious and civic goals. |
| **AC9HS5K08** | **types of resources, including natural, human and capital, and how they satisfy needs and wants** | Students examine how territories combined human, financial and material resources through alliances and how control of church land and institutional resources influenced reform. |
| **AC9HS5S01** | **develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems** | Students investigate rulers, alliances, religious divisions and systems of political authority in the Holy Roman Empire. |

| ACv9 Code | Exact Content Description | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **AC9HS5S02** | **locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats** | Students organise information from confessions, political agreements, maps and historical interpretations. |
| **AC9HS5S03** | **evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships** | Students infer relationships between shared beliefs, political cooperation, territorial authority, resources and religious policy. |
| **AC9HS5S04** | **evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives** | Students evaluate documents and historical interpretations associated with Reformation political agreements and religious division. |
| **AC9HS5S05** | **develop evidence-based conclusions** | Students develop a supported judgement concerning the effectiveness of the Peace of Augsburg. |
| **AC9HS5S06** | **propose actions or responses to issues or challenges and use criteria to assess the possible effects** | Students develop criteria and use them to assess the political compromise created by the Peace of Augsburg. |
| **AC9HS5S07** | **present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions** | Students present a structured historical and civics explanation drawing upon source evidence, mapped information and competing viewpoints. |

# Achievement Standard Contribution

The exact clauses below are drawn from the uploaded HASS Achievement Standards document. This lesson makes a particularly strong contribution to the civics participation and decision-making skills that can be developed across historical contexts, while leaving Australia-specific government knowledge for relevant Australian units.

| Age Band | Exact Achievement Standard Focus | Evidence Developed in this Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“They interpret information and data, and identify and discuss perspectives.”** | Students identify how an emperor, prince and citizen might understand religious authority differently. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use interpretations to draw conclusions and make proposals.”** | Students draw conclusions about why people disagreed and consider how leaders might respond. |
| **F–2 / Year 2** | **“Students use sources, and subject-specific terms to present narratives and observations about the past, people and places at different scales.”** | Students communicate historical observations using terminology connected with rulers, territories, alliances and conscience. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“They interpret and analyse information and data to identify perspectives, and draw conclusions.”** | Students analyse political choices and differing perspectives within the Reformation conflict. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students propose considered actions or responses.”** | Students compare working alone, forming an alliance, obeying the emperor or seeking compromise and select a response after considering possible effects. |
| **Years 3–4 / Year 4** | **“Students use ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students explain cooperation and authority using historical and civics terms. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students develop questions, and locate, collect and organise information and data from a range of primary and secondary sources.”** | Students undertake a structured inquiry into the Peace of Augsburg using documentary, mapped and secondary evidence. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives.”** | Students evaluate confessional, political and historical sources concerning Reformation authority and compromise. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships.”** | Students infer relationships among territorial government, shared beliefs, alliances, resources and religious policy. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“They evaluate evidence to draw conclusions.”** | Students use source and map evidence to judge the effectiveness and limitations of the Peace of Augsburg. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students propose actions or responses and use criteria to assess the possible effects.”** | Students develop criteria and apply them to the Peace of Augsburg as a historical response to religious and political division. |
| **Years 5–6 / Year 6** | **“Students select and organise ideas and findings from sources, and use a range of relevant terms and conventions, to present descriptions and explanations.”** | Students organise source findings, criteria-based assessment and mapped evidence into a structured historical explanation. |

# Assessment Opportunities

| Evidence Collected | Possible Assessment Method |
|---|---|
| Narration | Home-Tutor observation or narration record |
| Thinking Question responses | Oral or written formative evidence |
| F–2 perspective cards | Illustrated work sample and oral explanation |
| Years 3–4 shared-goal diagram | Civics participation evidence |
| Years 3–4 action/consequence table | Decision-making evidence |
| Years 5–6 source evaluation | Historical inquiry evidence |
| Peace of Augsburg criteria table | Criteria-based analysis |
| Annotated political map | Geographical and political interpretation evidence |
| Evidence-based Peace of Augsburg judgement | Achievement Standard evidence |

| TOPIC 9 | ASSESSMENT |
|---|---|

# Assessment Evidence Developed Through the Renaissance HASS Learning Guide

Assessment in this course is designed to be **cumulative**. Students are not expected to demonstrate the whole HASS Achievement Standard in one lesson or one assessment task. Instead, evidence is gathered progressively through narration, thinking questions, mapping, source analysis, perspective investigations, geographical and economic explanations, and historical conclusions.

## Assessment Approach

Throughout the course, teachers and Home-Tutors should retain selected examples of student work rather than treating every activity as a formal assessment.

Evidence may be collected from:

| Evidence Source | What It Can Demonstrate |
|---|---|
| Narration | Historical understanding, recall, sequencing, oral communication and use of subject-specific terms |
| Thinking Questions | Interpretation, reasoning, perspectives and developing conclusions |
| Maps and annotated diagrams | Locating places, recording information and explaining geographical interconnections |
| Resource and economic investigations | Classification, relationships between resources and economic activity, and inferred relationships |
| Perspective activities | Identification and analysis of differing viewpoints |
| Source investigation tables | Collection, organisation and evaluation of primary and secondary sources |
| Historical significance tasks | Use of evidence and criteria to judge the importance of a person or development |
| Cause and relationship diagrams | Analysis of multiple causes and inferred relationships |
| Criteria-based decision tasks | Proposed responses and assessment of possible effects |
| Extended historical explanations | Selection and organisation of findings, evidence-based conclusions and communication using relevant conventions |

# How Assessment Has Built Through the Course

## Topics 1–2: Learning to Observe, Ask and Explain

The early Petrarch and Brunelleschi lessons establish the foundational inquiry habits of the course.

Students begin to:

- ask questions about historical people, places and events.
- narrate historical information.
- interpret maps and visual information.
- recognise that places are interconnected.
- explain simple cause-and-effect relationships.
- use subject-specific historical, geographical and economic vocabulary.

At this stage, assessment evidence should primarily show that students can **notice, describe and explain**.

For younger students, narration and illustrated work samples may provide the strongest evidence.

For older students, short explanations and annotated diagrams begin to demonstrate analysis.

---

## Topic 3: Leonardo – Observation and Historical Investigation

The Leonardo topic increases the emphasis on questioning and investigation.

Students investigate:

- why Renaissance Italy encouraged innovation.
- how workshops and apprenticeships operated.
- how knowledge was passed between people.
- whether historical stories about Leonardo are reliable.

By Lesson 3.3, Years 5–6 students are explicitly evaluating sources according to:

- origin
- purpose
- perspective
- limitation.

They also begin developing **evidence-based conclusions**.

This topic marks an important assessment progression:

**What happened?**

becomes:

**How do we know?**

The Achievement Standard focus on source evaluation and evidence-based conclusions begins to be demonstrated more explicitly here.

# Topic 4: The Medici – Perspectives, Power and Resources

The Medici lessons strengthen assessment evidence relating to:

- historical significance.
- differing perspectives.
- political influence.
- natural, human and capital resources.
- inferred relationships between economic wealth and political or cultural influence.

Students begin to recognise that historical questions may not have one simple answer.

For example:

**Did the Medici strengthen or weaken Florence?**

or:

**Who really ruled Florence?**

These questions require students to compare information and develop balanced conclusions.

The Years 5–6 tasks especially build evidence for the Achievement Standard requirements that students:

**"evaluate a range of information and data formats to identify and describe patterns, trends or inferred relationships"**

and:

**"evaluate evidence to draw conclusions."**

---

# Topic 5: Michelangelo – Significance, Geography and Competing Interests

The Michelangelo topic builds further assessment evidence through three related investigations:

1. **Historical significance**
2. **Geographical and economic interconnections**
3. **The competing power of artists and patrons**

Students investigate *David*, Carrara marble and commissioned artworks.

The assessment progression now requires students to connect several areas of HASS.

For example:

Carrara's geography influenced quarrying.

Quarrying depended upon human and capital resources.

Transport networks connected Carrara with artists and cities.

Patrons supplied financial resources.

Michelangelo supplied specialist human skill.

The student must infer relationships rather than merely list facts.

The commission case study also develops students' ability to compare competing perspectives and evaluate obligations and authority.

---

# Topic 6: Gutenberg – Technology, Networks and the Movement of Information

The Gutenberg topic produces particularly strong evidence for the Year 2 Achievement Standard statement:

**“They identify the effects of changes in technologies on people's lives.”**

Students compare manuscript production with printing and explain changes to communication and work.

For Years 3–6, the assessment becomes more analytical.

Students investigate:

- how Gutenberg's printing system worked.
- why printing businesses developed in particular cities.
- how books travelled through commercial networks.
- how consumer demand influenced production.
- why authorities attempted to control printed information.

This topic builds a repeated pattern of historical reasoning:

**Development**

↓

**Changed system**

↓

**New interconnections**

↓

**New opportunities**

↓

**New problems or consequences**

Students are increasingly expected to analyse the **consequences of change**.

# Topic 7: Erasmus – Source Evaluation and Responsible Criticism

The Erasmus topic deliberately strengthens historical inquiry.

Students are repeatedly asked to investigate claims such as:

**"Erasmus wanted to destroy the Church."**

Rather than accepting or rejecting the claim immediately, students must:

1. identify the claim.
2. develop questions.
3. locate relevant evidence.
4. identify perspectives.
5. consider source origin and purpose.
6. draw a conclusion.

By the Years 5–6 level, students also develop and apply **criteria**.

For example, students determine criteria for responsible criticism and then assess Erasmus against those criteria.

This directly builds towards the Achievement Standard statement:

**"Students propose actions or responses and use criteria to assess the possible effects."**

The course therefore moves beyond students simply stating an opinion.

A student should increasingly be able to say:

**My conclusion is based upon these criteria and this evidence.**

---

# Topic 8: Luther – Multi-Causal Explanation and Historical Judgement

The Luther topic brings together many of the inquiry skills developed earlier.

Students examine:

- significant individuals.
- printing.
- geographical interconnections.
- political authority.
- economic resources.
- competing perspectives.
- source reliability.
- alliances and shared civic goals.
- criteria-based assessment of historical responses.

Students are explicitly taught not to use simplistic explanations such as:

**“Luther caused the Reformation.”**

Instead, they construct multi-causal explanations involving:

- Renaissance humanism.
- biblical scholarship.
- printing.
- Church problems.
- political geography.
- territorial rulers.
- economic interests.
- religious conviction.
- individual reformers.

This represents a significant increase in historical reasoning.

Students are now expected to evaluate several forms of evidence and explain **interacting relationships**.

---

# Expected Progression of Assessment Evidence

## Foundation–Year 2

By this stage of the course, a developing student should increasingly be able to:

- ask or respond to questions about people, places and events.
- sort and sequence historical information.
- interpret provided sources and illustrations.
- identify simple perspectives.
- identify effects of technological change.
- recognise connections between people and places.
- draw simple conclusions.
- present historical narratives and observations using subject-specific vocabulary.

These are strongly aligned with the Year 2 Achievement Standard.

The strongest evidence may include:

- oral narration records.
- illustrated sequences.
- labelled maps.
- comparison activities.
- simple perspective tasks.
- oral conclusions recorded by the Home-Tutor.

Written quantity should not be confused with achievement.

A younger student may demonstrate strong HASS understanding orally.

---

# Years 3–4

By this stage of the course, students should increasingly be able to:

- develop investigation questions.
- locate and record information from different source formats.
- interpret maps, diagrams, written information and visual sources.
- identify perspectives.
- analyse information before drawing conclusions.
- propose considered responses to historical or civic challenges.
- present explanations using ideas from sources and relevant terminology.

These skills directly reflect the inquiry requirements of the Year 4 Achievement Standard.

Strong assessment evidence may include:

- annotated maps.
- perspective comparison tables.
- historical claim investigations.
- cause-and-effect chains.
- opportunity/challenge tables.
- supported paragraphs.
- proposed responses with consideration of possible consequences.

---

# Years 5–6

By this stage of the course, students should increasingly demonstrate a structured inquiry process.

Students should be able to:

- develop historical questions.
- locate and organise primary and secondary sources.
- evaluate source origin, purpose and perspective.
- interpret different information and data formats.
- identify patterns or infer relationships.
- evaluate evidence.
- draw evidence-based conclusions.
- propose responses.
- develop and use criteria.
- organise ideas and findings into historical explanations.

These assessment practices strongly align with the transferable inquiry clauses of the Year 6 Achievement Standard.

Strong evidence may include:

- source evaluation tables.
- historical significance investigations.
- annotated political and geographical maps.
- multi-causal diagrams.
- network diagrams.
- criteria-based evaluations.

- extended evidence-based historical explanations.

---

# Recommended Portfolio Evidence from the Course So Far

It is **not necessary to retain every task**.

For each student, I recommend selecting a small number of strong samples that together demonstrate progression.

| Age Band | Recommended Evidence |
|---|---|
| **F–2** | Narration record; technological-change comparison; labelled connection map; perspective activity; illustrated historical explanation |
| **Years 3–4** | Annotated map; perspective analysis; historical claim investigation; cause or relationship diagram; considered response to a civic challenge |
| **Years 5–6** | Source evaluation investigation; historical significance response; geographical-economic inquiry; multi-causal diagram; criteria-based historical judgement |

The teacher should annotate each retained work sample with:

**Date**

**Lesson**

**Achievement Standard clause demonstrated**

**Level of independence**

**Teacher observation or judgement**

---