

The Italian Renaissance

By History.com, adapted by Newsela staff on 10.13.17

Word Count **561**

Level **590L**



The statue of David by Michelangelo. During the Renaissance, artists and thinkers looked back at Greek and Roman culture. They studied the human mind and body. Photo by: Jörg Bittner Unna/Wikimedia.

About 600 years ago, Europe went through a new period. This period was called the Renaissance. The word renaissance means to be born again. This was a time of great art and new ideas.



The Italian Renaissance began in Florence. This city in Italy was one of the largest in Europe. Powerful banks and rich merchants were set up there.

The rich people of Florence often showed off their money. They paid for artists and thinkers to create art. The city became a center for culture in Europe.

Greek and Roman culture

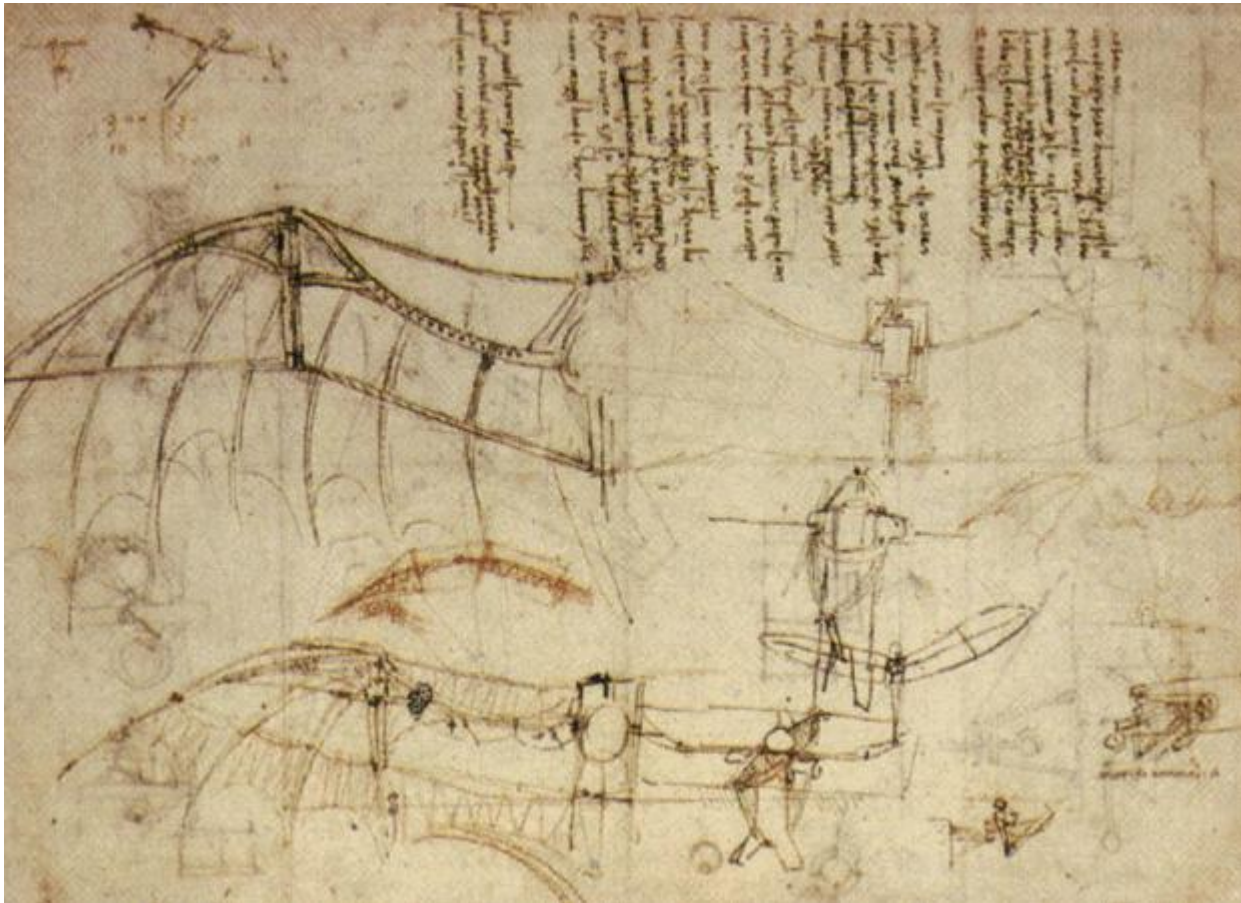
Thanks to this money, writers and thinkers could travel. They went to different parts of Italy. They studied Greek and Roman culture.

The Greeks were an ancient civilization in the east of Europe. The Romans were a powerful civilization from Italy. They took over the Greeks, and most of Europe.

The Romans had been long gone by then. But during the Renaissance, artists and thinkers wanted to bring back Greek and Roman art. For example, Greeks and Romans studied the beauty of the human body and the things humans could do. So, sculptures and paintings in the Renaissance did too. This became an important idea in the Renaissance. It is called humanism.

Science and technology

At the time, the Catholic Church had a great deal of power. But with humanism, people listened less to what the Catholic Church said. They started looking at nature more.



Many Renaissance thinkers studied how the world worked. Leonardo Da Vinci was a great Renaissance artist. He was also an inventor and planned all sorts of machines. He even planned submarines and machines with wings, although he didn't build them. Da Vinci also studied the human body. He was a scientist, painter, engineer and many other things.

One of the greatest inventions of the Renaissance came from Germany. Johannes Gutenberg made a new way of printing books. For the first time, many books could be made at once. These books spread knowledge and new ideas through Europe.

Art and architecture

During the Italian Renaissance, art was everywhere. Some artists were famous, like celebrities.



One of these was Filippo Brunelleschi, an Italian architect. He got many of his ideas from ancient Roman buildings. He built a huge dome for the main church in Florence. A dome is a round roof that sits on top of a building.

Brunelleschi used perspective in his drawings. Perspective is when buildings in a drawing don't look flat. Renaissance artists found out how to do this. It made their paintings look more real.

The end of the Italian Renaissance

The Renaissance was not just about art and beauty. At the time, Italy was a battlefield. Many armies fought to control it. The Catholic Church fought too, since it had its own land and army.

The Catholic Church set up the Roman Inquisition. The Inquisition judged people who did not agree with the Catholic Church. This included many humanists. Many see this as the end of the Renaissance in Italy.