WHaG **What was the Renaissance?** Name:

Use the information to answer the questions that follow in the spaces provided.

# Re + naissance = Renaissance

again "a birth, an origination as that of an idea, or a movement."

"**Cultural Movement**"
= **culture** + **movement**
- **culture** is the language, ideas, inventions, and art of a particular group of people.
- a **movement** in history is a change

The Renaissance, **"rebirth"** in French, was a **cultural movement** in the **14th-17th centuries** during which **European** artists, scientists, and scholars, were inspired by Classical achievements of the **Greeks** and **Romans**, which they became aware of through ruins and Greco-Roman texts preserved by **Islamic scholars** in the **Ottoman Empire.**

The Renaissance started in Italy in the **14th century (1300s)**, but its ideas and cultural trends spread slowly across Europe. The **Renaissance** marked the end of the **Middle Ages**, but they overlap. Depending on ***where*** in Europe a person was, the Renaissance "arrived" at a different time.

1. Identify and explain one cultural change that you have seen in your lifetime.

**<u>What were the characteristics of the Renaissance?</u>**

**Greek + Roman Influences:**

After the fall of the Roman Empire, much of the art and literature that was created by the ancient Greeks and Romans was "lost" because of the disorder caused by fighting between kingdoms, a lack of education for people outside of the clergy, and a lack of wealth to support artistic creation.

Starting in the 1300s, scholars, artists, and scientists in Italy **rediscovered Greek and Roman writings and art**. They modeled everything they did on what they learned from ancient texts and artifacts. Many of the texts and artifacts came to them from Constantinople in the **Ottoman Empire** where the texts had been preserved and often translated into Arabic.

Renaissance writers **learned Greek and Latin,** the languages of the Greek and Roman Empires, and studied the style and grammar used by writers like **Cicero**, a Roman philosopher and politician.

In art, Renaissance painters and sculptors tried to match the **realistic depiction of the human form** that the Greeks and Romans valued. Then, the Renaissance artists pushed themselves to create **idealized** versions of the human form in both sculpture and painting.

**Architects** too, were influenced by the Greeks and Romans. They **studied Greek and Roman ruins** to gain inspiration and to figure out how classical buildings were constructed. Renaissance architects then employed those techniques and improved upon them.

2. Where did Renaissance scholars get Greek and Roman texts that were previously "lost" in Europe?

3. How did Renaissance architects learn Greco-Roman building techniques?

**Humanism**

Humanism was an intellectual movement that emphasized the study of the subjects known as the **liberal arts** or the **"humanities"** including: **grammar, logic, poetry, philosophy,** and **history.** Students of humanist teachers took classes in which they **learned Greek and Latin**, and studied Greek and Roman **literature**, **philosophy**, and **history** to learn how to be knowledgeable **scholars**, **public speakers**, and **politicians**.

4. What subjects that you study in school would be considered "humanities?"

**Emphasis on the Individual**

People in the Renaissance **celebrated individuals** for their achievements. They were especially impressed by *homo universalis*, "universal" people, or what is now known as the **"Renaissance Man."** Renaissance men were well-rounded and accomplished in all fields. The ideal person was a **well-educated humanist**, an **artist**, a **scientist**, an **inventor**, a **musician**, and had impressive **physical abilities.**

The emphasis on the individual is also apparent in **Renaissance art**. Artists studied Greek and Roman sculpture and studied anatomy so they could create realistic, and later idealized [perfect] versions of the human form in sculptures and paintings.

5. Identify someone who might be considered a modern-day Renaissance person. Why did you pick that person?

**Celebration of Secular Achievements**

During the Middle Ages, Europeans were most concerned with living their lives so they would go to heaven and not hell. During the Renaissance, they studied Greek and Roman philosophers, most of whom wrote before the Catholic Church existed or before it had much power in Europe. Renaissance writers, artists, and scientists **shifted their focus from celebrating God to celebrating secular [non-religious] academic, artistic, and political achievements that were of *this* world and not the next**. The Catholic Church was still a very important part of European culture, but whereas in the Middle Ages most art was funded by the Church, during the Renaissance **artists and writers were funded by both the church and private individuals**. During the Middle Ages artists created work that was about religious subjects, but during the Renaissance **writers and artists explored both religious subjects and secular topics** of their world like philosophy, politics, literature, and science. During the Middle Ages most art was in cathedrals, during the Renaissance, **paintings and sculptures were created for churches and public spaces**. Architecture in the Middle Ages was mostly building Gothic cathedrals, but during the Renaissance **building projects were both religious and civic** [having to do with government].

6. What does *secular* mean?

7. Based on the description of the "Celebration of Secular Achievements" fill out the chart below.

| | Middle Ages | Renaissance |
|---|---|---|
| Topics focused on in art | | |
| Source of funding | | |
| Where art was displayed | | |
| Types of architecture designed | | |

**<u>Medici Family</u>**

Wealthy merchants, like the Medici family, turned their interest to beautifying cities like Florence. They funded artists, architects, and scientists to study Greek and Roman buildings and texts, then to build new Italian achievements. Without money from trade, the achievements of the Renaissance would not have been created.

The Medici family gained their wealth from the Medici Bank which financed merchants in Italy. Eventually the family came to rule Florence. They funded works of art throughout the city and became influential when family members became Pope (4 of them) and they married into royal families throughout Europe.

8. Wealthy merchants, like the Medici family helped spur the Renaissance because…