

THE GIANT EHAP REVIEW OUTLINE!

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The Renaissance

The Causes of the Renaissance

- The Middle Ages, which began around 500 AD, finally came to an end around 1450 AD.
- Though the beginning of the Renaissance, which signaled the end of the Middle Ages, occurred in the city-states of Italy, the same reasons that caused the Renaissance to begin in Italy caused it to appear in the rest of Western Europe.
- The conditions that led to the Renaissance in Italy are as follows:
 1. Because of the Crusades, and the new trade routes, Europeans began to come in contact with other, more advanced civilizations, which influenced them greatly.
 2. The Church, due to the scandals that occurred, lost much of its power, and people began to doubt its ultimate authority.
 3. Due to trade, the middle class grew, and people began to accumulate vast sums of money. They then wanted to enjoy and show off their wealth, which led to a philosophy of enjoying this life instead of simply waiting for the next one.
 4. Competition between wealthy people for status led to developments in education and art, since wealthy people, wanting to be respected, would compete to see who was the most educated or had sponsored the most artists.

The Definition of the Renaissance

- The Renaissance (French Term) means the rebirth of culture. However, it would be more accurately put as the rebirth of ancient culture since the Middle Ages did have a form of culture, just not the same culture as the ancients.
- An essential element of the Renaissance was the beginning of **humanism**, which glorified the culture of Ancient Greece and Rome.

The Four Aspects of Humanism

- Humanism was a new philosophy that really defined the Renaissance. Although it was an intellectual movement and didn't really spread to most people, it had a huge impact on the age.
- Though many believe that humanism replaced religion in the Renaissance, in reality, the two coexisted. Most humanists were actually religious, and the only difference between the beliefs of church and of the humanists had was that the humanists believed that this life was important and should be enjoyed while the church did not, and felt that people should focus on awaiting the afterlife instead.
- Humanism consists of four essential aspects, which are as follows:
 1. Admiration and emulation of the Ancient Greeks and Romans.
 2. Philosophy of enjoying this life, instead of just waiting for the next one.
 3. The glorification of humans and the belief that individuals are can do anything.
 4. The belief that humans deserved to be the center of attention.
- Humanism also had a subdivision known as **civic humanism**. The civic humanists believed that participation in public affairs was essential for human development, and that individuals should not cut themselves off from society and study the world. Instead, they should help make changes in it by becoming a part of government. Eventually, the beliefs of the civic humanists spread to the humanists as a whole.

The Humanists

- **Petrarch** → (1304 - 1374) was the first humanist of the Renaissance. He greatly admired the Greeks and Romans and preferred them to his own contemporaries, who he saw as barbaric. He even felt that the only true examples of moral and proper behavior could come from the Ancients. Though he was a lawyer and cleric by trade, he devoted himself to writing poetry, papers, and letters, which were often to the famous Greeks and Romans.
- **Boccaccio** → (1313 - 1375) was a writer who became famous for a collection of short stories called **The Decameron** that is now thought of as the first prose masterpiece ever written in Italian. The Decameron is a book relating how a group of young Florentines went to a secluded villa to escape the plague and began telling stories. It was one of the first books intended for entertainment and is groundbreaking in its frank treatment of relationships and its creation of ordinary, realistic characters.

- **Baldassare Castiglione** → writer who is best known for his novel, *The Courtier*, which, by taking the form of a conversation between the sophisticated men and women of a court in Urbino, became a manual of proper behavior for gentlemen and ladies for centuries to come.
- **Guarino da Verona & Vittorino da Feltre** → were educators who turned the ideals of the humanists into a practical curriculum. They founded a school in which students learned Latin, Greek, mathematics, music, philosophy, and social graces.
- **Marsilio Ficino** → was a member of a new, later group of humanists called the Neoplatonists, who believed in studying the grand ideas in the work of Plato and other philosophers as opposed to leading the “active life” the civic humanists lead. Ficino believed that Plato’s ideas showed the dignity and immortality of the human soul.
- **Giovanni Pico** → another Neoplatonist who believed that he could reconcile all philosophies and show that a single truth lay behind them all.

Humanist Art

- The area in which the humanists really excelled was art. Though some of the novels and essays written in the time have become classics, none of their writing (or any other area) ever came close to being as brilliant as their art.
- The differences between Medieval art and Renaissance art are numerous, and very dramatic, for a complete change in style occurred.
- Also, during the Renaissance, great artists, for the first time, gained special recognition and prestige instead of simply being craftsmen.

Characteristics of Medieval Art

- Paintings were lacking in depth and perspective.
- Paintings usually lacked a background.
- Always themed religiously and usually focusing on heaven or holy people.
- The paintings were not realistic, and made no sense geometrically or mathematically.
- The subjects did not show any emotions, except for calm or piety.

Characteristics of Renaissance Art

- Emulation of the Ancient Greeks and Romans.
- Good use of depth in paintings.
- **Linear** (further away = smaller) and **atmospheric** (further away = hazier) perspective.
- Paintings began to have more detailed backgrounds.
- Not necessarily religious, more focus on earthly themes and humans.
- More realistic, geometrically precise and mathematically accurate.
- Subjects showing signs of more emotion.
- **Contraposto** posture, in which the subject is shifting his or her balance.

Artists of the Early Renaissance

- **Giotto** → (1267 – 1337) was a painter famous for the solid bodies, the expression of human emotion, and the suggestion of landscape in his paintings.
- **Masaccio** → (1401 – 1428) was a painter who used the inspiration of the ancients to put a new emphasis on nature, on three-dimensional human bodies, and on perspective. He also was the first painter since the ancients to show nudes in his paintings.
- **Donatello** → (1386 – 1466) was mainly a sculptor whose focus was on the beauty of the human body. He made some of the first nude sculptures since the ancients.
- **Brunelleschi** → (1377 – 1446) was an architect whose work was groundbreaking for its simplicity, symmetry, balance and harmony. Additionally, he created the largest dome built in Europe since the ancients in a cathedral in Florence.

Artists of the High Renaissance

- **Leonardo** → (1452 – 1519) was a painter (and a scientist, writer, and inventor) whose paintings are remarkable for their technical perfection, in other words, for their good use of angles, perspective, and a detailed background.

- **Raphael** → (1483 – 1520) was a painter who used his mastery of perspective and ancient styles to produce works of harmony, beauty, and serenity and convey a sense of peace.
- **Michelangelo** → (1475 – 1564) was a painter who also experimented in poetry, architecture, and sculpture. Most of his work focuses on individuals who always give a sense of strength and ambition.
- **Titian** → (1479 – 1576) was a painter who painted scenes of luxury in such a vivid, immediate way that his paintings seem real to the viewer.