

CHAPTER 17 Section 1 (pages 471–479)

Italy: Birthplace of the Renaissance

BEFORE YOU READ

In the prologue, you read about the development of democratic ideas.

In this section, you will begin your in-depth reading of modern history starting with the Renaissance.

AS YOU READ

Use this chart to take notes on important changes that occurred during the Renaissance in Italy.

TERMS AND NAMES

Renaissance Period of rebirth of art and learning in Europe lasting from about 1300 to 1600

humanism Focus on human potential and achievements

secular Concerned with worldly rather than spiritual matters

patrons People who financially supported artists

perspective Art technique that recreates three dimensions

vernacular Use of native language instead of classical Latin

CHANGES IN VALUES	CHANGES IN ART	CHANGES IN LITERATURE
Humanism—new focus on human potential and achievements		

Italy's Advantages (pages 471–472)

Why did the Renaissance begin in Italy?

The years 1300 to 1600 saw a rebirth of learning and culture in Europe called the **Renaissance**. This rebirth spread north from Italy. It began there for three reasons. First, Italy had several important cities. Cities were places where people exchanged ideas. Second, these cities included a class of *mer-*

chants and bankers who were becoming wealthy and powerful. This class strongly believed in the idea of individual achievement. Third, Italian artists and scholars were inspired by the ruined buildings and other reminders of *classical* Rome.

1. What are three reasons why the Renaissance began in Italy?

Classical and Worldly Values

(pages 472–473)

What new values did people hold?

The new interest in the classical past led to an important value in Renaissance culture—**humanism**. This was a deep interest in what people have already achieved as well as what they could achieve in the future. Scholars did not try to connect classical writings to Christian teaching. Instead, they tried to understand them on their own terms.

In the Middle Ages, the emphasis had been mostly on *spiritual* values. Renaissance thinkers stressed **secular** ideas. These ideas centered on the things of the world. One way that powerful or wealthy people showed this interest in worldly things was by paying artists, writers, and musicians to create beautiful works of art. Wealthy people who supported artists were known as **patrons**.

People tried to show that they could master many fields of study or work. Someone who succeeded in many fields was admired greatly. The artist Leonardo da Vinci was an example of this ideal. He was a painter, a scientist, and an inventor. Men were expected to be charming, witty, well educated, well mannered, athletic, and self-controlled. Women were expected to have many accomplishments, too. But women were not to show them in public.

2. What are secular ideas?

The Renaissance Revolutionizes Art

(pages 474–475)

How did art change during the Renaissance?

Renaissance artists sometimes used new methods. *Sculptors* made figures more *realistic* than those from the Middle Ages. Painters used **perspective** to create the illusion that their paintings were *three-dimensional*. The subject of artwork changed

also. Art in the Middle Ages was mostly religious. Renaissance artists reproduced other views of life. Michelangelo showed great skill as an architect, a sculptor, and a painter.

3. How did the methods and subjects in art change?

Renaissance Writers Change Literature

(pages 475–477)

How did literature change during the Renaissance?

Renaissance writers also achieved greatness. Several wrote in the **vernacular**. This means they wrote in their native languages. It was a change from the Middle Ages, when most writing was done in Latin. Writers also changed their subject matter. They began to express their own thoughts and feelings. Sometimes they gave a detailed look at an individual. Dante and others wrote poetry, letters, and stories that were more realistic. Niccoló Machiavelli took a new approach to understanding government. He focused on telling rulers how to expand their power. He believed rulers should do what was politically effective, even if it was not morally right.

4. What did Renaissance writers write about?