

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Dawn of A New Age

About 1450, European scholars became more interested in studying the world around them. At the same time, European artists produced work that was more true to life. And European ships set sail to explore new lands. This new age in Europe was eventually called "the Renaissance", a French word that means "rebirth."

The Renaissance began in northern Italy and then spread over the next century through Europe. Italian cities such as Naples, Genoa, and Venice became centers of trade between Europe and the Middle East. In the Middle East, Arab scholars had preserved the writings of the ancient Greeks in great libraries. So, when these Italian cities traded with Arab merchants, the Italians were reconnected with the ideas of the ancient Greeks. These "new" ideas, preserved from the ancient past, served as the basis of the Renaissance.

Foreign trade made many Italian merchant families wealthy. These families became patrons who commissioned great



Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* is perhaps the most famous of all Renaissance paintings.

painting, sculpture, and architecture. During the Renaissance, paintings and sculptures became more realistic and focused less often on religious topics. Artists advanced the Renaissance style of showing nature and depicting the feelings of people.

In AD324, the Roman Empire was under attack, so Emperor Constantine moved his capital 850 miles east to Byzantium, a Greek-speaking city he renamed Constantinople. Visigoth warriors overran Rome in 410, but Constantinople remained a powerful city and a center of Christianity for a century. The Byzantine Empire fell to Muslim Turks in 1453, prompting many Greek-speaking Christian scholars to move to Italy.

The printing press allowed the ideas of the era to spread far from their native cultures. The Renaissance led to a flowering of music, literature and drama that included the plays of William Shakespeare.

European adventurers explored places further from their homelands. In 1492, a Spanish fleet led by Christopher Columbus sailed to the Americas. This spirit of discovery and innovation is why historians consider the Renaissance to be the beginning of modern history.

Answer in complete sentences

1. The word Renaissance comes from what language? What does the term mean?

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Fill in the Blanks

The Renaissance is the “r__b__r__h of Europe, a period when scholars became more interested in studying the w__r__d around them, when a_____ became more *l__f__l__k__, and when Europeans began to e__p__o__e new lands. Arab s__h__l__rs preserved the writings of the ancient G__e__ks in their l__b__a__i__s. When t__a__e__s from cities in northern I__a__y came into contact with A_____, they exchanged i__e__s as well as g__o__s.

Italian m__r__h__n__s used their wealth from foreign trade to c__m__issi__n great p__i__t__ng, sculpture, and a__c__i__e__tu__e. Artists advanced the R__n__i__s__n__e style of showing n__t__re and depicting the f__e__i__gs of people. Painting became more r__a__i__t__c and focused less often on r__l__g__o__s topics.

The fall of the B__z__n__i__e Empire in 14_____ was also a factor in the flowering of Renaissance. Many C__r__s__i__n scholars move to Italy after Muslim T__r__s captured C__n__t__n__i__o__le in 14_____.

The p__i__t__ng press helped spread the ideas of the R__n__i__s__n__e throughout *E__r__pe. Explorers *v__y__g__d far from their homes in search of new lands. In 1492, a S__a__i__h fleet led by Christopher C__l__m__us sailed across the *A__l__n__ic Ocean to reach the A__e__i__as.

Answer in complete sentences

*2. Why did the Renaissance begin in northern Italy?

*3. What was significant about Renaissance art?

*This is a higher order learning question. You will earn credit for any reasonable answer.