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# The Renaissance

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# The Renaissance ~ Wiley Mason



## *Abstract*

The Renaissance is not only a time period that roughly spanned from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century but also the idea of reform and political rebirth. The Renaissance began in Italy, and eventually spread to the rest of Europe. The time period between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries marked a large movement in humanistic art, political reform, and academic scholarship. The Renaissance was the start of a large cultural advance from the middle ages. The word Renaissance was first used and defined by a French historian known by the name of Jules Michelet. Many famous artists and scholars came from this time period such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. Some of the most inspiring works of art came from this time period, such as the Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, and Vitruvian Man. There are many different aspects to the Renaissance and its meaning, but one thing that is inevitable is the fact that the Renaissance had and still has a huge impact on life today.

## *The Renaissance*

Beginning around the fourteenth century, there was a large scale cultural movement that swept across Europe with the movement starting in Italy. The movement had completely spread across Europe by the sixteenth century and influenced art, philosophy, politics, and many other aspects of life. Without the Renaissance, life as we, the people, know it today would be completely different.

## *History of the Renaissance*

The Renaissance began in the fourteenth century and continued through the seventeenth century. The word Renaissance comes from the French language meaning "rebirth" (Gascoigne, 2003). The beginning of the Renaissance was marked by the fall of the Roman Empire in early eight hundred years before the fourteenth century. Europe had been mostly dependent on Rome as far as their advancements in science, math, and technology. When Rome fell, Europe entered the time known as the "middle ages," which was a motionless or stagnant time period between 542 CE and the fourteenth century. During this time period people became timid due to the Lords and Kings that ran society by force. By the fourteenth century, epidemics, such as the Black Plague, wreaked havoc on much of the European population. Because of the amount of deaths caused by the Black Plague, workers were in short supply. As a result of the lack of workers, wages that employers had to pay rose with the demand for workers. Higher wages allowed many peasants to move higher up in the social classes. This in turn contributed to the rise of wealthy merchants, which would provide the money, resources, and the motivation for the Renaissance to begin (Brown, 2006).

## *Changes in Society during the Renaissance*

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The social change during the Renaissance was slow but steady. By the end of the Renaissance, almost every characteristic of European life had been altered in some way. One of the biggest changes came with the idea of humanism. Humanism was an intellectual movement that instilled an attitude of live for today as opposed to the Middle Age belief that life was something that was to be suffered through by most people. Art was another large area during the Renaissance that underwent extensive changes. This time period produced many great artists such as, Leonardo da Vinci, Donatello and Michelangelo. These artists looked back to the Greek civilization for inspiration and ideas. One of the most famous paintings, The Mona Lisa, was created by Leonardo da Vinci himself. Science, another large aspect of the Renaissance, was largely modified and studied during the Renaissance time period. Famous scientists emerged such as Nicholas Cusanua, Galileo Galilei, Tycho Brahe, and Johannes Kepler (Brown, 2006).

## *Personal Analysis*

At the beginning of my research, I knew very little about the Renaissance and what impacts it had on life today. After doing research and learning from my gathered research, I personally believe that there is much to be learned from this time period. All aspects of life as we know it today would be different without the Renaissance (Wikipedia, 2013).

## *Conclusion*

The time period from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century marked many important improvements in science, art, literature, and politics. Many influential people also came from this time period, people such as Leonardo da Vinci, Donatello, and Michelangelo. One thing that cannot be argued is the fact that the Renaissance has a huge impact on life today.

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