

Summary: Renaissance Connections

The Rebirth of Europe

During the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, Christians from Western Europe tried to take back the Holy Lands from the Muslims. They sent military forces to Asia and Northern Africa. These attempts are known as the Crusades.

During the Crusades, Europeans rediscovered ancient Greek and Roman culture. As a result, Europe had a rebirth of creativity and learning between the 14th and 16th centuries. This time period is called the Renaissance. Artists, writers, scholars, and thinkers created many important works, which changed the way people saw the world.

City-states such as Florence became centers of banking, manufacturing, and trade. Many wealthy people called aristocrats lived in these city-states. The aristocrats were different from the nobles of the feudal system. The new aristocrats lived in cities. Their wealth came from money and goods instead of from owning land.

Learning and the Arts Flourish

Italy's aristocrats supported the arts. City-states competed to attract the most talented thinkers and artists.

Renaissance artists continued to create religious art. They also began to depict other subjects. Some painted portraits of wealthy aristocrats. Others illustrated stories from history or mythology. Leonardo da Vinci was a famous Renaissance artist and scientist. He painted the Mona Lisa. He also sketched thousands of his inventions and discoveries. William Shakespeare was a popular English playwright.

The Reformation

The Reformation was a 16th-century movement to reform the Roman Catholic Church. An important leader was Martin Luther, a German monk. He did not like what many church officials did, such as forgiving people's sins in exchange for money. Luther published his ideas, and they spread throughout Europe. Luther's followers were called Protestants because they protested against the Roman Catholic Church. The conflict between these two groups led to religious wars.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

Crusades *noun*, military journeys led by Western European Christians in the 11th to 13th centuries to capture the Holy Lands from the Muslims

Renaissance *noun*, a time of creativity and learning in Western Europe from the 14th century to the 16th century

Reformation *noun*, a 16th-century movement to change how things were done within the Roman Catholic Church

After You Read

REVIEW How did the new class of aristocrats in the Renaissance differ from the nobles of the feudal system? Draw a box around the sentences that tell how aristocrats and nobles were different.

REVIEW How did the subject matter of Renaissance art differ from medieval art? Highlight the sentences that tell what subjects Renaissance artists painted.

REVIEW How did Protestants get their name? Circle the sentence that tells how Protestants got their name.