

Chapter 12, Section 2 (Pages 406–411)

Ideas and Art of the Renaissance

Big Idea

Humanism was an important intellectual movement of the Renaissance and was reflected in the works of Renaissance artists. As you read, use a chart like the one below to describe the three pieces of literature written by Dante, Chaucer, and de Pizan. What was the primary importance of each of their works?

<i>Divine Comedy</i>	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	<i>The Book of the City of Ladies</i>



Read to Learn

Italian Renaissance Humanism (page 406)

Making Inferences

Why might some writers use their local vernacular?

Humanism was based on the study of the ancient Greek and Roman classics. Humanists studied grammar, rhetoric, poetry, moral philosophy, and history. Petrarch looked for forgotten Latin manuscripts and started searches in monastic libraries throughout Europe. In Florence, humanists took an interest in civic life. They believed that intellectuals had a duty to live lives of service to their state. Humanists emphasized the use of classical Latin, though some writers wrote in the **vernacular**—the language spoken in their own regions. In the Italian vernacular, the poet Dante wrote the *Divine Comedy*. It was a long poem about an imaginary journey to Paradise, or Heaven. The English writer Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales* about a group of pilgrims traveling to Canterbury. Each pilgrim represented part of English society. Chaucer’s dialect became the ancestor of the modern English language. A Frenchwoman, Christine de Pizan, wrote to defend women. *The Book of the City of Ladies* denounced men who said that women were unable to learn.



Read to Learn

Renaissance Education *(page 408)*

Making Inferences

What subjects do you study that were not part of the liberal arts schools of the humanists?

Renaissance humanists believed that education could change human beings. They wrote books on education and started schools. Education became more secular, or less focused on religion. Liberal studies (liberal arts) were at the core of the schools. To enable individuals to reach their full potential for virtue and wisdom, humanists had students study history, moral philosophy, poetry, mathematics, and other subjects. The humanists wanted to create individuals who follow a path of virtue and wisdom, and who could persuade others to follow the same path. They also wanted to prepare the sons of aristocrats for leadership roles. A few female students studied history, poetry, and how to ride and dance. They were told not to learn mathematics or rhetoric. Humanist schools were the model for education of Europe's ruling classes until the twentieth century.

Italian Renaissance Art *(page 409)*

Identifying the Main Idea

How did artists' paintings change during the Renaissance?

Renaissance artists sought to imitate nature. A **fresco** is a painting done on fresh, wet plaster with water-based paints. Masaccio, in Florence, made great strides in using perspective in his frescoes. Painters explored perspective, the organization of outdoor space, movement, and human anatomy. Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo worked during the High Renaissance, a period between 1490 and 1520. Leonardo mastered realistic painting. Raphael created great beauty in his madonnas (paintings of the Virgin Mary). Michelangelo created such masterpieces as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

The Northern Artistic Renaissance *(page 411)*

Drawing Conclusions

Why was the use of detail important to the artists of northern Europe?

Like the artists of Italy, the artists of northern Europe wanted to portray their world realistically. Because their churches were smaller, they emphasized the use of detail. The most important northern school of art was in Flanders, in the Low Countries. The Flemish painter Jan van Eyck was among the first to use and perfect the technique of realistic oil painting.

By 1500 northern artists had begun to study in Italy. A German artist, Albrecht Dürer, was greatly influenced by them. Dürer tried to achieve a standard of ideal beauty that was based on a careful examination of the human form.

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Section Wrap-up

Answer these questions to check your understanding of the entire section.

1. What Renaissance work served as the ancestor of the modern English language?

2. Who are the three artists most associated with the High Renaissance?

Descriptive Writing

Using information from the text, choose a scene in your mind, such as your classroom or your bedroom, and imagine how a northern European artist would have painted it. Describe this painting. Remember that northern European artists used oil paints.
