

Renaissance and Reformation

Lesson 1 The Renaissance Begins

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why do people make economic choices?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *Why did the states of Italy become leading centers of culture during the Renaissance?*
2. *How did Italy's states become wealthy and powerful?*
3. *Who controlled the states of Italy?*

Terms to Know

Renaissance “rebirth”; period in European history from 1350 to 1650 when people became interested again in art and learning

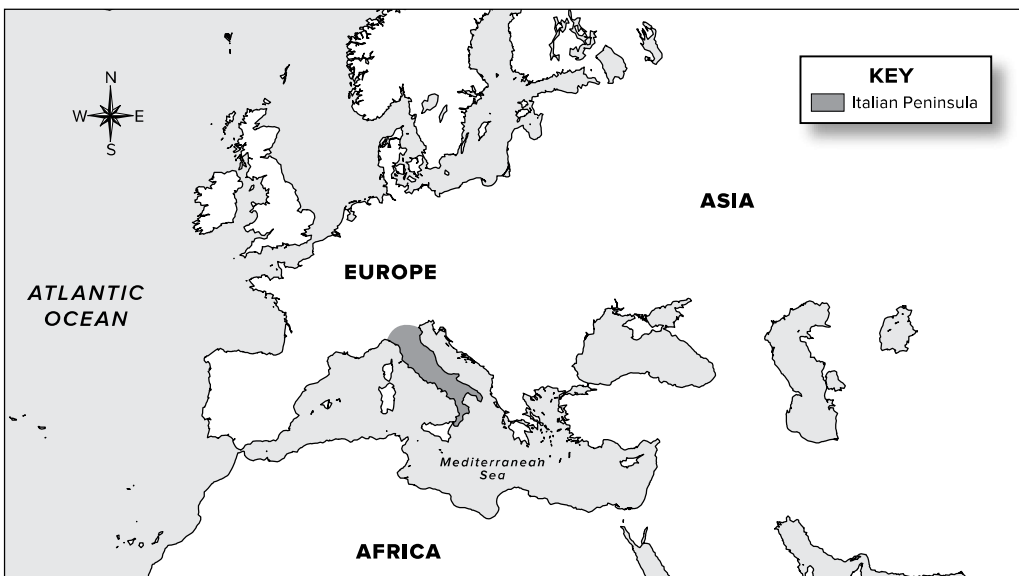
secular related to worldly things

urban related to cities, not the countryside

mercenary a soldier who fights for money

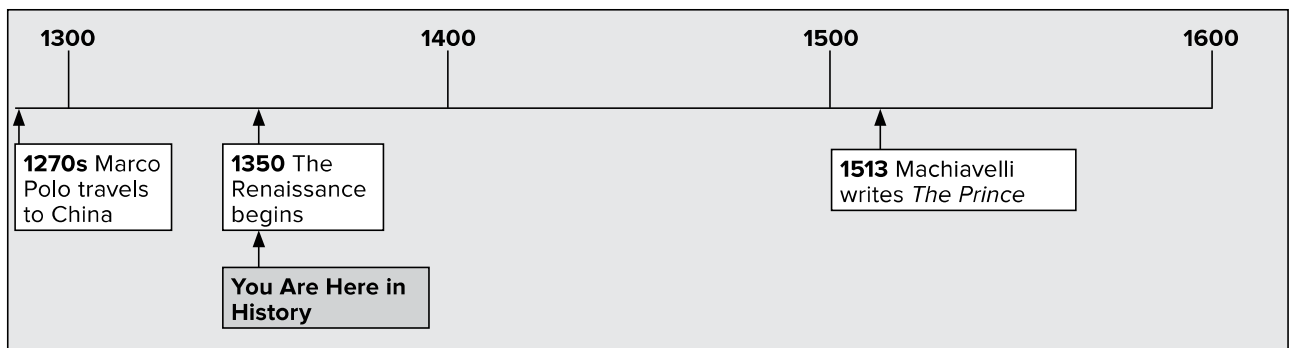
diplomacy making agreements with other countries

Where in the world?



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When did it happen?



Renaissance and Reformation

Lesson 1 The Renaissance Begins, *Continued*

The Renaissance in Italy

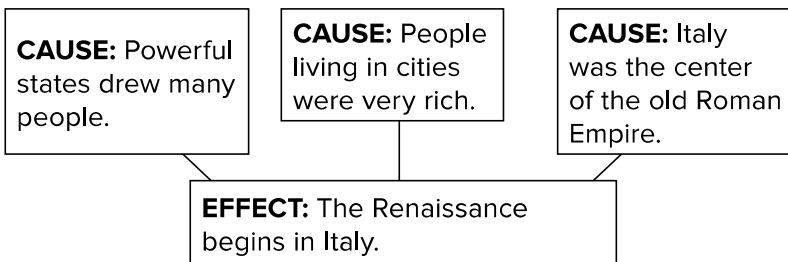
In European history, the years from about 1350 to 1650 were called the **Renaissance**. The word *renaissance* means “rebirth.” During this time period, people became interested again in art and learning.

After the hard years of the Black Death, Europeans became interested in the knowledge of the ancient Greeks and Romans. People became more **secular**. This meant that, even though religion was still important, people were interested in worldly ideas and events.

The Renaissance began in Italy, the center of the old Roman Empire. Italians were surrounded by Roman ruins and art. These ancient examples inspired the Italians in their own art.

Another reason the Renaissance was born was because Italian cities were very rich. People could pay painters, sculptors, architects, and other artists to make new works.

The powerful states of Italy also encouraged the Renaissance. In Europe, most people lived in the countryside. However, Italy was becoming **urban**. More people were living in the city than in the country. As a result, a different society began to develop in Italy. People shared ideas about art and learning. Strong economies developed.



The States of Italy

The states of Italy were independent of each other and very rich. They built fleets of ships and hired people to fight in their armies. A person who fights in an army for money is called a **mercenary**. Even though the states fought many wars, no state could beat all the others.

The Italian states sat on the Mediterranean Sea. They became rich through trade. The Italians bought Chinese silk and Indian spices to sell in Western Europe. They also sold goods from Europe in the Middle East.

Marking the Text

- Underline the reason this period of time is called the Renaissance, or “rebirth.”

Identifying

- Where did the Renaissance begin?

Defining

- What is an *urban* area?

Reading Check

- Why did wealthy Italians support artists during the Renaissance?

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Lesson 1 The Renaissance Begins, *Continued*

? Making Connections

5. Why did Europeans want Asian goods?

Identifying

6. Which city was the most famous Renaissance city?

✓ Reading Check

7. How did the travels of Marco Polo affect Europeans?

FOLDABLES®

Comparing

8. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover the text about Florence. Title the anchor tab *City-States*. Label the top tab *Florence* and the bottom tab *Venice*.

List facts about each and use them to compare the two city-states.

Marco Polo was a merchant from Venice. In the 1270s, he traveled to China. There he met Kublai Khan, the ruler of the Mongol Empire. The emperor sent Marco Polo on trips all over China. Marco wrote a book about his travels. After reading his stories, many people wanted to buy China's goods.

How did Italian states get rich?

- Traded Chinese silk and Indian spices at high prices in Europe
- Sold Western European goods in the Middle East
- Met increasing demand for Asian goods

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Florence was the most famous city of the Renaissance. It was the first city to grow rich. It had many famous artists. Florence became rich from trading cloth, mainly wool from England. In Florence, the wool was woven into fine fabrics.

Banking was another way people in Florence made money. Merchants needed to know how much the coins from different countries were worth. Florentine bankers set up a system to do this. They used the florin, the gold coin of Florence, to measure the value of other money. Florence's richest family was the Medici family. They owned banks as far away as Flanders, which is today part of Belgium.

The people of Venice built their city on many small islands. Long wooden poles in the mud supported their buildings. Instead of making roads, the Venetians built canals and waterways. They used boats to move around the city. Venice also became a major shipbuilding center.

A New Ruling Class

In Italy, old noble families moved to the cities. Rich merchants tried to live like noble families. The sons and daughters of nobles and rich merchants married each other. Their families blended together, and they became the upper class of the city-states.

Many city-states were republics at first. A republic is a government controlled by its citizens. Only merchants and artisans could be citizens. When city-states faced war or rebellion, they often gave power to a single person. Some leaders ruled harshly. Others used a more gentle approach.

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In Venice, the ruler was the duke, or doge. He was the official leader, but a small group of wealthy merchants held the real power.

In Florence, the Medici family controlled the government for many years. Lorenzo de' Medici ruled the city from 1469 to 1492. He was known as "the Magnificent."

Lorenzo the Magnificent

- part of the rich Medici family
- ruled Florence from 1469 to 1492
- supported artists, architects, and writers

Politics in Italy were not simple. The rulers of each city had to stop other rich people from taking power by force. They also had to get along with leaders from other states. To work with others, the Italians developed **diplomacy**. This is the art of making agreements with other countries. Today's ideas about diplomacy first began in Italy.

Niccolò Machiavelli was an official in Florence. He wrote a book called *The Prince* in 1513. He wrote that rulers should do anything they could to keep power and protect their city. This included killing and lying. Today when we say someone is being Machiavellian, we mean they are being tricky or sly and acting without morals.

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Check for Understanding

List two reasons why Italy was an ideal location for the Renaissance to begin.

1. _____

2. _____

List two ways Italian states helped fuel the Renaissance.

3. _____

4. _____

? Analyzing

9. Niccolò Machiavelli said rulers should do whatever they need to in order to keep power. Why?

✓ Reading Check

10. Why did the Italian states develop diplomacy?

FOLDABLES®

11. Place a one-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover the Check for Understanding. Title the anchor tab *The Renaissance*. Draw five arrows from the title and write five words or phrases about the Renaissance.

Use your Foldable to complete the Check for Understanding.