The Renaissance: The individual and the world of ideas

“Renaissance Men”
Causes of the Renaissance
1. Enormous loss of life due to the Black death & Hundred Years’ War led to a specialization in trade & put an end to the manor system
2. Increased trade with Asia & other regions due to the Crusades
3. Growth of large wealthy Italian city states
4. Interest in the classical learning of Greece & Rome
5. Rise of the merchant class who become patrons of the art
6. Desire of the wealthy to beautify cities

Renaissance Ideals

- **Humanism** – the study of classical learning not rooted in Christian teaching
  - Focus on *rhetoric* (public speaking)
  - Emphasized individual accomplishment
  - Rediscovery & application of astronomy, anatomy & geography

- **Secular** – worldly instead of spiritual focus

- Literature in the **vernacular**

- Church no longer an institution of stability & peace

Leaders of the Italian Renaissance

**Merchants: patrons**
- Medicis (Florence, Milan & Venice)
- Borgias (Spain, Rome & Papal states)
- Sforzas (Naples & Tuscany)

**Artists & Authors**
- Dante Alighieri
- Francesco Boccaccio
- Francesco Petrarch
- Leonardo Da Vinci
- Michelangelo Buonorrati
- Fillipo Brunelleschi
- Raphael Sanzio
• Niccolo Machiavelli (author)
  □ The Prince
• Baldassare Castiglione (author)
  □ The Courtier

Values in Renaissance Art & Architecture

• Realistic portrayals of people & objects
• Use of perspective
• Influence of classical Greece & Rome
• Beauty, balance & harmony
• Value the individual

The Northern Renaissance

• By the 1450s, trade had spread Renaissance ideas to the northern European cities
• 1458, Johannes Gutenberg developed the movable type printing press
  □ Paper printed on both sides
  □ Made books faster to produce, thus cheaper
  □ Cheap books encouraged literacy
  □ Spread renaissance ideas

Philosophers & Writers of the Northern Renaissance

• Sir Thomas More
  □ Utopia
  □ Criticized the English gov’t & created a fictitious perfect society based on reason
• Desiderius Erasmus
  □ Simple Christian life w/o the rituals & politics of the Church
• William Shakespeare
  □ Wrote plays about realistic characters
  □ Poetry reflected the desires of the individual

Artists of Northern Renaissance
• Albrecht Durer
• Jan van Eyck
• Pieter Brueghel
• Johannes Vermeer

Renaissance Ideals
• **Humanism** – the study of classical ideas not rooted in Christianity
  □ Focus on the **classics** – rhetoric (public speaking) grammar, poetry, history, Latin & Greek
  □ Emphasized **individual accomplishment**
  □ Human mind is **almost limitless**
• Inspired by Dante’s *Divine Comedy* & its focus on human nature
• Encouraged by **secular** books written in the **vernacular**
• **“Cogito ergo sum”** – I think therefore I am

Technology & the Spread of Ideas
• **Moveable type printing press**
  □ Roots in Song dynasty technology
  □ Text printed on both sides of paper
  □ Made producing books & other printed materials much **cheaper**
  □ Lower cost meant **more people had access to books**
  □ **Spread renaissance ideas** more quickly throughout the “civilized” world

Gutenberg’s Bible
• **Johannes Gutenburg**
  - 1458, produced first printed book
  - 1,200 page Bible
• Easier access to books increased literacy