

- The Black Plague was a persistent threat during Renaissance times. Students can learn more about the plague and how it spread by participating in a simulation like the one featured on the following web site. www.mcn.org/ed/cur/cw/Plague/Plague_Sim.html
- Renaissance cities were busy, bustling places. As a class, create a Renaissance city newspaper that includes news stories, advertisements, obituaries, weather reports, and entertainment.
- In small groups, have students research what a typical school day was like for their Renaissance counterparts. Students can then make a Venn diagram to compare and contrast their school day with the school day of a student from the 15th century. Useful resource: www.elizabethan.org
- Medicine during the Renaissance was very different than it is today. Have students investigate what doctors believed caused disease during this period and how they cared for the sick. Useful resource: www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/elizabethanmedicine.html

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.bcpl.net/~cbladey/guy/html/music.html
On this site students can listen to Renaissance music and learn about popular dances of the day.
- www.elizabethan.org
This is a fun site where students can learn about games, money, food, recreation and a variety of other things regarding Renaissance life in England.
- www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/plague/index.shtml
This is a very informative site about the Plague which contains many excerpts from primary sources describing the effects of the disease.

Suggested Print Resources

- Blackwood, Gary L. *The Shakespeare Stealer*. Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, New York, NY; 2000. A fictional title about a young boy living in the time of Shakespeare.
- Blackwood, Gary L. *Shakespeare's Scribe*. Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, New York, NY; 2002. A fictional title about a fifteen-year-old boy who works with Shakespeare. A sequel to *The Shakespeare Stealer*.
- Day, Nancy. *Your Travel Guide to Renaissance Europe*. Lerner Publishing Group, Minneapolis, MN; 2000.
- Ferris, Julia. *Shakespeare's London: A Guide to Elizabethan London*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA; 2000.
- Napoli, Donna Jo. *Daughter of Venice*. Dell Publishing Group, New York, NY; 2002. A fictional title about a fourteen-year-old girl who disguises herself as a boy to gain more freedom.
- Sider, Sandra. *Handbook to Life in Renaissance Europe*. Facts on File, New York, NY; 2005.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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COMPLETE LIST OF TITLES

- A HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE
- EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE RENAISSANCE
- RENAISSANCE ART, MUSIC & LITERATURE
- RENAISSANCE SCIENCE & INVENTION
- RENAISSANCE TRAVEL, TRADE & EXPLORATION

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Executive Producer: Andrew Schlessinger

Programs produced and directed by Tremendous! Entertainment, Inc.

7/07

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EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE RENAISSANCE

Grades 5–9

The Renaissance was a unique, distinctive time in European history. It was a time when people looked back to ancient Greek and Roman civilizations for inspiration, and in doing so ignited revolutions in science, technology, religion, medicine, politics, exploration and the arts. By looking at what was old, Renaissance scientists, artists, explorers and philosophers created something new. This synthesis of old and new, and the exchange and influence of ideas across disciplines is what made the Renaissance a time of great creative endeavors. In *The Renaissance for Students*, viewers will be introduced to some of the people who had the greatest impact on their time: Queen Isabella, Leonardo, Galileo, Shakespeare, Columbus and Luther. Students will also learn about the period's many astounding works of art, the impact of new inventions, like the printing press, on the spread of humanism far and wide, and the improvements in existing tools, like the telescope, which forever changed the way we perceive our world.



Program Summary

During the Renaissance, sweeping changes were happening throughout Europe. But it wasn't just all *Hamlet* and humanism. The everyday lives of the people who lived then were improving. It was during the Renaissance that people, for the first time, began to sleep on mattresses stuffed with cotton or horse hair. Advances in weaving technology and the availability of cloth added to everyday comfort as people covered their new mattresses with linen sheets and slept beneath goose feather coverlets. Houses were a lot cozier too. The invention of glass windows kept out the cold, the rain and the bugs. Improved fireplaces meant that smoke now rose up a chimney instead of into a room, so there were more fireplaces in more rooms than ever before. The food was also better. Because of more efficient farming tools, expanded transportation and the importation of things like spices, tomatoes, corn and squash (due to trade which resulted from exploration), there was not only more to eat, but a much greater variety from which to choose. Trade also influenced the manner in which people dressed. With access to wool, silk, ermine and new weaving technology, Renaissance dress became more varied and sometimes flamboyant.

Aside from eating, sleeping and dressing better, the education of both nobleman and commoner alike became important. Merchants at the time realized that it was more advantageous to have an educated populace than an uneducated one. Of course, the wealthy profited more from these advances than the poor, and for all, the plague was still a real and menacing threat. But for most, life's load became a little lighter.

Vocabulary

Renaissance — A period in European history extending roughly from the 1300s to the 1600s. The word "Renaissance" is derived from the French word for rebirth, as the period was characterized by a rebirth of interest in the ancient world. This period is also marked by great scientific and artistic achievements, especially in Italy.

merchant — A person who buys and sells goods for a profit.

textiles — Fibers or yarns that are woven together to make cloth.

surcoat — An outer coat that is worn over garments.

farthingale — A metal hoop worn beneath gowns at the hip line.

sumptuary laws — Laws passed to limit extravagance in dress to maintain a distinction between social classes.

shuttles — Devices used in weaving that automatically move the thread.

Black Plague — An epidemic during the Middle Ages and Renaissance that killed roughly 75 million people in total.

humanism — An intellectual movement begun in Italy in the 1300s which renewed interest in ancient Greek and Roman literature, history and art.

Parliament — The legislative body of the United Kingdom. (Continued)

Reformation — A movement that challenged the precepts of the Church, causing one unified church to split into many different churches.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Discuss with students what is meant by "everyday life." What are the components of everyday life?
- Have students think about how everyday life has changed from their parents' generation to their own. What things are part of everyday life now that were not 20 to 30 years ago? How do students think everyday life might change during their lifetimes?
- Discuss what people in contemporary times do for entertainment. How do students think contemporary entertainment differs from Renaissance entertainment? How might it be the same?
- Have students think about epidemics that have occurred over the past 100 years or are currently a threat. How does the threat of an incurable disease affect a population?

Focus Questions

1. List some inventions or improvements that made life during the Renaissance more comfortable.
2. What were some of the factors that contributed to improving life during the Renaissance?
3. What were sumptuary laws?
4. Why did people of the Renaissance have little access to fresh water?
5. Why were spices so desirable to the wealthy during the Renaissance?
6. How did the diets of the rich differ from those of ordinary people?
7. Explain why the education of the masses became important during the Renaissance.
8. How did humanism affect everyday life?
9. What was the Black Plague?
10. What were some of the occupations of people living during the Renaissance?

Follow-up Discussion

- During the Renaissance, sumptuary laws were passed to create an obvious distinction between social classes. Have students think about how social classes are indicated in contemporary society. How can you tell what class a person comes from today?
- Have students compare and contrast the wants and needs of contemporary people with the wants and needs of people living during the Renaissance.

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- During the Renaissance, European cities grew larger and faster than ever before. Have students discuss the impact of highly populated Renaissance cities on the environment. What effect did highly populated cities have on the people living in them?
- Have students think about the advantages and disadvantages of life during the Renaissance. How might it have been better than contemporary life? How might it have been worse?

Follow-up Activities

- In small groups have students design and create a Renaissance city. Their city should include everything they may think one would find in a typical city of that era, including dwellings of the rich and poor, churches, shops, streets, theaters, etc. Students should label these things on their drawings which they will share with the class. Useful resource: www.twingroves.district96.k12.il.us/Renaissance/Town/Clothing/Shop.html
- Have students research and then design some typical clothing of the Renaissance. Students drawings should include dress for nobles, the merchant class, men, women, children and the clergy. The above Internet resource will also be useful for this activity.
- Have students prepare a Renaissance dinner that a wealthy family might have. Students should bring in popular spices, vegetables and meats of the time and create dishes that were actually eaten. Useful resource: www.pbm.com/~lindahl/food.html
- During the Renaissance, artisans and craftsmen were members of different guilds. Have students research the guild system, select a particular guild and make a recreation of the guild's coat of arms.
- Students can research different forms of entertainment that were popular during the Renaissance. They can learn a game popular during the Renaissance, or perform part of a play. Useful resource: www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/amusements.html
- During the Renaissance, gender roles were very clearly defined. Have students conduct research about the lives of Renaissance women. A useful and excellent resource can be found at: www.bctf.bc.ca/lessonaids/online/LA9245.html This site contains ten lessons, complete with background information and handouts.
- Students can spend a day in the life and times of William Shakespeare. At the site below they can take an Internet tour with the Bard. Students can write letters to Shakespeare, or write journal entries as Shakespeare telling how they spent the day. edweb.sdsu.edu/T2ARP/Webqst.T2arp.12.98/The%20QUEST.Kimmel/wqshakespeare.htm

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