

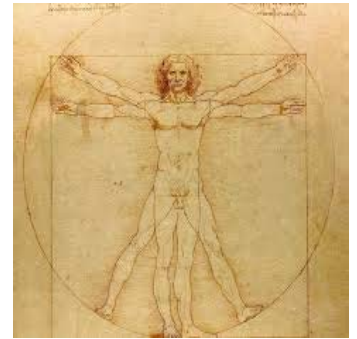
MAJOR THEMES: RENAISSANCE, REFORMATION & EXPLORATION



The Middle Ages were a tumultuous time period, characterized by the Black Death, the Crusades, and feudal social systems that did little to live up to the achievements of the Classical civilizations of Greece and Rome. Around 1400 C.E., the Renaissance ushered in a new period of history that combined newfound political stability and growing economic prosperity with a renewed interest in art, literature, and scientific discoveries. Emphasis on thought and individualism will lead to challenging old theories, religious reformations, and the exploration of new lands. On a darker note, it would also lead to an increase in religious intolerance and the exploitation of indigenous tribes in the Americas and Africa.

THE RENAISSANCE: 1400-1650 C.E.

The Renaissance, Italian for “rebirth”, was a cultural movement that focused on humanism, secularism, and individualism. *Humanism* was a philosophy that all people should strive to be educated in the classical arts, literature, and science. It focused on realism and human emotion in art; it also said that it was okay for people to pursue comfort, riches, and beauty. During medieval times, there was a strong tendency for religious authority to ignore human issues (like the Black Death) and to meditate on God and the afterlife. *Secularism* developed when people began to show more interest in human cultural achievements and the possibilities of their fulfillment in this world instead of the afterlife. In medieval times, feudalism revolved around the community rather than the individual- attempts to challenge authority and tradition was either discouraged or crushed. The Renaissance worked in favor of the general emancipation of the individual. The writings of Dante, Petrarch, and Machiavelli, emphasized the virtues of *individualism*, especially intellectual freedom and individual expression. In the essays of Montaigne the individualistic view of life received perhaps the most persuasive and eloquent statement in the history of literature and philosophy.



Major Events of the Renaissance:

- 1434 - The Medici family becomes the head of the city-state of Florence.
- 1450 - Johannes Gutenberg invents the printing press.
- 1495 - Leonardo da Vinci paints the Last Supper.
- 1508 - Michelangelo begins his painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.
- 1516 - Sir Thomas More publishes his work Utopia on political philosophy.
- 1599 - William Shakespeare builds the Globe theatre.

THE REFORMATION: 1517-1648



The Reformation was a religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval that splintered the Roman Catholic Church and set the precedent for a new branch of Christianity- Protestantism. In northern and central Europe, reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and Henry VIII challenged papal authority and questioned the Catholic Church's practices. The growing divide in religious beliefs triggered wars, persecutions and the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church's response to the Protestants. Along with the religious consequences of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation came deep and lasting political changes. Northern Europe's new religious and political freedoms came at a great cost, with decades of rebellions, wars and bloody persecutions. The Thirty Years' War alone may have cost Germany 40% of its population. But the Reformation's positive effects can be seen in the flourishing of culture and intellect, strengthened universities of Europe, even the production of J.S. Bach's music for Lutheran church services.

Major Events of the Reformation:

1509 - Henry VIII becomes king of England.

1517 - Martin Luther posts his 95 theses on the door of the Church of Wittenberg.

1534 - Henry VIII separates the Church of England from the Catholic Church of Rome so that he can divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn.

1558 - Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England.

1618 - The Thirty Years War begins.

THE AGE OF EXPLORATION: 1400-1600



The Age of Exploration began in the nation of Portugal under the leadership of Henry the Navigator. Henry sent out ships to map and explore the west coast of Africa; they went further south than any previous European expedition and mapped much of western Africa. From the mid-15th to the mid-16th century, a combination of circumstances stimulated men to seek new trade routes on the seas, especially since the land routes to India became more and more dangerous and cost inefficient. Many maritime explorers embarked on their mission to find the way to India. Discoveries that they found beyond the shores of Europe soon greatly increased our knowledge

of the Earth, and started a new era in the history of the human civilization. Some of the achievements from this time period include the implementation of new scientific and mathematic theories, the discovery of the Americas, and interactions with indigenous peoples. Starting in the 15th century, several European powers invested large amounts of resources in finding new trading sea routes and new lands. Discoveries made on those journeys ignited the rise of colonial empires and transfer of many plants, animals, communicable diseases, and cultures between Europe and the rest of the World.

Major Events of the Age of Exploration:

1419- Prince Henry the Navigator opens his school for navigation at Sagres, Portugal.

1488- Bartolomeu Dias was the first European to sail around the southern tip of Africa and into the Indian Ocean.

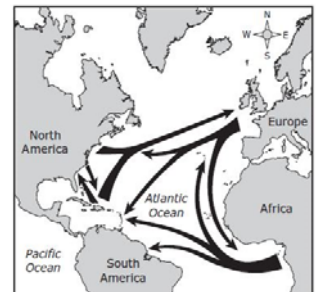
1492 - Explorer Christopher Columbus discovers the Americas.

1498 - Vasco da Gama arrives in India after sailing around the southern tip of Africa from Portugal.

1519 - Ferdinand Magellan begins his voyage around the world.

EXPANSION: 1500-1750

Upon discovering new lands through their naval explorations, Europeans soon began to migrate to and settle in areas outside their native continent. Spain took the opportunity of expanding their territories to set up missions in the New World, seeking to convert the native peoples to Christianity. The contact between the “Old World” of Europe and the “New World” of the Americas produced what is called the Columbian Exchange: the wide transfer of plants, animals, foods, communicable diseases, people (including slaves), and culture between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. The spread of epidemic diseases, like measles and smallpox, from Europe to the Americas resulted in the death of an estimated 80-95 percent of the Native American populations, who had developed no immunity to these diseases. However, New World crops such as sugar cane, tobacco and cotton required an unlimited and inexpensive supply of strong backs to assure production for the European market. Slaves from Africa offered the solution; the African slave trade reached its peak in the mid-18th century when it is estimated that over 80,000 Africans annually crossed the Atlantic to spend the rest of their lives in chains.



Major Events of the Expansion Period:

1519- Conquistador Hernan Cortes arrives in the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan

1520- Smallpox is introduced to the native Aztec population

1532- Francisco Pizarro captures the Incan city of Cuzco

1535- Jacques Cartier explores the St. Lawrence River in Canada and founds the trading village of Montreal

1607- Henry Hudson sails up the present-day Hudson River in New York