

## The Birth of New Ideas: Renaissance Achievements

### Key Terms and People

**Skepticism** questioning ideas before accepting them

**Vernacular** use of native language instead of classical Latin

### CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

#### How did the Renaissance change culture and society?

The European Renaissance was a period of great artistic and social change. It marked a break with older ideas that were focused around religion. Instead, a belief in the individual took hold. Some historians have compared the effects of the Renaissance to the arrival of personal computers in the 20th century.

In art, painters focused on humanistic ideas instead of just religious subjects. Individual people, not just figures from the Bible, became subjects of art. People and scenes were depicted realistically. New techniques allowed subjects' personalities to be revealed.

Renaissance writers began to write in the **1**. This means they wrote in their native languages. It was a change from the Middle Ages, when most writing was done in Latin. Books could be read by anyone, not just by people who had been taught Latin. Subject matter changed as well. Writers wrote either for self-expression or to portray individuals.

As artistic ideas and practices changed during the Renaissance, so did society. The development of moving type and the printing

**3**. What was the importance of the use of vernacular?

press led more people to have access to books. More people could read, and it was easier for people to exchange ideas. People began to challenge established ideas of religion and government.

### THE LEGACY OF THE RENAISSANCE

#### What new ways of thinking marked the Renaissance?

Renaissance artists, writers, and thinkers were driven by new ways of thinking. People in the Renaissance had a questioning attitude. A

tradition of **2**—questioning everything— took hold. Previously, people blindly followed tradition or accepted authority. Beginning in the Renaissance, people wanted to form their own opinions and make up their own minds.

These new attitudes had a tremendous effect on society. The idea of checking everything became part of the scientific method. This would lead to the transformation of medicine, physics, and other areas of science. Questions about religion and faith would lead to changes in organized religion. People also became more curious about the world, which would lead to the Age of Exploration.

In short, these fundamental changes in thinking influenced later generations and are still important today.

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**4.** How was a new spirit of inquiry reflected by the Renaissance?

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**Directions:** After you read about the legacy of the Renaissance, fill out the web diagram below.

