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i Think: World History

The Renaissance



by Sharon Coletti
and Kendra Corr

** It is the goal of InspirEd Educators to create instructional materials that are interesting, engaging, and challenging. Our student-centered approach incorporates both content and skills, placing particular emphasis on reading, writing, vocabulary development, and critical and creative thinking in the content areas.

Edited by Sharon Coletti, Kendra Corr, and Christi Szejter

Cover graphics by Sharon Coletti and Print1 Direct

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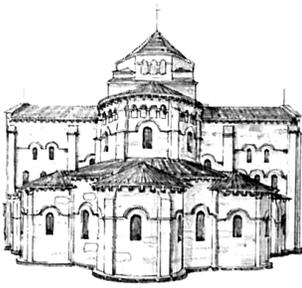
ISBN # 978-1-933558-57-8

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Lost and Found

Springboard:

Students should read “_____” and answer the questions.

Objective: The student will be able to explain how and why Europe emerged from the Middle Ages and Marco Polo’s role in the “awakening.”

Materials: “_____” (Springboard handout)
An Excerpt from *The Travels ...* (2-page handout)
Let Me Brainstorm the Ways (handout)

Terms to know: **primary source** - writing from a time of study
guild - skilled craft or merchant group
merchant - one who makes a living by selling or trading

Procedure:

- After reviewing the Springboard, explain that one figure of the transitional period between the Middle Ages and Renaissance was a trader AND the author of one of the most well-read books of the time. Go on to explain that in addition to learning about the Middle East from their Crusades, Europeans’ eyes were opened to the wonders of Asia and particularly China by Marco Polo’s book about his years of travels there.
- Distribute “An Excerpt from *The Travels of Marco Polo*” and “Let Me Brainstorm the Ways.” Explain that the reading is a primary source, taken from Marco Polo’s book published around 1300. Go on to explain that Polo went to China on a trading expedition and was hired by the Chinese ruler, Kublai Khan, to explore the countryside. He later returned to Europe and published this book about his experiences.
- The student(s) should read the primary source individually, in pairs, or groups and complete the brainstorming activity. (If student(s) have not already studied the Middle Ages, point out that this book was published at a time when most Europeans were dirty, the plague was breaking out in waves, and most were still uneducated.)
- Have the student(s) share their ideas and discuss how learning about the wonders of China and other places could help Europe emerge from its “dark” period of the Middle Ages. (*As people became interested in trade, new ideas were introduced, garnering interest that helped spur learning.*)



Historians usually place the start of the Middle Ages with the fall of the Roman Empire in Europe in 476 A.D. The end of Roman rule left Europe in chaos as rival clans fought almost constantly. Towns were **sacked** and trade collapsed. Gone was the Greek and Roman interest in learning and the arts, replaced instead with a single concern – land.

By the end of the 8th century order was finally restored under the leadership of Charlemagne, King of the Franks. Determined to bring an end to the constant warfare in Europe, Charlemagne spent thirty years taking over most of Western Europe. With vast lands under his rule, Charlemagne oversaw the rise to power of the Roman Catholic Church to unify Europe and establish feudalism, which brought peace.

For centuries Europeans lived and worshipped in small, self-sufficient communities and had little contact with outsiders. Then, in the late 11th century, warriors from across the continent heeded the call of the Catholic Church to go to war to capture the Holy Lands (the Middle East) for Christianity. Though the Crusades failed in their goal, they forced people to leave their closed communities and reawakened European interest in learning.

From the 12th century trade was revived and people began moving in large numbers to growing cities with new schools and universities, busy shops, and soon, printers. The growing availability of books added to a new thirst for knowledge and ushered in a new and exciting period in Europe, the Renaissance.

Which of these titles would be most appropriate for this passage?

- A. "Chaos in Middle Ages Europe"
- B. "The Renaissance Comes to Europe"
- C. "Charlemagne: King of the Franks"
- D. "Learning and Trade: Lost and Found"

Which sentence explains the warfare in Europe in the early Middle Ages?

- A. Rome was the most powerful empire in the world until 476 A.D.
- B. The lack of central rule created a vacuum filled by warring clans.
- C. Charlemagne built an empire to bring order to Western Europe.
- D. Towns and trade collapsed as Europeans lost interest in the arts.

The definition that **BEST FITS** the word "sack" in the first paragraph is to

- A. tackle.
- B. put in a bag.
- C. plunder after capture.
- D. dismiss from a job.

All of these changes paved the way for the Renaissance **EXCEPT**

- A. Most people lived and worshipped in small communities.
- B. People moved from small estates to large, growing towns.
- C. Europeans were sent on a quest to capture the Holy Land.
- D. As books were more available, more people learned to read.



Answers and Explanations

Historians usually place the start of the Middle Ages with the fall of the Roman Empire in Europe in 476 A.D. The end of Roman rule left Europe in chaos as rival clans fought almost constantly. Towns were **sacked** and trade collapsed. Gone was the Greek and Roman interest in learning and the arts, replaced instead with a single concern – land.

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From the 12th century trade was revived and people began moving in large numbers to growing cities with new schools and universities, busy shops, and soon, printers. The growing availability of books added to a new thirst for knowledge and ushered in a new and exciting period in Europe, the Renaissance.

Which of these titles would be most appropriate for this passage?

- A. "Chaos in Middle Ages Europe" *(Choices A-C relate to details in parts of the passage. D provides a summary of the entire period discussed.)*
- B. "The Renaissance Comes to Europe"
- C. "Charlemagne: King of the Franks"
- D. "Learning and Trade: Lost and Found" *

Which sentence explains the warfare in Europe in the early Middle Ages?

- A. Rome was the most powerful empire in the world until 476 A.D.
- B. The lack of central rule created a vacuum filled by warring clans. *
- C. Charlemagne built an empire to bring order to Western Europe.
- D. Towns and trade collapsed as Europeans lost interest in the arts.

(Choice A identifies PART of the problem, but B is more specific about WHY chaos erupted. C and D describe EFFECTS of the chaotic conditions.)

The definition that **BEST FITS** the word "sack" in the first paragraph is to

- A. tackle.
- B. put in a bag.
- C. plunder after capture. *
- D. dismiss from a job.

(Even if students are unfamiliar with the word "plunder," the other choices don't make sense.)

All of these changes paved the way for the Renaissance **EXCEPT**

- A. Most people lived and worshipped in small communities. *
- B. People moved from small estates to large, growing towns.
- C. Europeans were sent on a quest to capture the Holy Land.
- D. As books were more available, more people learned to read.

(Choices B-D all happened just before the Renaissance and contributed to it.)

AN EXCERPT FROM THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO

From "The Glories of Kinsay," c. 1300

And since we have got to Hangchow (now the city of Beijing, which Marco Polo called Kinsay), I will enter into particulars about its magnificence; and these are well worth the telling, for the city is beyond dispute the finest and the noblest in the world. The city of Kinsay (is) so great that it hath twelve thousand bridges of stone, for the most part so lofty that a great fleet could pass beneath them. And let no man marvel that there are so many bridges, for you see the whole city stands as it were in the water and surrounded by water, so that a great many bridges are required to give free passage about it...

There were in this city twelve guilds of the different crafts, and each guild had 12,000 houses in the occupation of its workmen. Each of these houses contains at least 12 men, whilst some contain 20 and some 40, - not that these are all masters, but inclusive of the journeymen who work under the masters. The number and wealth of the merchants, and the amount of goods that passed through their hands, were so enormous that no man could form a just estimate thereof...

Inside the city there is a Lake and all round it are erected beautiful palaces and mansions, of the richest and most exquisite structure that you can imagine, belonging to the nobles of the city. Sometimes there would be at these palaces an hundred different parties; some holding a banquet, others celebrating a wedding; and yet all would find good accommodation in the different apartments and pavilions, and that in so well ordered a manner that one party was never in the way of another...

The people are Idol Worshippers; and since they were conquered by the Great Khan they use paper-money. Both men and women are fair and comely, and for the most part clothe themselves in silk, so vast is the supply of that material...

All the streets of the city are paved with stone or brick, as indeed are all the highways in the land, so that you ride and travel in every direction without inconvenience... You must know also that the city of Kinsay has some 3000 baths, the water of which is supplied by springs. They are hot baths, and the people take great delight in them, frequenting them several times a month, for they are very cleanly in their persons. They are the finest and largest baths in the world ...

Everything pertaining to this city is on so vast a scale, and the Great Khan's yearly revenues there from are so immense, that it is not easy even to put it in

writing. Furthermore there exists in this city the palace of the king that is the greatest palace in the world, all enclosed with lofty battlemented walls; and inside the walls are the finest and most delectable gardens upon earth, and filled too with the finest fruits. There are numerous fountains in it also, and lakes full of fish. In the middle is the palace itself, a great and splendid building all painted in gold, with many histories and pictures of beasts and birds, of knights and dames, and many marvelous things...

The position of the city is such that it has on one side a lake of fresh and exquisitely clear water and on the other a very large river. The waters of the latter fill a number of canals of all sizes which run through the different quarters of the city, carry away all impurities, and then enter the Lake; whence they issue again and flow to the Ocean, thus producing a most excellent atmosphere...

(There) are the ten principal markets, though besides these there are a vast number of others in the different parts of the town... A market three days in the week frequented by 40,000 or 50,000 persons, who bring thither for sale every possible necessary of life, so that there is always an ample supply of every kind of meat and game... Those markets make a display of every kind of vegetables and fruits... From the Ocean Sea also come daily supplies of fish in great quantity. Any one who' should see the supply of fish in the market would suppose it impossible that such a quantity could ever be sold; and yet in a few hours the whole shall be cleared away'; so great is the number of inhabitants who are accustomed to delicate living...

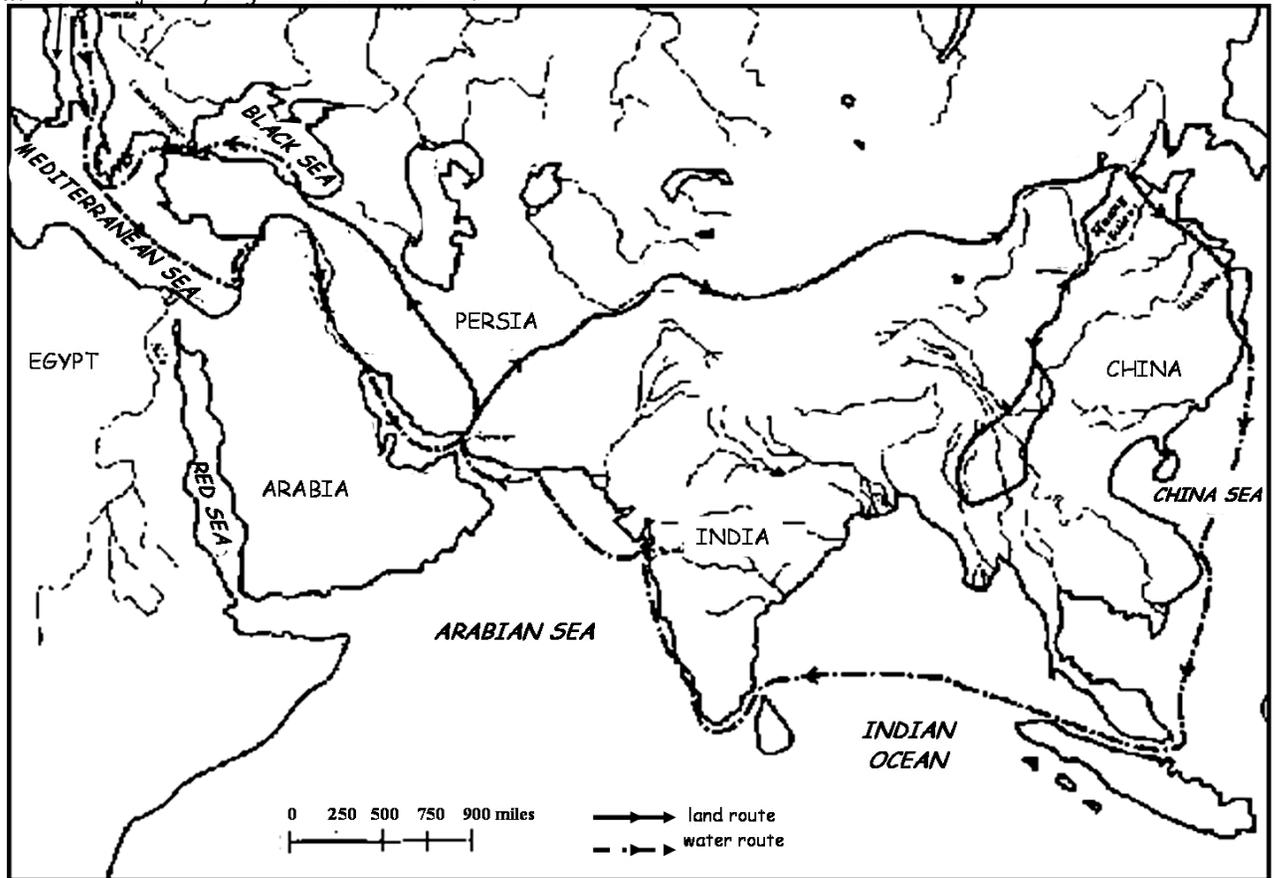
All the market places are encompassed by lofty houses, and below these are shops where all sorts of crafts are carried on, and all sorts of wares are on sale, including spices and jewels and pearls. Some of these shops are entirely devoted to the sale of wine made from rice and spices, which is constantly made fresh, and is sold very cheap... Streets are occupied by the Physicians, and by the Astrologers, who are also teachers of reading and writing; and an infinity of other professions have their places round about...

All along the main street running from end to end of the city, both sides are lined with houses and great palaces and the gardens pertaining to them, whilst in the intervals are the houses of tradesmen engaged in their different crafts... The houses of the citizens are well built and elaborately finished; and the delight they take in decoration, in painting and in architecture, leads them to spend in this way sums of money that would astonish you...

They treat the foreigners who visit them for the sake of trade with great cordiality, and entertain them in the most winning manner, affording them every help and advice on their business...

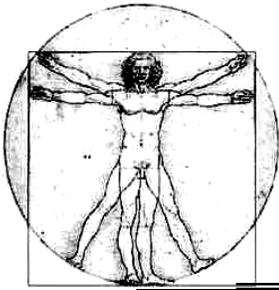
Let Me BRAINSTORM the Ways

Marco Polo's journey begins and ends in ITALY.



DIRECTIONS: Use information from the lesson, the map above, your own knowledge, and other sources as needed to brainstorm as many NEW IDEAS, INFORMATION, etc. as you can that came to Europe in the Middle Ages and inspired Europeans to advance.

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 16. | 31. |
| 2. | 17. | 32. |
| 3. | 18. | 33. |
| 4. | 19. | 34. |
| 5. | 20. | 35. |
| 6. | 21. | 36. |
| 7. | 22. | 37. |
| 8. | 23. | 38. |
| 9. | 24. | 39. |
| 10. | 25. | 40. |
| 11. | 26. | 41. |
| 12. | 27. | 42. |
| 13. | 28. | 43. |
| 14. | 29. | 44. |
| 15. | 30. | 45. |



We're Only HUMAN – istic

Springboard:

Students should read “Humanism” and answer the questions.

Objective: The student will be able to explain importance of humanism and the Medici family to the Renaissance.

Materials: Humanism (Springboard handout)
The First Family of Florence (2 page handout)
Their Place in History (handout)

Terms to know: **Humanism** - Renaissance viewpoint that humans should study and work hard to achieve their potential
Renaissance - period of “rebirth” of Greek and Roman ideas, artistic styles, etc.
patron - one who pays to support the arts or other cause
philosopher - thinker
regent - one who rules in the place of a king or queen

Procedure:

- After discussing the Springboard, explain that *in this lesson the student(s) will learn more about the Italian Renaissance and its roots in Florence, the city that had the greatest influence on the period.*
- Hand out copies of “The First Family of Florence” and “Their Place in History.” The student(s) should work individually, in pairs, or groups to read about the Medici family and analyze their importance.
- Student(s) should then share their answers and discuss. (*Answers may vary but should be supported with information from the lesson.*) During the discussion, have the student(s) summarize the importance of Humanism to Renaissance thinking and achievements. (*Humanism’s emphasis on people striving to achieve all that is possible during their lifetimes led Renaissance men, and women to a much lesser degree, to study, create, invent, etc. Men dominated, though there were some notable female artists and a number of female art patrons.*) Then have them summarize the role of the Medici. (*They were rulers of Florence during much of the Renaissance and were also important patrons of the time, sponsoring many of the most famous artists, architects, and others of the period.*)

HUMANISM

Humanism was a way of thinking about people and their place in the world. As a movement, Humanism first became popular in the 14th century in Italy. Humanists, unlike people of the Middle Ages, focused their writing, art, and thinking on people and their achievements. While in the Middle Ages everything in people’s lives centered on the Church, religion, and the “hereafter,” humanists were far more concerned with the “here and now” as they strived to achieve all they could during their time on earth.

Humanist thought was at the heart of a period of history called the Renaissance. The Renaissance was a time of rebirth of learning, particularly the ideas of the Ancient Greeks and Romans, which had been lost to Europeans in the chaos of the early Middle Ages. Humanists saw the Greeks and Romans as role models of accomplishment and tried to style their thinking, art, architecture, and literature after the ancient scholars and artists. Throughout the Renaissance humanists read and studied all they could find about the Greeks and Romans and went on to expand on the ancients’ ideas.

Both Humanism and the Renaissance began in Italy. Because of its location on the Mediterranean Sea, Italy’s cities became important centers for trade during the Middle Ages. Along with the many goods that arrived in Italy from foreign lands were many new and some old ideas, including those of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. Many of the ancient writings were in Latin, the language of Rome. Since Latin had never been completely lost among the people of its homeland, some Italians were able to read the original works.

There was fierce competition among Italy’s cities for foreign trade and the great wealth it brought. While all sought to make their cities beautiful, the city of Florence in particular understood that new ideas, great artwork, and learning would attract many people, including traders. Florence’s government and business leaders, therefore, worked hard to encourage humanist thought and the talents of the city’s people.

Summarize Humanism in **ONE** sentence. _____

Summarize the Renaissance in **ONE** sentence. _____

Write at least **THREE** sentences to explain how you think the Renaissance may have been different from the Middle Ages. _____

Underline **THREE** sentences in the passage that best explain why Humanism and the Renaissance began in Florence, Italy.

HUMANISM = SUGGESTIONS FOR ANSWERS

Humanism was a way of thinking about people and their place in the world. As a movement, Humanism first became popular in the 14th century in Italy. Humanists, unlike people of the Middle Ages, focused their writing, art, and thinking on people and their achievements. While in the Middle Ages almost everything in people's lives centered on religion and the "hereafter," humanists were far more concerned with the "here and now" as they strived to achieve all they could during their time on earth.

Humanist thought was at the heart of a period of history called the Renaissance. The Renaissance was a time of rebirth of Greek and Roman ideas. Humanists saw the Greeks and Romans as role models of accomplishment and tried to style their thinking, art, architecture, and literature after the ancient scholars and artists. Throughout the Renaissance humanists read and studied all they could find about the Greeks and Romans and went on to expand on the ancients' ideas.

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Summarize Humanism in **ONE** sentence. ***Humanism is a belief that people have the potential to achieve many great things during their lifetimes.***

Summarize the Renaissance in **ONE** sentence. ***The Renaissance was a period in history in which interest in the art, writing, architecture, and thinking of the ancient Greeks and Romans was "reborn."***

Write at least **THREE** sentences to explain how you think the Renaissance may have been different from the Middle Ages. ***During the Middle Ages people were concerned with the "hereafter," while the Renaissance brought a greater interest in people and their achievements in the "here and now." While religion was the prime focus of the Middle Ages, during the Renaissance people were intent upon learning about the Greeks and Romans and building upon their achievements. During the Middle Ages art and architecture centered on religion and glorified God and the Church. In the Renaissance art and architecture was modeled after Greek and Roman works.***

Underline **THREE** sentences in the passage that best explain why Humanism and the Renaissance began in Florence, Italy. *(Answers may vary but some relevant sentences are underlined above.)*