



# RENAISSANCE

A simulation of life in Florence

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**Interact**

10200 Jefferson Boulevard

Culver City, CA 90232-0802

ISBN 978-1-57336-275-7

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## PURPOSE

RENAISSANCE is a simulation which allows students to spy on early life, primarily in Florence, during a period in the history of western civilization that produced some of the finest artistic creations, most controversial and far-reaching philosophical ideas, and revolutionary scientific and technological innovations of any one period before or since. As student teams participate in activities and prepare their products, they meet the challenges of discovering who the people were, how they lived, and what they accomplished that has become so important to each of us as we live our own daily lives today.

Students will experience the following:

### Knowledge

- where and when the Renaissance first flourished
- who the prominent people of the times were
- what everyday life was like
- what artistic, scientific, and technological treasures we inherited
- how the events of this period affect us today by linking past and present



*... Italian girl, noblewoman, and lady of Sienna,  
second half of the 14th century ...*

### Attitudes

- an appreciation for the greatness of human achievement during this period
- an understanding of the word renaissance or “rebirth” as an apt description of the period
- confidence in personal research skills
- appreciation for the consequences of cooperative learning within a group

### Skills

- group collaboration, organization, and decision making
- critical thinking
- research techniques
- map reading and making
- math applications—logic, computation, pre-algebra, scale
- language arts—reading, writing, listening, speaking
- art appreciation, history
- science history



## INTRODUCTION - 1

RENAISSANCE  
... a simulation about the past ...

RENAISSANCE is a simulation about the past that is set in the future. This idea is not entirely serendipitous. The future is an engaging prospect for us all. It suspends us in mystery and constantly dares us each to use our imagination and attempt the improbable—that of predicting. The author hopes that through this simulation the energy students feel about living in the future will transfer to their study of the past. RENAISSANCE asks students to see themselves as both citizens of that which may be, and spies into that which was. Students make a “quantum leap” by being in more than one place at a time. And while they are bouncing around this universe of the intellect, it asks them to *see* what they see, analyze the impact, and evaluate in terms of themselves for today as well as their vision for the future.

### Why a simulation of the Renaissance?

*Renaissance* is not merely a word describing a specific time period in western civilization. Nor is it synonymous with, and limited to, a period of intense production of what have become some of our most treasured works of art. Rather Renaissance is an idea, an attitude, an orientation.

This idea was expressed in the past in several ways: a renewed interest in classical philosophy, advances in science and technology, significant social and political restructuring, an unprecedented interest in the arts and intellectual pursuits, and a growth in internationalism and exploration. Each facet of new learning built upon the others in a synergistic explosion of information and its applications. A new ability to store, retrieve, and exchange this information over greater and greater distances only added to its accumulation and the generation of new ideas. This change was not always easy and, as such, the piper had to be paid. But it perpetuated itself for 300 years at an incredible pace.

Today we treasure such a period in our heritage, for we are able to see its contributions to our own lives. And that is one reason why our children and students should know and feel that they also are a part of the Renaissance. But it is not a complete reason. For we can also easily draw close parallels to our own culture and society. Today we are experiencing a renaissance of a new kind. Just as past technology changed life in dramatic ways, current advances in high technology are changing our entire orientation to the world. Modern advances are moving us out of an industrial era and into a global information society. All around us we see worldwide political and social restructuring; the arts, in a growing diversity of ideas, are *alive*. International perspec-



## INTRODUCTION - 2

RENAISSANCE... that is set in the future ...

tives confront us morning till night on television, and the depths of our oceans and the ceaseless limits of space are our new frontiers of exploration. And around the world we are all growing more cognizant of a need to look back to a more humanistic time when man valued that which makes us human, when the pursuit of beauty and intellectualism was at a premium, and when a simpler lifestyle allowed us to breathe clean air and drink clean water.

We can learn that the most dynamic of times are ironic and dichotomous in their nature. The Renaissance produced great learning and beauty, yet it was simultaneously caught up in greed and consumption. Were these two faces necessary to the existence of the whole? And what about today? Can we see our own faces in this somewhat fuzzy mirror of history? Or is it simply an illusion? Has our modern renaissance simply followed on the heels of the last, or is it unique and just beginning?

Our students always need to form links from past to present and attempt to see their own faces as a part of a historical perpetual wave. They need to understand that while they are human and share all that is characteristic to humankind with all who lived in the past, they are also unique individuals living in a unique time. Simulations offer the opportunity for both perspectives. RENAISSANCE attempts to challenge students and teachers alike to create links and distinctions that may allow for personal insights into the past, pre-sent, and future . . . and into themselves.





## OVERVIEW - 1

RENAISSANCE begins with a fantasy of a time warp in which great artistic, literary, scientific, and technological treasures of the past have been caught in a peculiar “fold” of the universe and flung back to their places and times of origin. Student “detectives of the future” hop aboard the warp waves and maneuver their own timemobiles back to the past in order to rescue the treasures and bring them into the future where they will be safe from the uncertainties of “re-history.”

Your students will spiral their way around an authentic Renaissance gameboard, manipulating clues and obstacles as they learn about Florentine daily life, its famous families, and the greatest celebrities and treasures of the period.

In the tradition of **Interact**, students make history come alive *for themselves* through activities which guide them in making discoveries about places, events, and people, as well as the treasures we have inherited from 14th– to 16th–century Italy. As an interdisciplinary simulation, RENAISSANCE includes principles and skills of history, social science, math, science, geography/cartography, language arts, literature, and art. Students, additionally, must apply cooperative learning skills, organization, critical thinking, writing, and decision making in order to become Master Detectives.

*Our company  
is committed  
to cooperative  
learning and  
an integrated  
curriculum ...*

### How it works

Small groups of four to six students become “detective units” in a new age, using their accumulated research through activity assignments, INTERNAL MEMOS, STUMP and BLUNDER CARDS, a Tool Box, Data Folders, and a classroom GAME BOARD. They are competing to retrieve the “warped” wonders of Renaissance Europe—art, literature, scientific and technological theories, and inventions. Suddenly they become Master Detectives.

Student teams participate in four basic quanta. (See the definition of **quanta** on page 1:6.)

- **QUANTUM I: Team building** introduces the simulation as well as activities for team building, personal responsibility, and vocabulary and language arts. Students form teams, make commitments, and begin a log of their experiences and personal observations.



## OVERVIEW - 2



### **Quanta**

... "the plural for Quantum ... a portion or part ... one of the very small parts into which many forms of energy are subdivided ... Quantum mechanics says a single electron can be in two places at once ... Your students will need to make that 'quantum leap' which allows them to be here and now and then and there at the same moment ... " (See a more complete definition on page 1:6.)

- **QUANTUM II: Pre-Timeflight Planning** includes the first segment of activities that take students through the unit. Here they participate in pre-timeflight planning, including preparation for becoming a Renaissance visitor. Students get involved in research about such aspects of Florentine life as couture, customs and eating habits, slang, as well as map reading. This quantum also serves as the "launching pad" for competing in the board game.
- **QUANTUM III: Board Game** is the most competitive quantum and requires the most team effort as well as decision making, research, and critical thinking. Student teams use an authentic (although modified) Renaissance game board to learn about Florentine daily life: *How did people earn money? What did they eat? How did they perform daily tasks? etc.* Additionally, students travel outside Florence and learn about transportation, reading a city map, and learning about important landmarks still in use today. As each team reaches the end of the gameboard matrix and rescues a treasure, it must present an in-depth research project on that treasure and its famous initiator. All teams do this to earn the coveted and internationally recognized currency of the time—the florin.
- **QUANTUM IV: Debriefing** ends the simulation with debriefing activities which allow students to evaluate how their lives today have been influenced by the intellectual and artistic explosion of the period. Additionally, they are challenged to speculate on what our world might be like if, in fact, many of the "rescued treasures" had never been known.

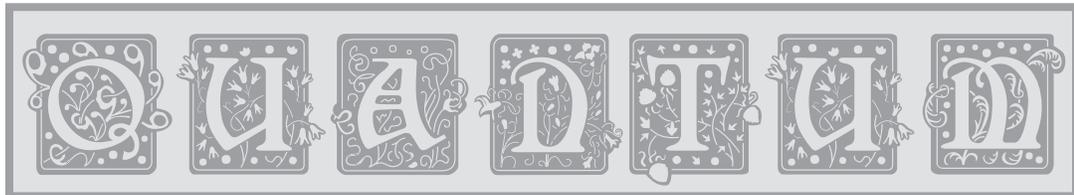
RENAISSANCE ends when one team wins by either accumulating the most florins or rescuing the most treasures—or maybe a combination of both? Deserving students are then designated as true detectives and awarded the Detective Certificate.



## OVERVIEW - 3

### Flexibility is a key component

This simulation is designed to offer you considerable flexibility in time, depth, and configuration of study. Teams of students in one classroom may compete against each other, or classrooms (periods) could be competitors. Also, research projects can be done either as teams, or pairs, or even individuals. You may decide to spend as little as one week or up to three or four weeks involved in the varying activities, depending on how many retrievals you allow each team to make, how you choose to have students handle their research presentations, how much information you elect to give out or have students research on their own. Consider interrupting and augmenting the unit sequence with appropriate literature, direct lessons about the period, and enrichment materials. Most of all, enjoy yourself. Let your students become as involved and inventive as they are inclined.



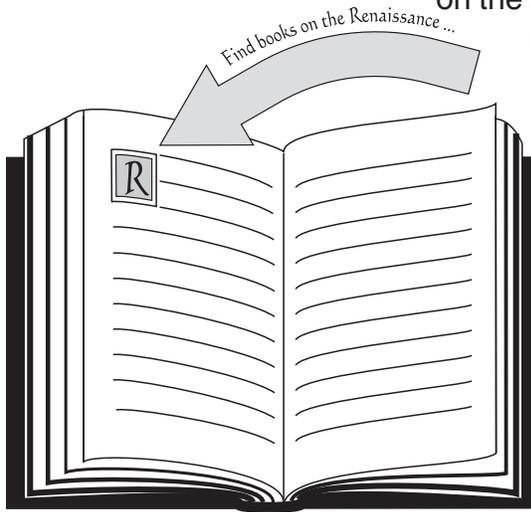
\***Quanta**—the plural for quantum; a noun meaning a portion or part; also, one of the very small parts into which many forms of energy are subdivided. The quantum theory is based on the subdivision of radiant energy into finite quanta and applied to numerous processes involving transference or transformation of energy in an atomic or molecular scale. Quantum mechanics is a system of precision calculation of a theory of uncertainties that says that a single electron *can* be in two places at once. Only the potentialities, however, can be described. Your students will need to make that “quantum leap” which allows them to be here and now and then and there at the same moment. Uncertainties will no doubt occur. (Definition from *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, 1965.*)



## SETUP DIRECTIONS -1

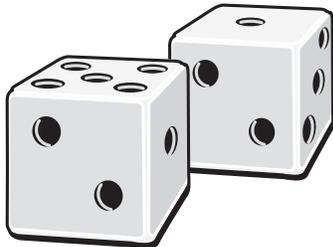
### 1. Collecting things for the simulation

- a. **Library** A classroom library will be essential in facilitating classroom research activities. Books should provide information on the subject of the Renaissance—artists, daily life, historical costumes, the city of Florence in particular. Although some information is included in RENAISSANCE, reference books such as atlases, almanacs, encyclopedias as well as those giving information about inventions, etc. and the events throughout the ages will help students use research skills and feel more involved. Also, a good resource to have on hand is one of the popular travel guides (found in any good book store which aid travelers in planning vacations). You can easily find one on Europe and possibly on Italy. These are excellent sources of concise information and tell about the famous historical sites. Another source of information and resources are your local travel agents. They often have old travel brochures that they are happy to give away. Check your school and local public libraries for additional resources. If there is a local university, many times they have liberal lending privileges for classroom teachers.



- b. **Atlases** both current and historical

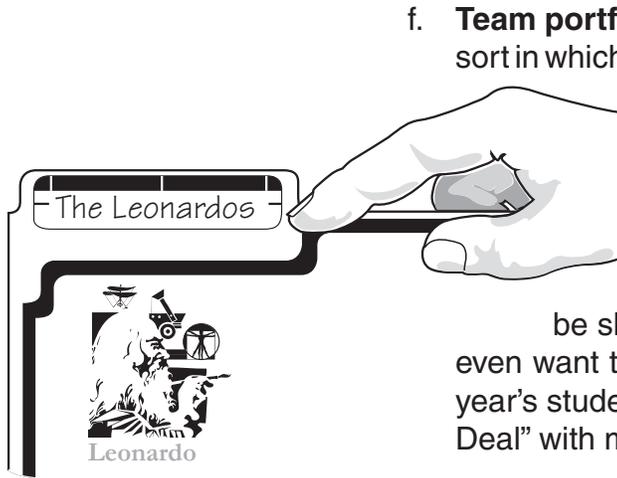
- c. **Dice** (One pair will do, but it's good to have extras.)



- d. **Activity materials** These include chart or tissue paper for maps, yard sticks, rulers, crayons, markers, colored pencils, scissors, unlined paper (8-1/2" x 11"), Post-it type note papers (3"x3"), etc. as needed. You may not need or have all of these items available. As you preview the activities, you'll be able to determine what is best for your students. However, the greater the variety of materials available, usually the greater the variety of student products.
- e. **Gameboard cards.** You'll need to paste the sheets on individual pieces of backing paper and then cut them apart. (Construction paper or tag board is good for this purpose, but be creative.) Label the flip side of the "card" either BLUNDER, STUMP, INTERVIEW, or TREASURE. Laminating the cards is a good investment if you plan to reuse RENAISSANCE.



## SETUP DIRECTIONS - 2



- f. **Team portfolios** Each team will need a folder or file of some sort in which to place its activity sheets and research notes, etc.

A team leader or a responsible team member can keep these for her/his team, or you may wish to have a place in the classroom for storage between work periods. (See #2 Preparing the Classroom on page 1:9.) You may use these folders at the end of the unit to hold all completed work which can be shared with other teams, parents, or staff. You may even want to keep some materials as samples for your next year's students. (Usually it is not difficult to play "Let's Make a Deal" with more conscientious students.)

- g. **Florins** You'll need to duplicate sheets of florins in quantity for student use during the game. Duplicate as per directions on page 1:11. Again, lamination will help them last longer. If you don't laminate, you might consider marking or stamping each florin in some way that's difficult to duplicate by the students *after* copying. (**Be aware:** *Students also have access to copy machines and the pressure of competition may tempt alternative methods of "earning" needed florins.*) Be sure to make an ample amount so you don't run out at an inconvenient moment.

- h. **Tool box** The tool box can include any type of item that students need to complete their activities—with the exception of paper goods and library books. Mirrors for decoding, maps of the city of Florence, maps of 15th-century Italy, as well as your markers, rulers, yard sticks, folders with pictures of the Renaissance period (art, people, documents and primary sources, inventions, etc.) are some examples. You may also wish to glue an inventory list to the outside of the box and make periodic checks to make sure things are not "warping" out of your classroom. You might also encourage—even reward—students who bring in useful items for the box.