

3

The Humanist Approach

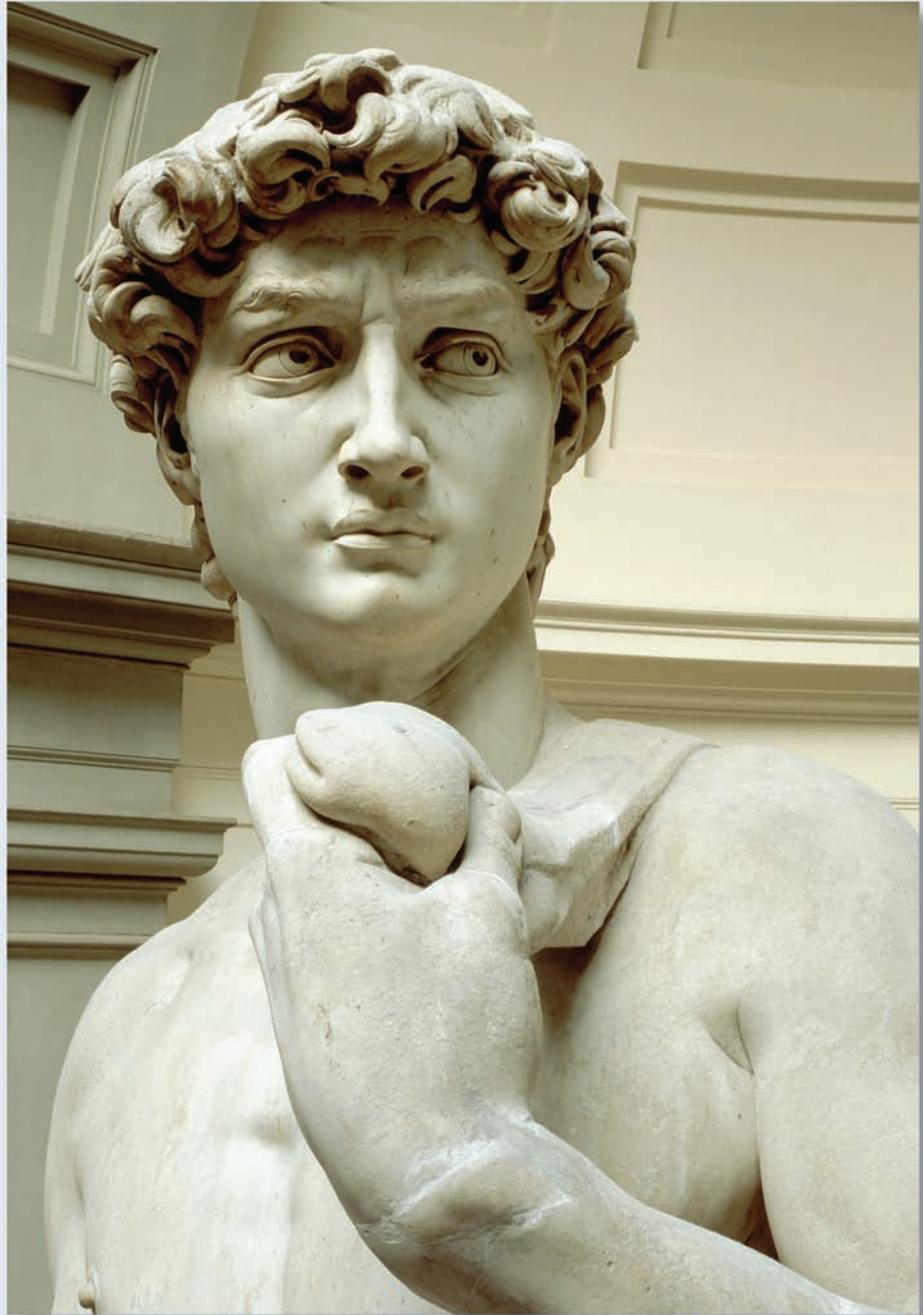


FIGURE 3-1 Michelangelo's sculpture shows David just before the battle with Goliath. What emotions do you read in his expression?

WORLDVIEW INQUIRY

In what ways can shifts in ideas affect a society's worldview?

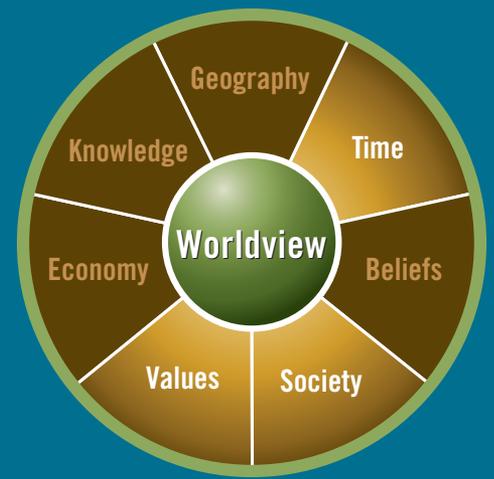
1504. Michelangelo's huge marble sculpture *David* was being hauled by workers from his studio to the Palazzo Vecchio, the political centre of Florence.

A stone flew through the air, hitting the face of the sculpture. Michelangelo cried out as if he had been struck himself. He rushed to see if the marble had been damaged. The exhausted workers stopped in their tracks. Suddenly several men burst out of a nearby alley shouting, "Medici! Medici!" before disappearing down a side street.

The new political leaders of Florence had hired Michelangelo, the most skilled sculptor of his time, to create a work that would symbolize the city. He decided on the young biblical hero, David, who defeated the giant Goliath with a simple slingshot and stone. Michelangelo wanted his work to encourage the people of Florence in their struggle to be free of their enemies and the powerful Medici family who had controlled the city for so long. He had created a magnificent figure in the spirit of the ancient Greeks and Romans whom he admired. *David* represented human beings in all their beauty and glory.

"They are gone. Let us go on," Michelangelo said to the workers. He could hardly wait to see his work standing in front of the Palazzo Vecchio.

According to the story, why did Michelangelo choose David to symbolize the city of Florence? What does Michelangelo's choice suggest about how he viewed Florence and its future?



In This Chapter

What is the meaning of life?
What is the right way to behave?
Do you ever think about questions like these? In earlier chapters, you saw that many people in the Middle Ages looked to religious beliefs, especially ideas about the afterlife, for answers to such questions. Renaissance thinkers — people we refer to as “humanists” today — reintroduced ideas from pre-Christian times to this religious foundation. They encouraged people to develop their minds and talents, and to use them for the good of society as well as the glory of God. How did these humanists express their ideas, and how did these ideas spread? What was the impact of humanist thinking on European society?

A Rebirth of Ideas

Which ideas from classical times helped to form the Renaissance humanist worldview?

What's in a WORD?

The word “humanist” comes from the Latin word *humanitas*. The Romans used *humanitas* to refer to the quality of the human mind that sets us apart from animals — our spiritual and intellectual abilities.

LINK UP

Other chapters in this unit and Chapter 9 from Unit 2 discuss more fully the contributions of Islamic civilization to Europe's renaissance. ■

Think of a time when you changed your mind about something. What caused your new way of thinking to come about? Were you influenced by other people, by things you saw or read, or some other factor? Now imagine a new way of thinking taking place across a whole continent. That's what happened during the Renaissance.

This new way of thinking appears to have started in the northern Italian city-states, where scholars we now call **humanists** looked back to the ancient classical civilizations of Greece and Rome. These scholars studied Greek and Roman writings and art and applied classical ideas in their own lives and work.

Classical Writings

The Greek and Roman civilizations had not been forgotten during the Middle Ages. Latin, the language of the Romans, remained the language of scholars and the Church. Ancient writers like Aristotle and Plato were studied from the Christian perspective. However, during the Renaissance, educated people began to look at ancient works in a different way. They admired the eloquent writing styles of ancient writers and became interested in their ideas about society, politics, history, and the arts. You might say that the Renaissance worldview was a result of intercultural contact with earlier civilizations:

- ◆ the Greek and Roman civilizations that form what we call “Classical civilization”
- ◆ the Islamic civilization that preserved the knowledge of Classical civilization and further developed it, especially in the sciences, math, and medicine of the great civilizations in India and the Far East.



FIGURE 3-2 This is a detail of *The School of Athens* (1508–1511) by the Renaissance painter Raphael. Plato and Aristotle are the two men in the centre. Plato, in red, is shown as Renaissance thinker Leonardo da Vinci. Below him, resting his head on his hand, is the philosopher Heraclitus, shown as Michelangelo. Why do you think Raphael showed these ancient Greek philosophers as Renaissance personalities?

Humanist ideas spread mainly among the wealthy people in society. Reading and discussing ancient writers became a kind of fad among the new merchant and business class that you read about in the previous chapter.

Most cultures have a set of rules or commandments that guides people's behaviour. In Anishinabe (Ojibwa) society there was a religious organization called the Midewewin (MAY-dee-yah-yem) that created a "Code for Long Life and Wisdom." It told people how to live a good life.

- ◆ Thank Kitche Manitou for all his gifts.
- ◆ Honour the aged; in honouring them, you honour life and wisdom.
- ◆ Honour life in all its forms; your own will be sustained.
- ◆ Honour women; in honouring women, you honour the gift of life and love.
- ◆ Honour promises; by keeping your word, you will be true.
- ◆ Honour kindness; by sharing the gifts you will be kind.
- ◆ Be peaceful; through peace, all will find the Great Peace.
- ◆ Be courageous; through courage, all will grow in strength.
- ◆ Be moderate in all things; watch, listen and consider; your deeds will be prudent.

Basil Johnson, *Ojibway Heritage*.

Think IT THROUGH

The Ten Commandments are an important code in the Christian and Jewish religions and those values are also reflected in Islam. Find a copy of the Ten Commandments and compare it with the Code for Long Life and Wisdom. In what ways do both codes express similar values? How does modern-day society enforce these values?



FIGURE 3-3 Cicero, a Roman lawyer and politician wrote "Cultivation of the mind is as necessary as food to the body." What is he saying about the importance of learning? Do you agree with him? Explain.

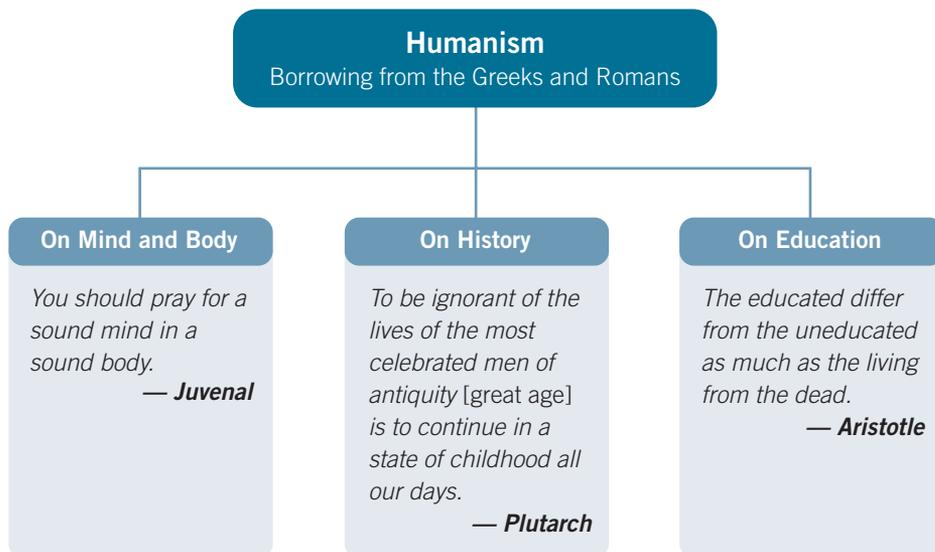


FIGURE 3-4 Do you think the views expressed by Juvenal, Plutarch, and Aristotle remain part of our society's worldview? Explain.

In Europe today you can still see some of the remarkable ruins of the Roman civilization: the Colosseum in Rome, where gladiators sometimes fought to the death, some **aqueducts** that even today carry water great distances into the cities, and the roads that once allowed travel throughout the vast Roman Empire.

Roman writers produced great poetry, drama, and history. The Romans created a legal code that remained in use in Europe until the end of the 1700s.

The Romans based much of their thinking on the golden age of Greek civilization that occurred many centuries earlier. The Greeks were masters of arts such as drama, sculpture, and architecture. They had brilliant mathematicians and historians.

Philosophers taught people how they could improve themselves and their society

through their own efforts. The Greeks also developed the jury system and the Olympic Games. Our form of government—**democracy**—is named after the Greek system of participatory government. Our form of democracy also derives in part from democratic structures originating in First Nations, such as the inter-tribal system of the Haudenosaunee.

- What aspects of Roman and Greek civilization still influence our society today?

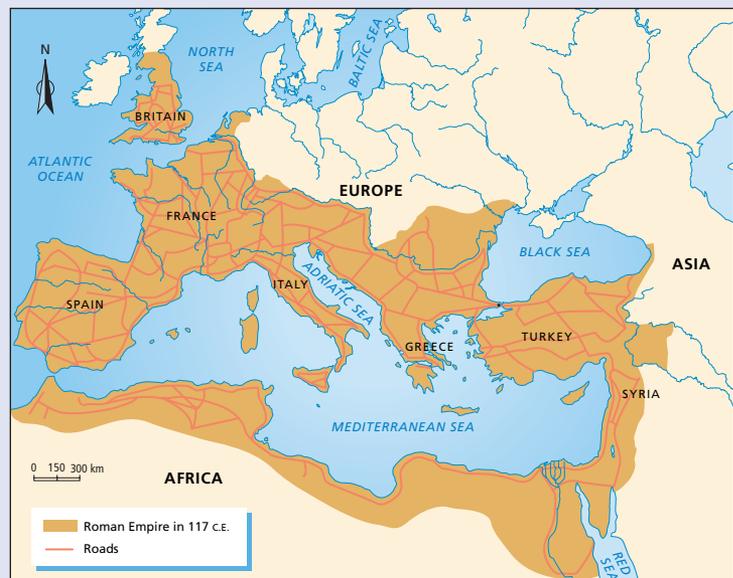


FIGURE 3-5 Roman armies conquered territory all around the Mediterranean and much of Britain. Taxes as well as trade within the empire brought wealth to the city of Rome.

Humanism and the Individual

The classical concept that was most important to Renaissance thinkers and artists was the belief in the dignity and potential of the individual. They believed that people could shape their lives through their own efforts and talents. These new ideas were easily integrated into the Christian worldview: To develop one's talents was to serve God, because God had provided you with those talents. The humanists believed that:

- ◆ Human beings can use the power of reason, that is, thinking to find truth for themselves.
- ◆ It is important for a person to have an open, curious, and questioning mind.
- ◆ People can achieve great things through learning.
- ◆ Individuals should be skilled in many different areas. They should develop not just their minds but also their bodies and spirits.

LINK UP

In Chapter 13 you will see that Japanese society generally values conformity rather than individualism. How might this strengthen the sense of community in a society? ■

Think IT THROUGH

Which of these ideas about the individual do you think are still part of the worldview of our society?

Individuals Can Make A Difference

Dr. Jenn Brenner set up community health programs in southwestern Uganda where one in five children die before their fifth birthday, mainly of preventable diseases like malaria and pneumonia. Dr. Brenner's approach is to train local volunteers who travel around to rural villages. They "visit homes, talk to pregnant mothers, give demonstrations and help get people out for the twice-yearly Child Health Days, where on average 500 children get weighed and immunized," says Dr. Brenner. "They're like human ambulances, bringing very ill children to the hospital and helping families get the care they need." Dr. Brenner hopes to expand the program to reach out to more than 20 000 children under the age of five. Her work is funded in part by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which is a government organization.



FIGURE 3-6 Dr. Jenn Brenner is a pediatrician who works at Alberta Children's Hospital. In 2006, she was listed on the *Maclean's* magazine honour roll, which pays tribute to Canadian individuals who "make the world a better place to live."

Think IT THROUGH

1. How does Dr. Brenner's work illustrate the Renaissance idea of the potential of the individual?
2. In your opinion, is supporting projects like these part of many Canadians' worldview? Give examples to support your answer.

Humanist Scholars

Francesco Petrarch, a humanist thinker of the early Renaissance, saw the Classical past as a glorious time. He believed it was far superior to both the medieval world, which he called a "dark age," and the time in which he lived. He wrote,

Among the many subjects that interested me, I dwelt [reflected] especially upon antiquity, for our own age has always repelled me . . . In order to forget my own time, I have constantly striven [tried] to place myself in spirit in other ages, and consequently I delighted in history.

Later humanists began to see theirs as a glorious time, a "renaissance," when the ideas and values of ancient times were "reborn."

Greek and Roman manuscripts had been preserved in libraries in the Muslim world and in monastery and cathedral libraries throughout Europe. Petrarch and other humanists collected these manuscripts and made copies and translations of them. In one year alone, humanist Giovanni Aurispa brought 240 Greek manuscripts to Europe. Humanists wanted to make the ideas in these ancient works available to the widest possible readership. They thought that in order to be truly cultured, a person should read good books and look at great works of art.



FIGURE 3-7 Francesco Petrarch was painted by Andrea del Castagno in the mid-1400s. How does this painting of Petrarch fit in with what you know about Renaissance humanist values?

The Renaissance Individual

- What objects do you see in this painting? What do they suggest about the interests and abilities of the two young men?
- How does this double portrait illustrate the humanist ideas about the individual listed on page 62?
- In the top left corner of the painting, there is a religious object, a tiny crucifix. What might its size and position suggest about the young men’s attitude toward religion?



FIGURE 3-8 *The Ambassadors* (1533) by Hans Holbein the Younger. On the left is Jean de Dinteville, a French nobleman, and on the right is his friend, George de Selve, the Bishop of Lavaur.

Over to YOU

1. Skim this section and make jot notes of the classical ideas that were part of the Renaissance worldview.
 - a. Share and discuss your ideas with a partner. Come up with a list you can both agree on and compare it with a list made by other classmates.
 - b. Use a graphic organizer to show the humanist ideas that shape your life. Be sure to include examples to illustrate your points.
2. Greek dramas are still staged today. Ellen Hemphill directed a modern production of *The Trojan Women*, an anti-war play by the ancient Greek playwright, Euripides. She explained her interest in this ancient play as follows: “Women and children are always the ultimate victims of war. They are not mentioned in statistics; they are not glorified as heroes; they are losers even if they were not on the battlefield—they lose husbands, sons, fathers, and if they are in

the battle zones, their homes, other children or their own lives.” What is your response to Hemphill’s ideas? What are your responses to your classmates ideas?

3. a. Work with a partner to suggest ways each element of the Midewewin Code for Long Life and Wisdom could be applied in modern daily life. Here is an example:

Thank Kitche Manitou for all his gifts.	Give thanks, for example, say a prayer before meals.

- b. Research to find wisdom teachings of Inuit or another First Nations group. As you did in Question 3a, suggest ways one or more teachings could be applied in modern daily life.

Thinkers and Society

Name some people who you think affect thinking in our society today. Consider politicians, activists, writers, artists, and film makers. What means do they use to get their messages across? Renaissance humanists were often the intellectual leaders of their communities. There were humanist scholars, philosophers, teachers, public officials, writers, scientists, architects, artists, and musicians. Some of them had important positions in government, the Church, and at royal courts. As a result, they were able to affect many aspects of Renaissance society.

How can thinkers and philosophers bring about changes in society?

Civic Humanism

Renaissance humanists were interested in what classical authors had written about good government. Cicero's idea that public service was the duty of everyone in society was very influential. **Civic** humanists believed that being a responsible citizen meant educating yourself about history and political issues and working to improve society. Why is being an informed citizen valued today?

What's in a WORD?

The word "civic" comes from the Latin word *civis*, which means "citizen." Civic humanism is interested in how people can be good members of their society.

EXPLORING SOURCES

For the Good of Society

The following quote is taken from a letter written by the wealthy merchant Lorenzo de Medici to his children. How does it express his civic humanism?

I find we have spent a large sum of money from 1434 to 1471, as appears from an account book covering that period. It shows an incredible sum . . . spent in buildings, charities and taxes, not counting other expenses; not would I complain about this, for though many a man would like to have even part of that sum in his purse I think it gave great luster to the state and this money seems to be well spent.



FIGURE 3-9 The Medici family donated a library filled with Christian, classical, and humanist manuscripts to the city of Florence. This is the reading room. Wealthy people today continue this Renaissance tradition of contributing to society. Give some examples from your community or a community you have visited.

Building Consensus in a Group

Today many people express their sense of responsibility to the local, national, or global community by donating money or fundraising. If your group decided to do a fundraising project, you would first need to decide on an organization to support.

How could you go about this? Each member of your group could come up with the name of an organization, the group could get together to consider the proposals, and then you could choose one. But there is more than one way for your group to make the choice.

Two Ways to Make a Decision

1. The suggestions could be recorded on a list. The group could then discuss them and vote on their choice. The organization that gets the most votes is the one the group will support. This is a win-lose situation.
2. Group members could work together to agree on an organization to support. This is called building a “consensus.” Consensus building takes more time than a vote.

Making a Decision Through Consensus

Keep in mind that a decision made through consensus may not represent everyone’s first choice, or even anyone’s first choice. However, it should represent a decision that everyone in the group can agree to.

- ◆ People share ideas, knowledge, and their perspectives on the decision. These are recorded on a list, but the speakers’ names are not recorded. Ideas belong to the whole group, not to an individual.
- ◆ Points of agreement are listed as well as differences of opinion.



FIGURE 3-10 What type of decision might best be made with a vote? In what situation might consensus be a better method?

- ◆ Everyone in the group needs to speak once before anyone can speak for a second time.
- ◆ People need to listen respectfully and stay on topic when they speak.
- ◆ Focus on trying to come up with a decision that everyone can agree with. The final decision may not be anyone’s first choice.
- ◆ The group as a whole is responsible for the final decision and supports it.

Try It!

1. Put consensus building into action by working through the example given above. Did the process help you to better understand perspectives other than your own? Did you find that one or more people in the group took on a leadership role? How did they help?
2. How are the two decision-making processes above different from one another? Identify one advantage and one disadvantage for each method. Are some group decisions better suited to one method than the other? Explain.

Humanist Education

Think about the subjects that you study in school. Why do you think educators decided that students should study these particular subjects? What other things do you think would be interesting or useful to study?

One of the most important ways that the humanists influenced Renaissance society was in the emphasis they put on education. The humanist Leonardo Bruni wrote admiringly about a wealthy merchant who “never wasted time by loitering, but returned home after business and spent his time in studying Greek and Latin.”

Many humanists were dedicated teachers who ran their own schools. They believed that it was important to train young people’s characters and bodies as well as their minds. This approach to education is sometimes called “educating the whole child.” They also encouraged a curious, questioning attitude in their students. Many rulers and wealthy people hired humanists as tutors for their children. How do you think this might help to spread humanist ideas?

Humanist teachers added to the traditional subjects studied during the Middle Ages.

FIGURE 3-12 Many cities offer awards to youth who contribute to their communities. Métis Kristen Acuna, right, received the Chief David Crowchild Youth Award in 2006 from the City of Calgary for her commitment to education, community service, and cross-cultural activities. Victoria Crowchild Aberdeen, left, is the daughter of Chief David Crowchild, a renowned Tsuu T’ina hereditary chief, for whom the award is named.



FIGURE 3-11 This portrait of a schoolmaster in his classroom was painted by Ambrosius Holbein in 1516.



Studied in Middle Ages

grammar, **rhetoric** (public speaking), logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, theology, scripture, medicine

Studies added during Renaissance

Greek and Roman writings, physical training, ethics and morality (right behaviour), aesthetics (philosophy of beauty), manners and behaviour, history, eloquence (persuasiveness)

Think IT THROUGH

What programs exist in your school that reflect a whole-child approach? What additional programs would you suggest?

Human Beings and the Earth

What should human beings' relationship be with the Earth? We use Earth's resources to supply our needs and wants. But don't we have a responsibility to be caretakers of the Earth as well?

Different Perspectives

All societies have ideas about the relationship between human beings and the Earth. This relationship is often based on religious or spiritual beliefs.

Here is the account of the creation of human beings in the Book of Genesis from the Bible.

*So God created human beings, making them like himself. He created them male and female and blessed them, and said "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals." **The Good News Bible***

- What do the phrases "under their control" and "in charge" suggest about human beings' relationship with the Earth and the other things that live on it?

Here is how Evelyn Steinhauer, a Cree and member of the Saddle Lake First Nation, describes her perspective of the individual and his or her relationship to the Earth:

We believe that beings thrive when there is a web of interconnectedness between the individual and the community, and between the community and nature. Everything we do, every decision we make, affects our family, our community, it affects the air we breathe, the animals, the plants, the water in some way. Each of us is totally dependent on everything else.

- What do the words "interconnectedness" and "dependent" suggest about the First Nations' view of the relationship of human beings with the Earth and with other living things?



FIGURE 3-13 During the 1800s, the buffalo were hunted almost to extinction by Canadian and European buffalo hunters. Why might their attitude to the buffalo have been so different from that of the First Nations peoples who lived on the Prairies?

Think IT THROUGH

1. Here are three quotations about nature from Renaissance thinkers and scientists:

Let us permit nature to have her way. She understands her business better than we do.

– Michel de Montaigne, France

Nature to be commanded, must be obeyed.

– Francis Bacon, England

Nature uses as little as possible of anything.

– Johannes Kepler, Germany

- Work with a partner to restate your understanding of each of these quotations.
 - Discuss how each quotation relates to the quotations from *The Good News Bible* and Evelyn Steinhauer.
 - Decide which of these passages is closest to your own worldview regarding the relationship between human beings and the Earth. Explain your thinking.
2. Use the *pictures to words to questions* formula on page 6 to discuss Figure 3-13 with a partner. Share your questions with the class.

Humanism and Religion

The classical texts that were admired and studied by Renaissance scholars were written before the beginning of Christianity. Renaissance thinkers emphasized ideas and values such as individual achievement and the importance of history and the arts. Religion continued to play an important part in their lives, just as it had during the Middle Ages. Petrarch, for example, was a devout Christian.

Desiderius Erasmus, born in 1466 in the city of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, was the outstanding humanist scholar of his time. He said famously, “When I get a little money I buy books; and if any is left I buy food and clothes.” He edited a new Greek version of the New Testament.

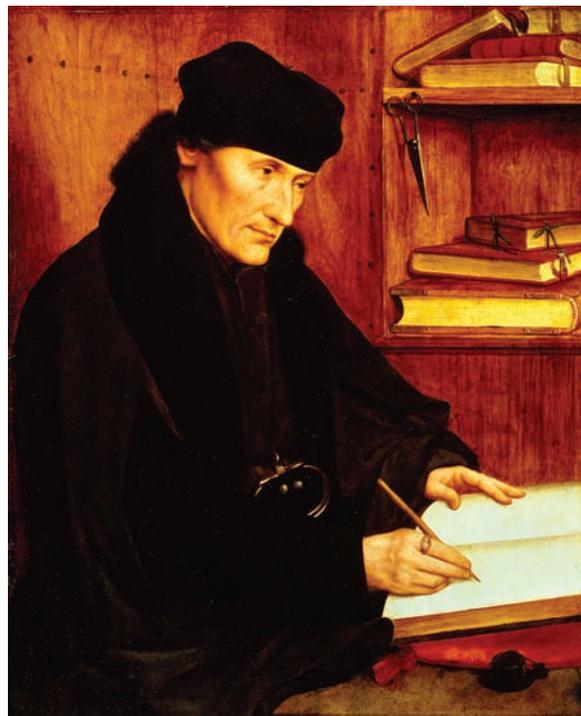


FIGURE 3-14 This portrait of Desiderius Erasmus was painted by Quentin Metsys. Erasmus applied his knowledge of Greek to making a revised translation of the Bible.

Over to YOU

1. Role-play Lorenzo de Medici explaining to one of his children how humanist thinkers brought about changes in Renaissance society. Your monologue should include examples of new attitudes toward education and civic responsibility.
2. Many public institutions such as museums, theatres, university lecture halls, and even seats in concert halls are named for the people who made donations to them. For example, what used to be the Edmonton Concert Hall is now called the Winspear Centre.
 - a. In a group, discuss what you think of this policy. How might it encourage people to contribute money for the common good? How might it reinforce individualism in our society?
 - b. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, anonymous charity is considered superior to charity in which the donor is identified. Have an informal class debate on your views about this idea. (See the Building Your Skills on Debating an Issue on page 355.)
3. What volunteer opportunities are available in your community for people your age?
 - a. Work with a partner to plan how you can find out which local organizations need volunteers.
 - b. Contact three organizations to find out about their volunteering program. Make up a list of questions before you begin. Consider asking about location, time commitment, jobs, and skills needed.
 - c. Create a chart to show the results of your research. Consider the best way to share this information with other students in your school or community.
4. Imagine that the school board in your region was starting a new kind of school. They are looking for input from students on what special focus the school should have as well as such issues as programs, class size, homework, hours, and discipline. Write a letter giving your ideas and explaining how your ideas would shape students' attitudes and worldview in a positive way.

Society and the Arts

What do the arts tell about a society?



FIGURE 3-15 *Mona Leapa*, a digital image created by George Coghill



FIGURE 3-16 *Mona Lisa* (c. 1503–1505) was painted by Leonardo da Vinci.

FIGURE 3-17 Sandro Botticelli painted *The Birth of Venus* (1486) for a member of the Medici family who were his patrons. How does the artist express graceful movement in the detail taken from this painting?

Did you get the joke in this digital image? It was created for an environmental clean-up campaign. The artist was asked to replace the main figure in a famous painting with a frog. He used the *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci because he thought it was the most famous painting in the Western world. The *Mona Lisa* is an example of the new style of art that developed during the Renaissance. Artists became interested in portraying the beauty of the human body and the natural world.

Patrons, people who paid artists to produce works, played an important role in promoting the arts during the Renaissance. They included members of the new wealthy merchant class, as well as the government and the Church. Artists made works to decorate private homes or to display in public places.

Painting

Like Michelangelo, many artists found inspiration in the art of the ancient Greeks and Romans. In the Middle Ages, most art had religious themes and this continued through the Renaissance. But influenced by humanist ideas, Renaissance artists began to interpret these subjects in new ways. The Renaissance also saw a growing interest in portraits and landscapes. As you look at the paintings on these pages, consider how they reflect the humanist interest in the individual, the present world, beauty, and human excellence.



The painting on the right illustrates many of the elements Renaissance artists used to create naturalism and beauty in their works.

- ◆ natural world: symbolized by the peacock
- ◆ light and shadow: on the faces of the angel and the Saint, and on the ground beside them
- ◆ texture and pattern: on the carpet, on Mary and the angel's clothing, the flooring, decorative surfaces
- ◆ realistic details: child in left side of painting peeking around the corner
- ◆ elegance: Mary's hands; the angel's hands

Many contemporary artists also draw inspiration from the past. Ojibwa artist Norval Morrisseau uses images created by First Nations peoples long ago: **petroglyphs** which are carved into rock with sharp implements, and **pictographs** which are drawn onto rock surfaces, and the drawings on the birchbark scrolls of the Ojibwa Midewewin societies. Some First Nations people criticize Morrisseau for breaking traditional restrictions by showing sacred beliefs in his paintings. He defends his work by saying that he wants to restore cultural pride in his people.



FIGURE 3-18 *The Annunciation with Saint Emidius* (1486), Carlo Crivelli

FYI...

In 2006, the National Gallery of Canada put on a solo exhibition of Norval Morrisseau's work.



FIGURE 3-19 *Water Spirit* (1972) by Norval Morrisseau. How do you think art might contribute to the identity of a people and help to build a sense of community?

SKILL POWER

How is Renaissance painting different from medieval painting? Examine this medieval *Enthroned Madonna and Child* and Bellini's *The Madonna of the Meadow*. (See the Building Your Skills on Analyzing Images on page 21.)

Use a chart like the one below to help you think it through.

With a group, discuss how these paintings show a change in thinking from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.

	Medieval	Renaissance
Background		
Emotions		
Pose		



FIGURE 3-20 *The Madonna of the Meadow* (early 1500s) by Giovanni Bellini, Italy. How has Bellini made this religious subject into a universal human experience?



FIGURE 3-21 *Enthroned Madonna and Child*, (1200s), artist unknown

Think IT THROUGH

What connections can you make between Vitruvius's description of an architect and the Renaissance view of the individual?

Architecture

An architect should be a good writer, a skillful draftsman, versed in geometry and optics, expert at figures, acquainted with history, informed on the principles of natural and moral philosophy, somewhat of a musician, not ignorant of the law and of physics, nor of the motions, laws, and relations to each other of the heavenly bodies.

Adapted from *The Architecture of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio in Ten Books.*

This description of an architect comes from the writings of Roman engineer and architect Marcus Vitruvius Pollio. His book *De Architectura* was rediscovered during the Renaissance. It influenced Renaissance architects to include features of classical buildings in their work. Like painters and sculptors, Renaissance architects raised the status of their profession from skilled labourer to artist.

Architectural Inspiration

Architects from all over Europe travelled to Rome during the Renaissance to study the Pantheon, the Colosseum, and other classical buildings. What similarities can you see in these Roman and Renaissance buildings? You may wish to use the Skill Power on page 72 to help you create a chart to record your ideas.

RENAISSANCE BUILDING



FIGURE 3-22 Filippo Brunelleschi, one of the most famous architects of the Renaissance, designed the church of San Lorenzo in 1425–1446.

ROMAN BUILDING



FIGURE 3-23 *The Interior of the Pantheon* was painted by Giovanni Panini in 1747. The interior was actually built much earlier during the time of the Roman Empire.

Sculpture

Sculptors in the Middle Ages were seen as craftspeople rather than artists. They were part of the construction team for cathedrals, carving figures and other decorations that told biblical stories. They generally did not even sign their work. The role of the artist changed dramatically during the Renaissance. Just as wealth raised the social status of merchants and business people, their artistic genius raised the status of artists. Sculptors like Michelangelo became celebrities with international reputations.



FIGURE 3-24 *Raven and the First Men* (1978–1980) was inspired by Haida artist Bill Reid's interest in his background. It depicts the moment that the raven found the first humans in a clam shell and tricked them into coming out into the world. What might this sculpture reflect about the Haida worldview?

Michelangelo's *Pietà*

This is a story retold by the Renaissance art historian, Giorgio Vasari.

One morning he [Michelangelo] had gone to the place to where it [the Pietà] stands and observed a number of Lombards [people from Lombardy, Italy] who were praising it loudly. One of them asked another the name of the sculptor, and he replied, "Our Gobbo of Milan." Michelangelo said nothing, but he resented the injustice of having his work attributed to another, and that night he shut himself in the chapel with a light and his chisels and carved his name on it.

Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects.*

- How does Vasari's story highlight the Renaissance view of the individual?
- What does the sculpture suggest about the Renaissance worldview?



FIGURE 3-25 Michelangelo's *Pietà* (1496) shows Mary holding the dead body of Jesus. Michelangelo uses the physical beauty of Mary to reflect her spiritual perfection. Do you think that a work of art should be beautiful? Or make you think? Or make you look at the world in a new way?

Literature

In the early Renaissance, writers focused on translating the works of Roman and Greek writers and copying their styles. At the same time, books or texts written in the **vernacular**—that is, the language that people spoke, such as Italian, French, and English—became more accessible.

Humanism influenced writers to focus on expressing their thoughts and emotions. Petrarch was the leading Italian poet of his time. He is most famous for the hundreds of love poems he wrote to a woman called Laura. Here is the beginning of one of these **sonnets**:

*Oh blessed be the day, the month, the year,
the season and the time, the hour, the instant,
the gracious countryside, the place where I was
struck by those two lovely eyes that bound me;
and blessed be the first sweet agony
I felt when I found myself bound to Love,
the bow and all the arrows that have pierced me,
the wounds that reach the bottom of my heart.*

FAST FORWARD

Writing About Love

Québec-born poet Leonard Cohen continues Petrarch's tradition of romantic poetry. Here is one of his poems.

For Anne

*With Annie gone,
Whose eyes to compare
With the morning sun?
Not that I did compare,
But I do compare
Now that she's gone.*

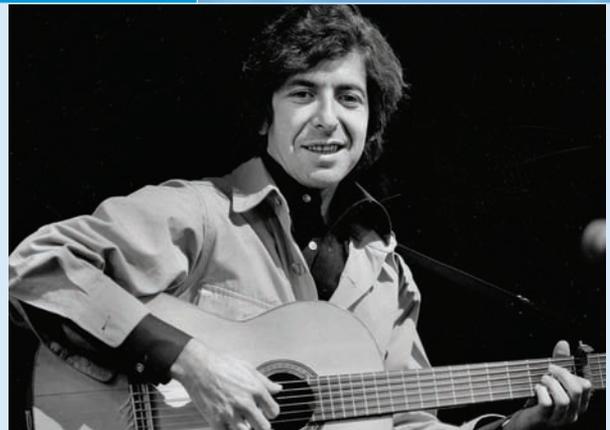


FIGURE 3-26 Canadian poet and singer/songwriter Leonard Cohen

Think IT THROUGH

1. Think about how many popular songs are written on the subject of love. Why do you think this is so?
2. Compare the emotions expressed by Petrarch in his sonnet with the emotions expressed in Cohen's poem. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? Compare the forms each poet used to express those emotions. What similarities and differences can you identify?

Christine de Pisan was a humanist writer, some of whose ideas may seem very modern to you. One of a very few women to receive a humanist education, Pisan was educated at the court of King Charles V of France. When she was left a widow at the age of 25 with three small children to support, she decided to make her living by writing. Pisan was Europe's first professional woman writer. Pisan's many works included poetry, history, essays, and biographies. In her writings, she protested the way women were portrayed in medieval literature. In *The City of Women*, she argued that men and women should be judged not on the basis of their gender but on their abilities and virtues.



FIGURE 3-27 From a 15th-century manuscript. Christine de Pisan is the person on the left. She is receiving three visitors. In the right-hand image she and one of her visitors are building the City of Women that Pisan imagines in her writings.

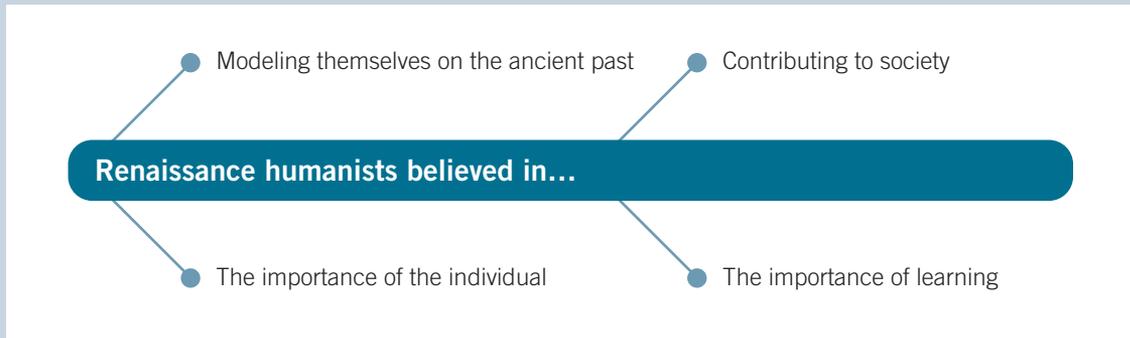
Over to YOU

1. Create a web to show how humanist ideas were expressed during the Renaissance in each of the four arts discussed in this section.
2. Research a contemporary painter, sculptor, architect, or writer to find out whether this person's work has been influenced by humanist ideas. Present your conclusions in a short oral presentation. Use the five-step process on page 264 to help you draw valid conclusions.
 - Support your ideas with quotations from the sources you used in your research.
 - Consider how you can use visuals from electronic sources to enhance your presentation.
3. If you were asked to judge a work of art what criteria would you use? How do the criteria you selected reflect your worldview?
 - a. Create a rubric that shows these criteria and the evaluation scale with descriptors that you would use for your evaluation of the work of art.
 - b. Work with two other students and select a work of art from the Renaissance to judge. Each of you can use your own rubric to judge the work. Compare and discuss your results.
4. Are Christine de Pisan's ideas about men and women reflected in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*? To what extent do you think we have equality between men and women in Canadian society? What criteria can you use to answer this question?
5. How do you use the arts—music, writing, dance, and art—to express your ideas and emotions? How do they help you to express your worldview?

Explore the Big Ideas

Thinkers and philosophers influenced society in the development of a humanist worldview during the Renaissance. Their views spread from Italy across northern Europe.

- a.** Use the organizer below to gather evidence from the chapter about each of these aspects of humanism.



- b.** Write an opinion paragraph responding to the following questions: Which of these humanist values do you think is most widespread in modern society? Which do you think *should* be the most widespread?

- Today when someone is described as a “Renaissance person” it means that he or she is knowledgeable about a wide range of subjects and skilled in many areas. Turn back to page 64 and examine *The Ambassadors*. Notice how the painter has shown that these two are Renaissance men. Create an image modeled on *The Ambassadors* showing one or more modern Renaissance individuals.
- Renaissance thinkers recognized that a sense of responsibility to

the community was important and to them, belonging to a Christian community was essential. Individualism is an important value in our society, and it is one we trace back to the Renaissance. Create an image or collage that expresses your ideas about how these two elements—individualism, and membership in a community—should be balanced for the good of society.

- Develop an electronic bulletin board or a blog to allow you to share and discuss your ideas

about a new way of thinking that you believe would change society for the better.

- Select a work of Canadian art that reflects each of the following:
 - one of the aspects of humanism discussed in this chapter
 - some aspect of contemporary Canadian society.

Share and discuss your choices with other students in the class.