



**Topic:** The Causes and Traits of the Renaissance

**Grades:** 10, 11

**Course:** World History

**Context:** The Italian Renaissance is one of the most famous periods in European history. Beginning in the 14th century, it brought about tremendous changes in art, literature, science, and culture. The Italians were the first to embrace the changes known as the Renaissance, or "rebirth," of culture and thought in Europe. With its emphasis on classical knowledge, humanism, and mathematics, the Italian Renaissance gave rise to a series of innovations that eventually spread beyond Italy.

The word "Renaissance" was not used to describe the era until the 19th century. However, the term is appropriate, as the Italian Renaissance was marked by a revival of the ideas and artistic styles of ancient Greece and Rome. Surrounded by elements of Roman architecture, art, and culture, Italy was well suited for this transformation. Furthermore, its strong connection to the Byzantines also opened a world of knowledge otherwise not available. Finally, the great boom in the economy of many Italian city-states, and especially of great merchant families like the Medici, meant that wealth and patronage existed to support the work of artists, architects, and writers.

**Focus:** The Renaissance of the 14th century changed the way that Western Europeans viewed the world. The belief that humans could discover, or "re-discover," knowledge and understanding began to change the way the world was approached.

**Outcomes:** At the end of this lesson, students should have a broad understanding of the major elements of the Renaissance as an artistic, architectural, and civic movement. They should be able to explain the elements studied and what was new about them.

## Factors:

- The Renaissance was a “re-introduction” of Greco-Roman cultural and artistic elements into Western Europe.
- The notion of “perspective” is essential to humanism and art in general.
- The Renaissance was more than just painting—it encompassed the entire range of human activity.

**Student Writing:** Note the central subject of this quote. Who is being considered here? Consider Pico's perspective on choice as it relates to humanity. Look for words and phrases that show how Pico generally regards humanity's potential. Does he see humans in a negative or positive light?

*This lecture is brought to you by:*



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