

Famous People of the Renaissance

Great Artists of the Renaissance



Leonardo Da Vinci (1452 – 1519) Leonardo was the supreme Renaissance painter, scientist, inventor, and polymath. Da Vinci is widely regarded as one of the greatest minds the world has ever produced. He was interested in everything from music to art and science. Da Vinci was an immense creative force at the start of the Renaissance period. Amongst his many works was the immortal painting – *The Mona Lisa*.



Michelangelo (1475 – 1564) Renaissance sculptor, painter and architect. Michelangelo's artistic endeavours embodied the spirit of the Renaissance. His greatest works include the statue of David and his painting of the Sistine Chapel.

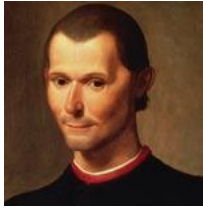


Raphael (1483 – 1520) Italian painter. One of the three members of the High Renaissance trinity. Raphael was asked by Pope Julius II to work on rooms in the Vatican at the same time as Michelangelo worked on the Sistine Chapel. Raphael was known for the perfection and grace of his classical interpretations.

Jan van Eyck This Belgian painter achieved an astonishingly sophisticated level of realism unknown in the art of painting. Glimmering jewels, reflective metals, lush satins and velvets, and even human flesh were each rendered with their own distinctive qualities with such a high degree of naturalism it seemed he had conjured a new artistic medium. He reserves the title "Father of Oil Painting" and is credited with inventing the modern portrait, with his enigmatic *Man in a Red Turban* and *The Arnolfini Portrait*.

Albrecht Durer German painter and printmaker generally regarded as the greatest German Renaissance artist. His vast body of work includes altarpieces and religious works, numerous portraits and self-portraits, and copper engravings. His engravings retain a Gothic flavour. He was deeply influenced by da Vinci's work, and is considered to be 'Leonardo of the North.'

Political Thinkers of the Renaissance



Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) Machiavelli was an Italian writer, historian, diplomat and humanist. Moving in political circles, he created a new branch of political science based on humanist principles. His greatest work, *The Prince* is an expose of political machinations.



Thomas More (1478-1535) More was an English statesman who wrote an ideal political system, Utopia. He was considered a social philosopher and Renaissance humanist. He was executed for refusing to accept Henry VIII as head of the Church of England.

Renaissance Scientists



Nicolaus Copernicus (1473- 1543) A Renaissance mathematician and astronomer who formulated a heliocentric view of the universe. His teaching that the earth revolved around the sun placed him in opposition to the established teachings of the church. He was also an astronomer, physician, economist, diplomat, classics scholar and jurist.



Galileo (1564 – 1642) Creating one of the first modern telescopes, Galileo revolutionised our understanding of the world supporting the work of Copernicus. His work *Two New Sciences* laid the groundwork for the science of Kinetics and strength of materials.



Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) German scientist who played a key role in the 17th Century scientific revolution. He created the laws of planetary motion, which influenced Sir Isaac Newton's theory of gravitation.

The German printer **Johann Gutenberg** emerged as one of the most important people of the Renaissance, with his groundbreaking invention of the Printing Press. He invented the movable metal type printer which made printing swift, convenient and cheap. In 1455 he published the Bible, which helped to increase literacy as never before.

Theology and Philosophy



Erasmus (1466-1536) Erasmus was a Catholic theologian and statesman who has also been called the 'Prince of the Humanists'. He was willing to raise questions about the teachings of the church and not to rely on blind dogma. Erasmus was critical of the abuses of the church and advocated reform from within the church. He was an early advocate of religious tolerance.



Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626) English philosopher, statesman and scientist. Bacon is considered the father of empiricism for his work and advocacy of scientific method and methodical scientific inquiry in investigating scientific phenomena.

Francois Rabelais was a French humanist scholar. In his most famous work *Gargantua*, he uses humour and exaggeration to criticize traditions in religion, education and politics.

Writers



William Shakespeare (1564- 1616) English poet and playwright known for his humanist plays and poetry that continues to be enjoyed all over the world. Famous works include *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet*.

Dante Aligheri was one of the most famous Italian poets of the Renaissance choosing to write in the vernacular. His most famous work is epic poem *The Divine Comedy*, in which he imagines a journey through hell and heaven, during which he encounters many people brilliantly characterized in their plight.

Petrarch was one of the earliest Italian Renaissance poets. He wrote love poems and imaginary letters to the great scholars and philosophers of the ancient past. He also chose Italian to be the language of his writing. He is considered to have been one of the founders of Humanism.

Christine de Pizan was a French Renaissance female writer who wrote some of the very first feminist pieces of literature. She broke with the traditional roles assigned to women. She became the first woman in Europe to successfully make a living through writing. In her most important work, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Christine builds her symbolic city for women. Her book honored all kinds of great women and stood as a testimony to the greatness and accomplishments of women, putting them on the same level as men.