

The Story of the Renaissance

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Seed
Learning



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The Black Death

In the 14th century, a sickness called the Black Death arrived in Europe. It spread quickly and killed many people.

A man named Agnolo de Tura saw the Black Death and wrote:

So many died that we all believed that it was the end of the world.

By 1350, millions of people in Europe had died. The Black Death killed between 30% to 50% of the European population.

Everything changed. Many skilled workers died, so there were not enough workers to make things. Nor were there enough farmers to work the land. Fortunately, it was not the end of the world as many had thought.



The spread of the Black Death



Sick people during the Black Death

Rebirth and Renaissance

After the darkness and death came life and light. The Black Death changed Europe in many ways. Some historians say the Black Death helped make Europe ready for a rebirth called the Renaissance.

The Renaissance was many things. For one, it was a rebirth of art and learning. Europeans looked back through time at the great cities and works of the Greeks and Romans over a thousand years before. They wanted to know how Europe could be great again. They wanted to learn from their past.



A sign in Weymouth, England about the Black Death



A Renaissance statue of David by Michelangelo



The Parthenon temple in Athens, Greece

Petrarch: The Light of Rome and Greece

One person who learned from Europe's past was Francesco Petrarch. He loved the books and teachings of ancient Rome and Greece. In contrast, he felt that he was living in a time of darkness which he called the Dark Ages.



A Greek theater



Francesco Petrarch
(1304-1374)

Petrarch spent much of his life traveling through Europe. He found many Latin and Greek texts that had been lost. Petrarch published them again. He wanted Europe to end the Dark Ages, and he wanted to return to the light of the Romans and Greeks.

Petrarch's love for old books influenced many Europeans to learn from their past. But Petrarch didn't just love books. He also loved a woman.




The Colosseum in
Rome

Petrarch's Love: Laura

One day at church, Petrarch saw a woman named Laura. He fell deeply in love with her.

Today, we don't know much about Laura, but her name probably was Laura de Noves.

She was indeed beautiful, but there was a problem. She was already married, so

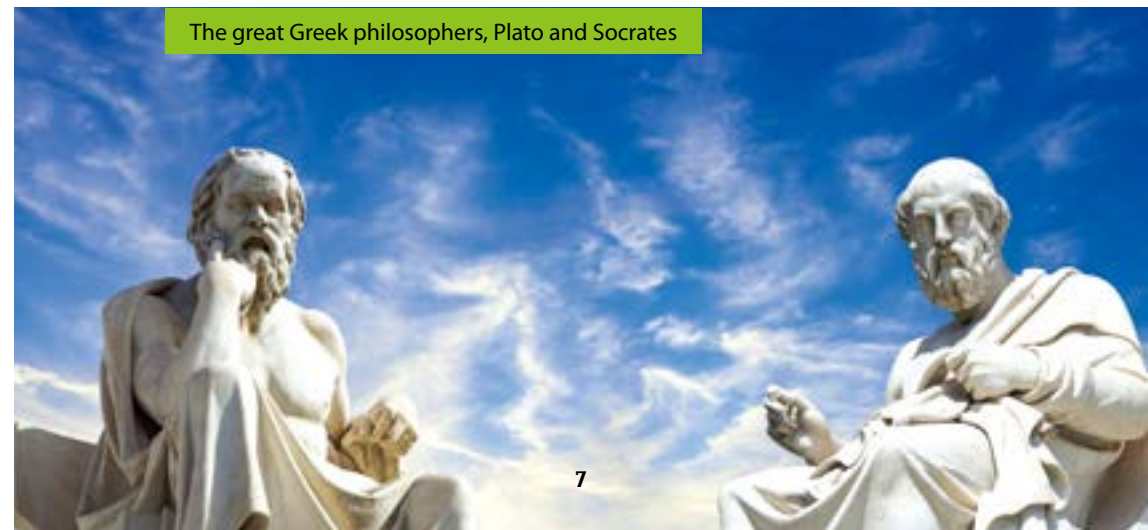
Petrarch showed his love for Laura in writing. He wrote hundreds and hundreds of poems and songs for her, with words like these:

*When from hour to hour among the other ladies,
Love appears in her beautiful face.*



A painting of Laura

The great Greek philosophers, Plato and Socrates



Gutenberg and the Power of Print

Even today, Petrarch's love songs are famous. They influenced many great writers, including William Shakespeare.

Petrarch died in his home on July 19, 1374. It was one day before his 70th birthday. One popular story says



William Shakespeare was influenced by Petrarch.

that he was found dead in his library leaning over a book.

Because of his work and learning, we call Petrarch the Father of the Renaissance. He created great art with words, and he helped Europeans learn from their past.



A statue of Petrarch

For Europeans to learn from their past, people needed to read. But there was a problem. Books were expensive and hard to make. People usually copied books by writing them out by hand.

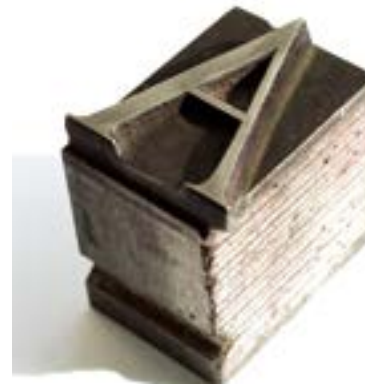


Gutenberg's first printed book: *The Gutenberg Bible*

A young German named Johannes Gutenberg created a new way of printing. He made a printing machine that used moveable letters on metal blocks. He was the first European to be able to quickly print books.

By 1482, there were about 100 printing presses in Europe. These presses helped spread knowledge quickly and accurately. People studied the art and ideas of ancient

Greece and Rome. Thanks to Gutenberg, Europe began its rebirth through the power of print.



A metal letter from Gutenberg's printing machine

Comprehension Questions

1. The Black Death killed...
 - (a) hundreds of people.
 - (b) many millions of people.
 - (c) everyone in Europe.
 - (d) thousands of people.
2. Who did Francesco Petrarch learn from?
 - (a) Agnolo de Tura
 - (b) Laura de Noves
 - (c) Johann Gutenberg
 - (d) The Greeks and Romans
3. Gutenberg was famous for...
 - (a) a printing press.
 - (b) writing love songs.
 - (c) surviving the Black Death.
 - (d) Greek and Roman books.
4. Who painted the *Mona Lisa*?
 - (a) Galileo Galilei
 - (b) Johann Gutenberg
 - (c) Leonardo da Vinci
 - (d) Nicolaus Copernicus
5. Who thought the sun moved around the earth?
 - (a) The Catholic Church
 - (b) Aristarchus
 - (c) Galileo Galilei
 - (d) Nicolaus Copernicus
6. Who forced Galileo to give up his ideas?
 - (a) Nicolaus Copernicus
 - (b) Johann Gutenberg
 - (c) The Catholic Church
 - (d) Leonardo da Vinci
7. According to Einstein, who is the father of modern science?
 - (a) Galileo Galilei
 - (b) Leonardo da Vinci
 - (c) Johann Gutenberg
 - (d) Nicolaus Copernicus
8. How did Galileo learn how planets moved?
 - (a) He read Aristotle.
 - (b) He followed the Church.
 - (c) He studied Petrarch.
 - (d) He used mathematics.
9. Who helped pay for the Renaissance?
 - (a) The Catholic Church
 - (b) The House of Medici
 - (c) Leonardo da Vinci
 - (d) The Greeks and Romans
10. Renaissance means...
 - (a) science without art.
 - (b) art without science.
 - (c) rebirth and renewal.
 - (d) return to the past.

Glossary

- **ancient** very old; from a long time ago
- **influence** to change the way that someone thinks or the way that something develops
- **invent** to make or create something new
- **mention** to speak or write a few words about someone or something
- **philosopher** a person who studies ideas about knowledge, truth, nature, and the meaning of life, etc.
- **planet** a large, round object that moves around the sun or another star
- **prisoner** someone who is held captive as a punishment
- **rebirth** a new period of growth of something
- **Renaissance** a rebirth of learning (art, literature, ideas, science, etc.) during the 14th to 16th century
- **smoky** like smoke in color or appearance
- **support** to take care of someone by paying for their food, clothes, etc.
- **technique** a way of doing something
- **telescope** a tube that is used to help people see distant objects

Key

1. (c) 2. (b) 3. (d) 4. (a) 5. (c) 6. (a) 7. (c) 8. (a) 9. (d) 10. (c)