

A detailed Renaissance painting depicting a scene in a city square. In the foreground, three men in period clothing are gathered around a large globe. One man, wearing a red cap and a dark robe, points at the globe. Another man, in a dark robe and cap, holds a book. A third man, in a red robe and cap, holds a scroll and looks thoughtfully at the globe. In the background, the Florence Cathedral (Duomo) and its bell tower (Giotto's Campanile) are visible, along with other buildings and people in the square. The scene is set during the Renaissance, with a focus on the exchange of ideas and the rediscovery of classical knowledge.

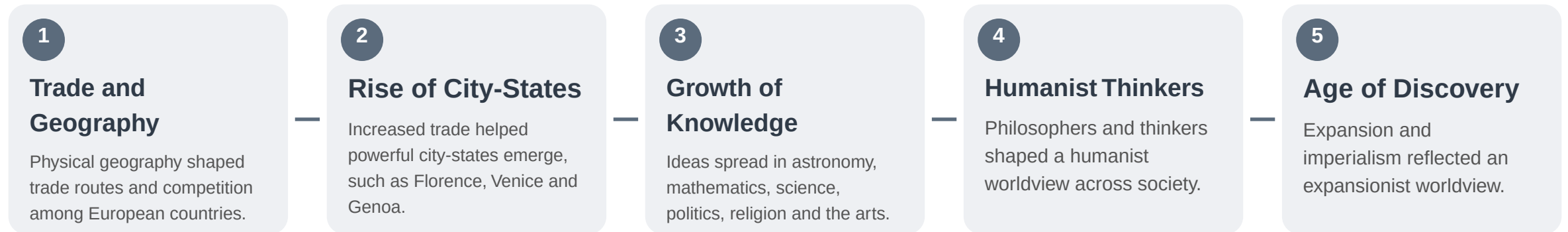
Renaissance Worldviews: Origins of Western Thought

How the exchange of ideas in Renaissance Europe reshaped the Western world

What Is a Worldview, and Why Study the Renaissance?

- A worldview is the set of beliefs and values a society uses to understand life.
- Renaissance Europe formed the basis for the worldview of the Western world.
- Beliefs and values are shaped by time period, geographic location and societal context.
- Studying this era means practicing an openness to differing beliefs and values.

How the Renaissance Spread Ideas Across Europe



Art as a Mirror of a New Worldview

Renaissance art did not simply record faces and places. It carried a philosophy. As humanist ideas grew, artists began showing individual people as worthy of careful, realistic attention.

- Art styles change across historical periods as societies change.
- Renaissance art reflected a new humanism and individualism.
- Compare a medieval religious icon with a Renaissance portrait: what changed, and why?

Contact, Identity and Citizenship

Exploration and intercultural contact during the Renaissance

When European explorers reached new lands during the Age of Discovery, they encountered peoples with different beliefs, values and ways of life. This contact changed how Europeans saw themselves and their place in the world, raising questions about identity and citizenship that still matter today. Considering these encounters critically means asking who benefited, who was harmed, and how contact reshaped identity on both sides.

Bringing It Together

Renaissance Europe's exchange of ideas across trade routes, city-states, humanist thought and exploration built the foundation of the Western worldview. Beliefs and values shift with time, place and context, and studying this era asks us to consider worldviews different from our own. Renaissance art shows this shift visually, reflecting a new humanism and individualism.

If a historian five hundred years from now studied art and ideas from your community today, what would they conclude about our worldview?