

The Renaissance Worldview: Origins of a Western Perspective

This worksheet examines how the Renaissance reshaped ideas about knowledge, trade and society in Western Europe, and how this era still shapes the Western worldview today ([Outcome](#), [Topic](#)). You will also practise thinking about how beliefs are connected to time, place and circumstance ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)).

Exercises

1. Multiple choice. Choose the best answer for each question.

a) The Renaissance is best described as:

- A) A period of declining trade and closed borders in Europe
- B) A period of renewed growth in art, science, and the exchange of ideas across Europe
- C) A war between Italian city-states and the Church
- D) The founding of the first European parliament

b) Which subject areas were affected by the growth and exchange of ideas during the Renaissance?

- A) Astronomy and mathematics only
- B) Religion only
- C) Astronomy, mathematics, science, politics, religion, and the arts
- D) Only trade and banking

2. Matching. Draw a line from each city-state to the description that matches it. Use [Outcome](#) to check your reasoning.

City-State	Description
Florence	A major sea trading power known for its navy and merchant fleet
Venice	Another leading Mediterranean sea and trading power that competed with its neighbours
Genoa	A centre of banking, art, and humanist thought, home to the Medici family

3. Fill in the blank. Complete each sentence using the word bank below.

Word bank: humanism, thinkers, philosophers, individual

- a) During the Renaissance, _____ and _____ began to focus more on human potential, reason and achievement rather than only on religious teaching.
- b) This new way of thinking, known as _____, placed greater value on the _____ person's abilities and worth.

4. Short answer. Answer in one or two complete sentences.

How did the physical geography of Renaissance Europe (its coastlines, ports and location near the Mediterranean Sea) affect trade and competition among European countries? ([Outcome](#))

5. Short answer. Answer in two or three complete sentences.

Explain how the Age of Discovery and the growth of imperialism reflected an expansionist worldview among European nations. Give one example of how this expansion may have affected the identity of Europeans who took part in exploration. ([Outcome](#))

6. Reflection. Beliefs and values are shaped by the time, place and society a person lives in ([Outcome](#)). A person today might disagree with a Renaissance-era belief but still need to understand why people held it.

Describe one belief or value common during the Renaissance that differs from a value widely held in Canada today. Then explain why it is important to consider this differing worldview rather than simply dismiss it. ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#))

Answer key

1. a) B, the Renaissance was a period of renewed growth in art, science and the exchange of ideas ([Outcome](#)). b) C, the growth of ideas touched astronomy, mathematics, science, politics, religion and the arts ([Outcome](#)).
2. Florence !' centre of banking, art and humanist thought, home to the Medici family; Venice !' leading sea and trading power; Genoa !' major sea trading power known for its navy and merchant fleet ([Outcome](#)). (Accept reasonable variation in matching Venice and Genoa, since both were competing sea powers.)
3. a) thinkers, philosophers; b) humanism, individual ([Outcome](#)).
4. Answers should note that coastlines and ports near the Mediterranean gave some regions easier access to trade routes, which increased both cooperation and rivalry among European countries ([Outcome](#)).
5. Answers should explain that European countries expanded overseas to gain wealth, territory and influence, showing a worldview focused on expansion and dominance, and should give a plausible example of how exploration changed Europeans' sense of identity or citizenship, such as new contact with other cultures reshaping how they saw themselves and their place in the world ([Outcome](#)).
6. Answers will vary. Look for a clearly stated Renaissance-era belief or value, a clearly stated contrasting modern Canadian value, and an explanation showing willingness to understand a differing worldview rather than dismiss it ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)).