



The Renaissance

In the 1300s, a new age began in Western Europe. Europeans called it the Renaissance, which means “rebirth.” After years of war and plague, the Renaissance began in Italy. Then, it spread through the rest of Europe. Lasting until the 1600s, it was a time of creativity, invention, and education. The new ideas of the Renaissance had an effect on art, literature, and politics.

During the Renaissance, people took a new interest in ancient Rome and Greece. Scholars paid attention to classical culture and worldly subjects instead of religious issues. These scholars, called humanists, studied subjects taught in ancient Greek and Roman schools. They learned about grammar, poetry, literature, drama, philosophy, and history.

Individual ability became important. People looked up to those who were well-rounded and could do well in many areas. For example, the famous painter Leonardo da Vinci was also a sculptor, architect, inventor, and mathematician. He is best known for his paintings the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*. But he also made sketches for inventions like submarines and flying machines and studied the human body. In addition to da Vinci, the Renaissance produced famous painters and sculptors like Michelangelo and Raphael.

Famous works of literature were written during the Renaissance. Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales*, and the Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*. One of the most important writers of the Renaissance was William Shakespeare, the English poet and playwright. He wrote 37 plays between 1590 and 1613, including *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Hamlet*.

In politics, Niccolò Machiavelli wrote one of the most influential works on political power, *The Prince*. Unlike the political writers before him, Machiavelli talked about reality instead of the ideal. Machiavelli’s ideas influenced political leaders for many years.

The development of the printing press in Europe made producing books much easier. Before the printing press, books were difficult to make. Because they were expensive, most people could not afford to buy them. Now, books were more available. Printed books allowed Europeans to be exposed to the new ideas of the Renaissance. As the Renaissance spread through Europe, the Western world enjoyed a golden age.



Name: _____

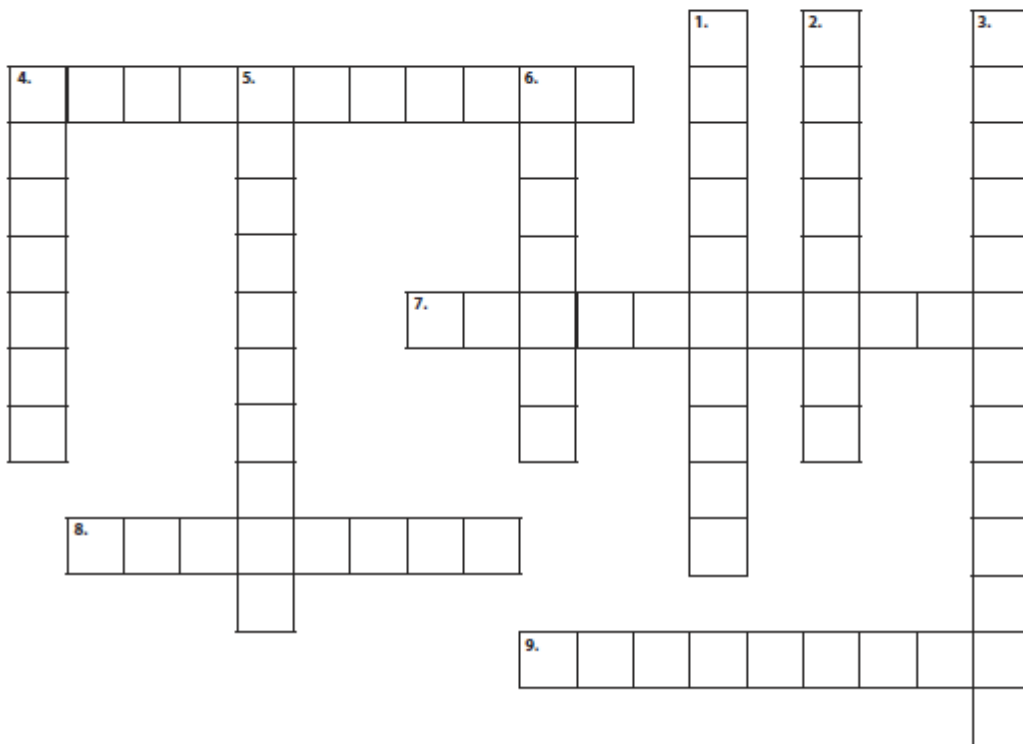
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Crossword Puzzle

Write the best answer in each blank, and complete the crossword puzzle.



ACROSS

4. The _____ lasted from the 1300s until the 1600s.
7. _____ wrote about reality in politics instead of the ideal.
8. Leonardo da Vinci is best known for his paintings, such as the _____.
9. _____ studied grammar, poetry, literature, drama, philosophy, and history.

DOWN

1. Many famous works of _____ were written during the Renaissance.
2. Michelangelo and Raphael were famous _____ and sculptors.
3. The development of the _____ made producing books much easier.
4. The word "renaissance" means "_____."
5. _____ ability became important during the Renaissance.
6. _____ wrote *The Canterbury Tales*.