

SOCIAL STUDIES · GRADES 5–6

The Renaissance

Europe, c.1400 – c.1600

Key facts

What	A 200-year burst of new ideas in art, science, literature and exploration.
Where it began	Florence, in northern Italy.
Meaning	'Renaissance' is French for 'rebirth' — a rebirth of ancient Greek and Roman ideas.
What changed	People started to question old beliefs, observe the natural world, and value the individual.
Famous artists	Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Botticelli, Donatello.
Famous thinkers	Galileo (astronomy), Erasmus (philosophy), Machiavelli (politics).
Important inventions	Printing press (1440) — finally books could spread cheaply.
Important explorations	Sea routes to India, Americas, around Africa.
Spread to	France, Germany, Spain, England — and on to the rest of Europe.
Lasting impact	Modern science, modern banking, the value of education, the idea of the 'individual'.

