

APEH

Summer Reading 2021

As you read the following secondary and primary source excerpts, please annotate your thoughts with regard to the following prompts. An essay will be assigned the first week of school to assess your comprehension of main Renaissance ideas and themes. Remember first and foremost: read for argumentation. What is the main point the author is making, and, how is the author supporting that point with evidence?

Prompts for annotation: (annotations may be completed using the comment feature of the Google suite)

-Contextualize the Renaissance (who, what, where, when)

-Evaluate the causes of the Renaissance (consider: political, economic, social themes)

-Evaluate the impact of the Renaissance (consider: political, economic, social themes)

-Identify and explain several intellectual positions Renaissance scholars held

-Provide examples of these intellectual positions using the excerpted Pico and Machiavelli primary source readings

Secondary Source

"Humanism in the Early Renaissance." *Arts and Humanities Through the Eras*, edited by Edward I. Bleiberg, et al., vol. 4: Renaissance Europe 1300-1600, Gale, 2005, pp. 225-232. *Gale In Context: High School*. Accessed 26 May 2021.

HUMANISM IN THE EARLY RENAISSANCE (excerpted)

DEFINITION

While scholasticism was dominant in Europe's universities during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, humanism also appeared at this time as the primary intellectual innovation of the Renaissance. Humanism first developed in Italy's cities in the fourteenth century, and underwent a process of maturation before affecting intellectual life throughout Europe around 1500. The word "humanism," though, is a modern term created to describe a broad and diffuse movement. There was no intellectual manifesto for humanism, no set of beliefs that all humanists shared, as in modern Marxism or existentialism. Instead humanism describes an intellectual method and a pattern of education that Italy's *umanisti* or humanists embraced in the fourteenth century. These humanists practiced the *studia humanitatis*, the origin of the modern humanities. They believed that an education rooted in the classical texts of ancient Greece and Rome would help to bring about a rebirth of society. Their interests in Antiquity were wide ranging, embracing both the writers of the pagan and the early Christian world. Humanists desired to revive classical literary style and to create graceful speakers and writers who would encourage their audience to pursue virtuous living. The incubator for these ideas was the Italian city, and throughout humanism's long life, the movement often treated the problems that arose from Europe's rapidly urbanizing society. The specific disciplines the humanists stressed in their studies differed across time and place, but an emphasis on rhetoric (the art of graceful speaking and writing), grammar, moral philosophy, and history was usually shared as a common vision. Thus in place of the university's scholastic method with its emphasis on logic, the humanists' vision of education stressed the language arts. From the first, the humanists distinguished themselves from the scholastics. They attacked the scholastics for their "barbaric," uncultivated Latin style, and for emphasizing logic over the pursuit of moral perfection. This rivalry at first made the universities resistant to humanist learning. In Italy, the movement developed in the cities, in ducal courts, and in monasteries and other religious institutions before it eventually established a foothold within the universities in the fifteenth century. As humanism spread to Northern Europe in the later fifteenth century, it

experienced similar resistance. Universities continued to be dominated by the scholastic study of theology and philosophy. By 1500, though, most of Europe's distinguished centers of learning had begun to establish training in the "New Learning," a signal for the adoption of humanist patterns of education. In early-modern Europe the emphasis on the Classics and the humanities became signs of intellectual and cultural distinction and helped to create the modern vision of liberal arts instruction within the universities.

ORIGINS

The first humanist to achieve international renown was Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374), and his interests and ideas shaped the humanist movement for several generations. Petrarch gave up the study of law when he was young and instead devoted himself to literature, particularly the literature of classical Rome. He took the example of the ancient poet Vergil as the model for his poetry, while Cicero was important in shaping his prose. Petrarch self-consciously styled his letters to other humanists to be read by an audience, and in one of these he set forth a new idea of Western history. In place of the traditional periodization, which had stressed the birth of Christ as a key date, Petrarch saw the collapse of Roman authority in Western Europe as decisive. Constantine's abandonment of the Western Empire had given rise to an era of barbarism, from which Petrarch believed that European civilization was only beginning to recover in his time. Thus Petrarch helped to shape the notion of European history as divided into ancient, medieval, and modern periods. In 1341, Petrarch became the first of the humanists to accept the poet laureate's crown, an event that humanists over the following centuries considered the highlight of their revival of letters. Petrarch staged this ceremony himself as a way of self-consciously identifying with the poets of classical Antiquity. His coronation as poet laureate, though, helped spread his celebrity throughout Europe, and for the remainder of his life Petrarch continued to extend his fame through his writing. In these works he expressed a love for St. Augustine, particularly the autobiographical *Confessions*. Petrarch took this work as a model for his *The Secret, or the Soul's Conflict with Desire*, a work that was unprecedented since Augustine's time in revealing the internal psychological dimensions and tribulations of its author.

THOUGHT

Petrarch's thought lacks a systematic current, but is instead characterized by several recurring themes. Petrarch was deeply Christian in his outlook, but because of his admiration for Antiquity, his Christianity was broad and inclusive. His love for classical literature, too, meant that he was often critical of the scholastics. He disliked intensely the logically structured arguments of medieval philosophers like St. Thomas Aquinas, and he berated the scholastics' style as mere "prattlings." Petrarch argued instead that the chief end of philosophy should be to help human beings to attain moral perfection, not the logical understanding of philosophical truths. These truths were ultimately unknowable and they did not prompt human beings to live virtuous lives. He expressed this position in his famous and often quoted dictum, "It is better to will the good than to understand truth." Petrarch realized that harnessing the human will was essential in any effort to achieve virtue, and so his writings often contained deeply introspective passages in which he recorded his efforts to overcome human passions and to lead a more virtuous life. Petrarch's emphasis on the will in his writings gave rise as well to his argument that rhetoric—the art of persuasive and graceful writing and speaking—inspired morality more profoundly than the study of logic or ethics. The ancient Roman rhetoricians Cicero and Seneca, for instance, prompt their readers to live virtuous lives. By contrast, Aristotle's *Ethics* may promote an intellectual knowledge of morality, but it is incapable of making its readers into better human beings. These ideas together with Petrarch's life and literary corpus provided a powerful example to humanists of his own generation and those that followed. Later humanists emulated Petrarch's love for classical literature and learning, his powerful individuality, and his advocacy of the study of rhetoric in place of traditional scholastic logic.

REVIVAL OF GREEK

Humanists of Petrarch's generation had confined their efforts to the study of classical Latin texts, but around 1400 knowledge of the Greek classics began to expand dramatically. In this regard, Florence led the way by establishing the first European professorship of Greek in 1360. Of those who held this position, Manuel Chrysoloras (c. 1350–1415) was chiefly responsible for creating a resurgence in the study of Greek. He arrived in Florence in 1397 at Salutati's instigation, and during his three-year tenure in the city, he taught Greek to many outstanding humanists, including

Salutati, Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), and Pier Paolo Vergerio (1370–1444 or 1445). Chrysoloras's tenure at Florence produced great enthusiasm for the study of Greek, and knowledge of the language steadily grew among humanists during the fifteenth century. After leaving Florence in 1400, Chrysoloras taught in a similar fashion in Milan and Pavia, and his activities in these places produced similar results. In the next few decades as humanists throughout Italy devoted themselves to recovering antique texts, knowledge of the Greek tradition expanded apace with the recovery of Latin sources. In 1418 Ciriaco D'Ancono traveled to Greece to collect classical texts, and in 1423 Giovanni Aurispa returned from a journey there laden with more than 230 volumes of classical Greek manuscripts. As a result of his reception in Italy during the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1445) the Greek Cardinal Bessarion later left his collection of more than 800 Greek works to the city of Venice, where they became the foundation for the city's Marciana Library. While knowledge of Greek grew in the fifteenth century, many humanists were still unable to master the language. Translations out of the Greek and into Latin continued to feed the desire of many scholars for a more direct knowledge of the Greek classics. Of the many translation projects undertaken by the humanists in the fifteenth century, none was more important than Marsilio Ficino's translation of all the surviving works of Plato into Latin during the 1460s. With the completion of this project, Italy's humanists finally possessed a detailed knowledge of the entire scope of Plato's ideas, something that scholars had longed for since the days of Petrarch.

LIBERAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION: In 1404, the humanist Pier Paolo Vergerio wrote one of the first humanist treatises on education. The ideas that he sets forth in the book—that liberal education is necessary for the formation of men capable of governing—link him to the civic humanist tradition that was developing in early fifteenth-century Florence. The work was widely read and shaped the training of young men in Florence and throughout Italy in the fifteenth century.

We call those studies liberal which are worthy of a free man; those studies by which we attain and practise virtue and wisdom; that education which calls forth, trains and develops those highest gifts of body and of mind which ennoble men, and which are rightly judged to rank next in dignity to virtue only. For to a vulgar temper gain and pleasure are the one aim of existence, to a lofty nature, moral worth and fame. It is, then, of the highest importance that even from infancy this aim, this effort, should constantly be kept alive in growing minds. For I may affirm with fullest conviction that we shall not have attained wisdom in our later years unless in our earliest we have sincerely entered on its search. Nor may we for a moment admit, with the unthinking crowd, that those who give early promise fail in subsequent fulfillment. This may, partly from physical causes, happen in exceptional cases. But there is no doubt that nature has endowed some children with so keen, so ready an intelligence, that without serious effort they attain to a notable power of reasoning and conversing upon grave and lofty subjects, and by aid of right guidance and sound learning reach in manhood the highest distinction. On the other hand, children of modest powers demand even more attention, that their natural defects may be supplied by art ...

We come now to the consideration of the various subjects which may rightly be included under the name of 'Liberal Studies.' Amongst these I accord the first place to History, on grounds both of its attractiveness and of its utility, qualities which appeal equally to the scholar and to the statesman. Next in importance ranks Moral Philosophy, which indeed is, in a peculiar sense, a 'Liberal Art,' in that its purpose is to teach men the secret of true freedom. History, then, gives us the concrete examples of the precepts inculcated by philosophy. The one shews what men should do, the other what men have said and done in the past, and what practical lessons we may draw therefrom for the present day. I would indicate as the third main branch of study, Eloquence, which indeed holds a place of distinction amongst the refined Arts. By philosophy we learn the essential truth of things, which by eloquence we so exhibit in orderly adornment as to bring conviction to differing minds. And history provides the light of experience—a cumulative wisdom fit to supplement the force of reason and the persuasion of eloquence. For we allow that soundness of judgment, wisdom of speech, integrity of conduct are the marks of a truly liberal temper.

SOURCE: Pier Paolo Vergerio, "The Qualities of a Free Man," in *Vittorino Da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators*. Ed. William H. Woodward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921): 102–110.

CIVIC HUMANISM

The humanist culture that Salutati and others introduced into Florence matured during the period between 1400 and 1440. A lineage of humanist chancellors succeeded Salutati, of whom Leonardo Bruni was the most notable. Bruni served as chancellor during the period between 1427 and 1444, continuing the tradition that had by then developed of civic support for the arts and humanist scholarship. A number of artistic projects undertaken during Bruni's period as chancellor gave Florence the veneer of a classical Roman city. These included the doors of the baptistery, the dome of the cathedral, and a number of churches, public buildings, and patrician palaces. These new movements evoked the antique past and were largely designed and executed by the Renaissance artists Filippo Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, and Michelozzo Michelozzi. Artists established ties with Florence's circle of humanists. Alberti, for instance, was both a practicing architect and a humanist, and he spent his time writing treatises on marriage and family life even as he codified the rules of visual perspective and revived ancient architectural style. Although Bruni's day-to-day government work consumed his time, he continued to nourish his scholarly interests. He completed Latin translations of works of Aristotle, Plato, Plutarch, and other Greek writers, which became models of cultured style imitated by other Florentines. His *History of the Florentine People* was a widely popular work among the city's humanist circle, and although written in Latin, each volume's immediate translation into the local Tuscan dialect reached the broadest possible audience. In the work, Bruni argued that Florence had been founded during the Roman Republic, and not, as had been previously thought, in the era of the empire. The work, together with other monuments of Florence's artistic and literary life, glorified Florentine patriotism for its defense of civic liberty. More generally, an emphasis on civic values and the arts of good government was a subject that the Florentine humanists frequently took up in the works written in this period. The "civic humanism" that appeared in these years advocated an active life engaged in government and society as the most conducive to virtue. The town's civic humanists also celebrated the republican virtues of ancient Rome and they saw Florence as the modern heir to the ancient arts of good government.

HUMANISM BEYOND FLORENCE.

In part because of the success of the humanists at Florence, elites in northern and central Italy embraced humanism as the preferred means of preparing men to enter into government service. Often, students who had trained with Salutati, Bruni, and other Florentine scholars spread the new learning to cities throughout the peninsula. By 1450, humanists were active as civil servants, diplomats, and secretaries in most of Italy's important city governments, and humanist training became more and more essential as preparation for those who wished to undertake careers in government. Outside urban governments, humanists also worked in the courts of Italy's dukes and in the governments of church officials, including those of the pope. In addition, many who had received humanist training served as private tutors in the households of the elite, while humanists also taught in Italy's secondary schools and universities. The most fortunate of humanist scholars sometimes became "scholars-in-residence" at the courts of Italian dukes, in the church at Rome, or in the households of merchant princes. In these positions a scholar received a salary merely in exchange for pursuing his studies. Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) was one such humanist, who was singled out by the Medici family in Florence for patronage. The son of the family's physician, Ficino exhibited precocious scholarly talents at an early age. When not yet thirty, the Medici set him up with a pension and a townhouse and a villa outside Florence in which he pursued his studies and translations of Plato. Lorenzo Valla (1405–1457), one of the outstanding humanists of the fifteenth century, received similar appointments, first in the household of the king of Naples and later at the papal court at Rome. Most humanist scholars, though, struggled to pursue their love of learning while working in government positions or teaching their craft.

INTENSIFICATION OF LITERARY STUDIES

As humanism spread from Florence throughout Italy, an increasing sophistication developed in the movement's critical study of languages. The career of Lorenzo Valla exemplifies this trend. Valla was the most distinguished of the many students trained by Leonardo Bruni at Florence and early in his life he displayed a keen understanding of classical Latin and Greek. When he was not yet thirty he had written a grammar of classical Latin entitled *The Elegancies of the Latin Language*. During the next century the *Elegancies* became the dominant Latin grammar used by students of the language. Valla's nature was impetuous, though, and the criticisms that he made of scholasticism's barbaric Latin style

offended his colleagues at the University of Padua. Soon after he completed the *Elegancies*, Valla fled Padua for Naples. There he enjoyed the most productive period of his career, devoting himself to perfecting the philological method. As Valla developed philology, it became a tool for studying the original meanings of words in texts. With the disciplined techniques that he developed, he was able to authenticate or deny the originality of documents that historians had long relied upon. He found many of the texts that had long been used to justify historical developments to be forgeries. His studies disproved the authenticity of *The Donation of Constantine*, a document that had long been a foundation of papal authority. Valla examined the text, which reputedly ceded secular control over Western Europe to the Roman pope. He found words, phrases, and concepts used in the document that had not existed during Constantine's life, and he demonstrated that the *Donation* was probably written in the late eighth or early ninth century, hundreds of years after the Roman emperor's death. Other philological studies that he undertook in this period denied the authenticity of the Apostle's Creed and pointed out inaccuracies in St. Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible, the Vulgate, that had long been used in Western Europe. Valla's critical scholarship raised the suspicions of the Inquisition at Naples, but although they questioned him, they allowed him to continue his studies. In the final years of his life he took up a position at Rome under the patronage of Nicholas V, the first humanist-trained pope.

EPICUREANISM

Until Valla's time most humanists had been attracted to those ancient philosophies that stressed self-denial and the pursuit of moral perfection. In the generations following Petrarch the humanists had often argued that mastering the human will through self-examination and self-denial was key if one hoped to attain a virtuous life. Lorenzo Valla's life and ideas, though, point to the growing philosophical variety of fifteenth-century humanism. Early in life he had been drawn to the ideas of the ancient Greek philosopher, Epicurus, who had argued that the pursuit of pleasure was humanity's life-giving principle. Valla made use of Epicurus's insights concerning the importance of pleasure to create a surprisingly original philosophy. In *On Pleasure*, a work completed during Valla's final years at Rome, he outlined a synthesis of ancient Greek Epicureanism with Christianity. On its surface, the text seemed to praise the joys and pursuits of the ancient pagans. But beneath this surface, Valla presented a highly moral Christian philosophy that would later be echoed in the works of sixteenth-century Protestants like Martin Luther and John Calvin. Only Christianity, according to Valla, offered a way out of the cycle of human sinfulness. The sinful human will, according to Valla, could not be overcome, nor could human beings hope to achieve moral perfection. But Christianity, through its pursuit of the higher aim of love, offered a means for human beings to substitute the pursuit of God's love for earthly pleasure. In this way the Christian religion presented humankind with a genuine way out of the dismal cycle that the pursuit of pleasure created. While these ideas were highly original, Valla's Christian Epicureanism found few admirers during his lifetime. His critical scholarly methods, though, inspired humanists in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Primary Sources

PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA: Oration on the Dignity of Man, Paragraphs 1-7

Taken from [Fordham Internet History Sourcebook](#)

Imagine! The great generosity of God! The happiness of man! To man it is allowed to be whatever he chooses to be! As soon as an animal is born, it brings out of its mother's womb all that it will ever possess. Spiritual beings from the beginning become what they are to be for all eternity. Man, when he entered life, the Father gave the seeds of every kind and every way of life possible. Whatever seeds each man sows and cultivates will grow and bear him their proper fruit. If these seeds are vegetative, he will be like a plant. If these seeds are sensitive, he will be like an animal. If these seeds are intellectual, he will be an angel and the son of God. And if, satisfied with no created thing, he removes himself to the center of his own unity, his spiritual soul, united with God, alone in the darkness of God, who is above all things, he will surpass every created thing. Who could not help but admire this great shape-shifter? In fact, how could one admire anything else? . . .

For the mystic philosophy of the Hebrews transforms Enoch into an angel called "Mal'akh Adonay Shebaoth," and sometimes transforms other humans into different sorts of divine beings. The Pythagoreans abuse villainous men by

having them reborn as animals and, according to Empedocles, even plants. Muhammed also said frequently, "Those who deviate from the heavenly law become animals." Bark does not make a plant a plant, rather its senseless and mindless nature does. The hide does not make an animal an animal, but rather its irrational but sensitive soul. The spherical form does not make the heavens the heavens, rather their unchanging order. It is not a lack of body that makes an angel an angel, rather it is his spiritual intelligence. If you see a person totally subject to his appetites, crawling miserably on the ground, you are looking at a plant, not a man. If you see a person blinded by empty illusions and images, and made soft by their tender beguilements, completely subject to his senses, you are looking at an animal, not a man. If you see a philosopher judging things through his reason, admire and follow him: he is from heaven, not the earth. If you see a person living in deep contemplation, unaware of his body and dwelling in the inmost reaches of his mind, he is neither from heaven or earth, he is divinity clothed in flesh.

Who would not admire man, who is called by Moses and the Gospels "all flesh" and "every creature," because he fashions and transforms himself into any fleshly form and assumes the character of any creature whatsoever? For this reason, Euanthes the Persian in his description of Chaldaean theology, writes that man has no inborn, proper form, but that many things that humans resemble are outside and foreign to them, from which arises the Chaldaean saying: "*Hanorish tharah sharinas*": "Man is multitudinous, varied, and ever changing." Why do I emphasize this? Considering that we are born with this condition, that is, that we can become whatever we choose to become, we need to understand that we must take earnest care about this, so that it will never be said to our disadvantage that we were born to a privileged position but failed to realize it and became animals and senseless beasts. Instead, the saying of Asaph the prophet should be said of us, "You are all angels of the Most High." Above all, we should not make that freedom of choice God gave us into something harmful, for it was intended to be to our advantage. Let a holy ambition enter into our souls; let us not be content with mediocrity, but rather strive after the highest and expend all our strength in achieving it.

Let us disdain earthly things, and despise the things of heaven, and, judging little of what is in the world, fly to the court beyond the world and next to God. In that court, as the mystic writings tell us, are the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones **1** in the foremost places; let us not even yield place to them, the highest of the angelic orders, and not be content with a lower place, imitate them in all their glory and dignity. If we choose to, we will not be second to them in anything.

Translated from the Latin by Richard Hooker ((c)1994)

Medieval Sourcebook: Niccolo Machiavelli: The Prince [excerpts], 1513

[Taken from Fordham Internet History Sourcebook](#)

Niccolo Machiavelli, a diplomat in the pay of the Republic of Florence, wrote The Prince in 1513 after the overthrow of the Republic forced him into exile. It is widely regarded as one of the basic texts of Western political science, and represents a basic change in the attitude and image of government.

That Which Concerns a Prince on the Subject of the Art of War

The Prince ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study, than war and its rules and discipline; for this is the sole art that belongs to him who rules, and it is of such force that it not only upholds those who are born princes, but it often enables men to rise from a private station to that rank. And, on the contrary, it is seen that when princes have thought more of ease than of arms they have lost their states. And the first cause of your losing it is to neglect this art; and what enables you to acquire a state is to be master of the art. Francesco Sforza, though being martial, from a private person became Duke of Milan; and the sons, through avoiding the hardships and troubles of arms, from dukes became private persons. For among other evils which being unarmed brings you, it causes you to be despised, and this is one of those ignominies against which a prince ought to guard himself, as is shown later on.

Concerning Things for Which Men, and Especially Princes, are Blamed

It remains now to see what ought to be the rules of conduct for a prince toward subjects and friends. And as I know that many have written on this point, I expect I shall be considered presumptuous in mentioning it again, especially as in discussing it I shall depart from the methods of other people. But it being my intention to write a thing which shall be useful

to him to apprehends it, it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation; for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil.

Hence, it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity. Therefore, putting on one side imaginary things concerning a prince, and discussing those which are real, I say that all men when they are spoken of, and chiefly princes for being more highly placed, are remarkable for some of those qualities which bring them either blame or praise; and thus it is that one is reputed liberal, another miserly...; one is reputed generous, one rapacious; one cruel, one compassionate; one faithless, another faithful.... And I know that everyone will confess that it would be most praiseworthy in a prince to exhibit all the above qualities that are considered good; but because they can neither be entirely possessed nor observed, for human conditions do not permit it, it is necessary for him to be sufficiently prudent that he may know how to avoid the reproach of those vices which would lose him his state...

Concerning Cruelty and Clemency, and Whether it is Better to be Loved than Feared

Upon this a question arises: whether it is better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with. Because this is to be asserted in general of men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous, and as long as you succeed they are yours entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life, and children, as is said above, when the need is far distant; but when it approaches they turn against you. And that prince who, relying entirely on their promises, has neglected other precautions, is ruined; because friendships that are obtained by payments, and not by nobility or greatness of mind, may indeed be earned, but they are not secured, and in time of need cannot be relied upon; and men have less scruple in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserved you by a dread of punishment which never fails.

Nevertheless a prince ought to inspire fear in such a way that, if he does not win love, he avoids hatred; because he can endure very well being feared whilst he is not hated...