Ideas on the Move

Follow the money, ideas, and inventions of the Renaissance.

SS24.8.9 "Describe cultural and economic developments in Italy and Northern Europe during the Renaissance, including the influence of the Medici family. 9a Analyze humanism and the contributions of philosophers and artists during the Renaissance..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways money supported Renaissance work, circle one example of humanist thinking in Italy and one in Northern Europe, and put matching numbers beside two new ideas or technologies and their effects.

From Florence to Northern Europe

1. In fifteenth-century Florence, profits from trade and banking helped pay for art and learning. The Medici family grew wealthy through its bank and used that wealth to support artists and scholars. Their commissions gave artists paid work and made Florence a center of Renaissance culture. Italian city-states also competed for prestige by building impressive public spaces. This economic support did not mean artists were free to paint anything they wanted: patrons often chose the subjects. Still, steady payment gave skilled people time and materials to experiment.

2. Humanism encouraged people to study ancient Greek and Roman writing and consider what people could achieve through education. In Italy, the scholar Petrarch sought ancient texts and argued that studying them could sharpen human thought. Leonardo da Vinci studied the human body to make his drawings more lifelike, linking careful observation to art. In Northern Europe, Erasmus used his study of early Christian writings to call for reform in church life. German artist Albrecht Dürer combined Italian ideas about proportion with detailed observations of plants and animals.

3. Around 1450, Johannes Gutenberg developed a printing system in Mainz using movable metal type, a press, and oil-based ink. Printers could make many copies of the same text more quickly than scribes could copy books by hand. Books became cheaper over time, helping humanist ideas travel between Italy and Northern Europe. Northern European printers and booksellers earned money by serving a growing market. In 1543, Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus published a sun-centered model of the solar system. Printing helped spread his claim, though many people resisted changing their view of the universe.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Medici wealth affect artists and Florence, and what limit could patrons place on artists?

2. How did Petrarch and Erasmus each use older writings, and how did their goals differ?

3. How did observation shape the work of Leonardo and Dürer? How did Dürer's work also connect Northern Europe to Italy?

4. How did Gutenberg's printing system change the book market and affect the spread of Copernicus's idea?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a bookseller in a Northern European town in the 1500s. Write a short pitch for a book that pairs an Italian artist's work with a Northern European scholar's ideas. Explain how paying to print it could help your business and affect readers, and identify one possible obstacle.

ANSWER KEY

Ideas on the Move

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.9

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways money supported Renaissance work, circle one example of humanist thinking in Italy and one in Northern Europe, and put matching numbers beside two new ideas or technologies and their effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Medici wealth affect artists and Florence, and what limit could patrons place on artists?	**Medici commissions paid artists and helped make Florence a center of Renaissance culture. Patrons could choose the subjects artists painted.**
2	How did Petrarch and Erasmus each use older writings, and how did their goals differ?	**Petrarch sought ancient texts to sharpen human thought. Erasmus studied early Christian writings to call for reform in church life.**
3	How did observation shape the work of Leonardo and Dürer? How did Dürer's work also connect Northern Europe to Italy?	**Leonardo studied the human body to improve his drawings. Dürer observed plants and animals closely and combined that detail with Italian ideas about proportion.**
4	How did Gutenberg's printing system change the book market and affect the spread of Copernicus's idea?	**Printers made copies faster, books became cheaper over time, and printers and booksellers gained customers. Printing also helped spread Copernicus's sun-centered model, although many people resisted it.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1550, I would print a book with drawings inspired by Leonardo's studies of the body and short selections from Erasmus on church reform. Readers could examine both the physical world and familiar beliefs. An investor could pay for paper, type, and workers, then earn money when shops sold copies in several towns. The book might lead readers to discuss changes in learning and church life. Some religious leaders might oppose Erasmus's criticism, making the book harder to sell.

Accept other passage-supported links between money, cultural work, and the spread of ideas. For the pitch, look for an Italian artist, a Northern European scholar, a plausible business benefit, an effect on readers, and a possible obstacle.