People at the Center

Trace humanist ideas from books to works of art.

SS24.8.9a "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 details that show what humanists valued, and circle one contribution by each scholar or artist named in the passage. Number the circled contributions to show the order in which they appear.

What Can People Learn and Do?

1. Imagine opening a dusty book in fourteenth-century Italy and finding letters by an ancient Roman writer. The scholar Petrarch searched for such texts and copied letters by Cicero. He admired their attention to public life, friendship, and choices people make. Renaissance humanism grew from studying Greek and Roman writing and asking what people could learn from it about living well. Humanists still lived in a religious society, but they gave fresh attention to human experience and the skills people could develop through reading, discussion, and writing.

2. Erasmus, a scholar from the Low Countries, used that approach to examine the world around him. He studied early Christian texts in Greek and argued that careful reading could clarify religious teaching. In *In Praise of Folly*, he mocked greed and empty rituals among church leaders and others. His goal was not to abandon Christianity. He wanted people to think for themselves and live by its moral teachings. For Erasmus, learning from old texts was useful only if it helped people improve their conduct in the present.

3. In Italian workshops, artists also explored what people could know and do. Leonardo da Vinci studied anatomy and proportion; in his drawing *Vitruvian Man*, a human body fits inside a circle and a square. The drawing connects close observation of a person with an ancient Roman writer's ideas about proportion. Michelangelo carved *David* as a strong, alert young man preparing to face a giant. Both artists placed human bodies and abilities at the center of their work, though their methods differed: Leonardo investigated measured patterns, while Michelangelo emphasized courage in action.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Petrarch's work with ancient letters help bring attention to human experience?

2. Why does Erasmus's criticism in *In Praise of Folly* fit a Christian humanist approach rather than a rejection of religion?

3. How does Leonardo's *Vitruvian Man* bring together an ancient idea and a Renaissance way of studying people?

4. Compare how Michelangelo's *David* and Erasmus's writing show what people might be able to do.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Design an imaginary Renaissance mural for a public library. In four sentences, describe what it shows, explain how it reflects humanism, and connect your design to one scholar and one artist in the passage by naming a specific idea or method from each.

People at the Center

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show what humanists valued, and circle one contribution by each scholar or artist named in the passage. Number the circled contributions to show the order in which they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Petrarch's work with ancient letters help bring attention to human experience?	**He studied Cicero's letters about public life, friendship, and choices, showing that ancient writing could help people think about their own lives.**
2	Why does Erasmus's criticism in *In Praise of Folly* fit a Christian humanist approach rather than a rejection of religion?	**He criticized greed and empty rituals because he wanted people to think for themselves and live by Christian moral teachings, not abandon Christianity.**
3	How does Leonardo's *Vitruvian Man* bring together an ancient idea and a Renaissance way of studying people?	**It connects an ancient Roman writer's ideas about proportion with Leonardo's close observation and measurement of the human body.**
4	Compare how Michelangelo's *David* and Erasmus's writing show what people might be able to do.	**Michelangelo showed a person ready to act with courage. Erasmus argued that people could use learning and thought to improve their conduct.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My mural shows neighbors reading ancient stories and debating how to settle a dispute fairly. Their discussion reflects humanism because they use learning to guide choices in everyday life. Like Petrarch, they study old writing for ideas about public life and human decisions. I would draw their faces from careful observation, following Leonardo's interest in studying real people.

Accept other supported explanations that connect each contribution to humanist attention to learning, human experience, or human abilities. For Part 3, look for an original mural idea and accurate, specific links to one scholar and one artist.