

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. The Greeks and Romans established new forms of government.
2. During the Middle Ages, society eventually changed from a feudal system to a system with a middle class of artisans and merchants.
3. The Renaissance was a time of rebirth in the arts and in learning.

The Big Idea

New ideas and trade changed Europeans' lives.

Key Terms and People

Socrates, p. 22

Plato, p. 22

Aristotle, p. 22

reason, p. 22

democracy, p. 23

knights, p. 24

Black Death, p. 25

Michelangelo, p. 26

Leonardo da Vinci, p. 26

Johannes Gutenberg, p. 27

joint-stock companies, p. 27



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TAKING NOTES

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on the changes in society during the periods listed.

Europe before Transatlantic Travel

If YOU were there...

You are a peasant in the Middle Ages, living on the land of a noble. Although you and your family work very hard from sunrise to sundown, much of the food you grow goes to the noble. Your house is very small and has a dirt floor. Your parents are tired and weak, and you wish you could do something to improve their lives.

Is there any way you could change your life?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Hard work was a constant theme in the lives of peasants in the Middle Ages. Nobles were not free to live as they chose, either. As the Middle Ages ended, the Renaissance brought new ways of thinking, and the growth of cities brought big changes to the way people lived and worked.

Greek and Roman Government

During the Renaissance, European thinkers and artists rediscovered the traditions of Greece and Rome. Ancient Greek and Roman texts were translated, and their ideas began to revolutionize European societies.

Greek Philosophers and Government

Ancient Greeks valued human reason and believed in the power of the human mind to think, explain, and understand life. Three of the greatest Greek thinkers, or philosophers, were **Socrates**, **Plato**, and **Aristotle**. Socrates, a great teacher, wanted to make people think and question their own beliefs. Plato, a philosopher and teacher, wrote a work called *The Republic*. It describes an ideal society based on justice and fairness for everyone. Aristotle taught that people should live lives based on **reason**, or **clear and ordered thinking**.

Greek scientists and mathematicians also gained fame for their contributions to geometry and for accurately calculating the size of Earth. Doctors studied the human body to understand how it worked. One Greek engineering invention that is still used today is a water screw, which brings water to farm fields.

One of the Greeks' most lasting contributions, however, is their political system. During the time known as the **Classical Period**, around the fifth and fourth centuries BC, Greece was organized into several hundred independent city-states, which became the foundation for Greek civilization. Athens was the first Greek city-state to establish **democracy**—a form of government in which people rule themselves. All male citizens in Athens had the right to participate in the assembly, a gathering of citizens, to debate and create the city's laws. Because all male citizens in Athens participated directly in government, we call the Greek form of government a direct democracy.

Roman Law and Government

Later, Rome followed Greece's example by establishing a form of democratic government. The Roman Republic was created in 509 BC. Each year Romans elected officials to rule the city. These officials had many powers, but

Democracy and Republic	
Direct democracies and republics are similar forms of government in which the people rule. There are some slight differences, though.	
Direct Democracy	Republic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every citizen votes on every issue. Ideas are debated at an assembly of all citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens elect representatives to vote on issues. Ideas are debated at an assembly of representatives.

they only stayed in power for one year. This early republic was not a democracy. Later, the Romans changed their government into one with three parts. These three parts were made up of elected representatives who protected the city and its residents.

Roman laws were written and kept on public display so all people could know them. Roman concepts of equality before the law and innocent until proven guilty protected Roman citizens' rights.

The political ideas of Greece and Rome survived to influence governments around the world, including that of the United States. In the U.S. political system, citizens vote for representatives, making the nation a democratic republic.

READING CHECK Analyzing How did Roman and Greek governments influence the United States?

QUICK FACTS

THE IMPACT TODAY

Many of the geometry rules we learn in school today come straight from the Greek mathematician Euclid. Many doctors recite the Hippocratic Oath, named after the Greek doctor Hippocrates.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

classical
referring to the cultures of ancient Greece or Rome



The Roman Senate played a principal role in the Roman government.

Middle Ages

As the Roman Empire fell, groups from the north and east moved into former Roman lands. By the early 500s Europe was divided into many small kingdoms. This marked the beginning of the Middle Ages, a period that lasted about a thousand years.

Feudalism

In the 480s a powerful group called the Franks conquered Gaul, the region we now call France. The Franks created a huge empire in Europe. When invaders began to attack European settlements in the 800s, the Frankish kings could not defend their empire. Because they could not depend on protection from their kings, nobles had to defend their own lands. As a result, the power of European nobles grew, and kings became less powerful. Although these nobles remained loyal to the king, they ruled their lands as independent territories.

Nobles needed soldiers to defend their lands. Nobles gave **knights, warriors who fought on horseback**, land in exchange for military service. Nobles who gave land to

knights so that the knights would defend the land were called lords. A knight who promised to support the noble in battle was called a vassal. This system of promises between lords and vassals is known as feudalism.

Peasants owned no land, so they were not part of the feudal system. They did, however, need to grow food to live. As a result, a new economic system developed. Knights allowed peasants to farm land on their large estates, called manors. In return, the peasants had to give the knights food or other goods as payment.

Because of its structure, feudalism promoted the separation of territories and people. The Catholic Church, however, served as a strong unifying force among the states and people of Europe. During the Middle Ages, nearly everyone in Europe was Christian. Life revolved around the local church with markets, festivals, and religious ceremonies.

The Crusades

In the late 1000s, a long series of wars called the Crusades began between the European Christians and Muslims in Southwest Asia.

Time Line

Key Events in Europe



The Turks had captured Palestine, the Holy Land where Jesus had lived. Christians no longer felt safe to travel there on pilgrimages. Christians were called upon to go to war with the Turks to recapture Palestine.

Although the Crusades failed, they changed Europe forever. Trade between Europe and Asia began to grow, introducing Europeans to new products such as apricots, rice, and cotton cloth, as well as the ideas of Muslim thinkers.

Travel, Trade, and Towns

In the Middle Ages, towns were small. After about 1000, this situation began to change. New technology meant farmers could produce larger harvests. As farmers grew more food, the population increased.

Travel became safer as increased protection from stronger rulers kept larger territories secure. Over time, kingdoms became nation-states—organized political units with central governments. This development provided even more protection to merchants.

The rulers of the Mongols made routes like the Silk Road, a caravan route that started in China and ended at the Mediterranean Sea,

safe for travelers and traders. Among these traders was Marco Polo. In 1271 he journeyed from Europe to China along part of the old Silk Road. He spent 20 years living and traveling in Asia. When Marco Polo returned to Europe, he brought back stories of spices, coal, and paper money.

Trade routes spread all across Europe. Merchants brought goods from Asia and Africa to sell in European markets. Their ships also brought back rats infected with the plague. The disease, known as the **Black Death**, spread across Europe, killing an estimated 25 million people. The European economy was dramatically affected by the shortage of workers. Peasants and serfs could now demand payment for their labor. They began to move to cities, which began to grow in size.

In time, the growth of trade led to the decline of feudalism and the manor system. A new middle class of artisans and merchants emerged, and trade cities became commercial centers. Trade associations called guilds became an influential part of European life.

READING CHECK Drawing Conclusions How did travel and trade affect the feudal system?



1215 Nobles force King John to sign Magna Carta.

1347 The Black Death arrives in Europe, eventually killing millions.

c. 1350 The Renaissance begins.

1000

1200

1400

1066 England is conquered by the Norman king William the Conqueror.

1436 Johannes Gutenberg perfects his invention of the printing press.



ANALYSIS SKILL

READING TIME LINES

What two factors on the time line most helped spread literacy in Europe?



Trading Centers

Major cities like Venice and Florence became centers of commerce and banking during the 1300s. The trading of cloth, spices, and other goods renewed the European economy during the Renaissance.

How does this picture show a thriving economy?

Renaissance

The Renaissance period brought new ways of thinking to Europe, weakening the old feudal system even more. The word *Renaissance* means “rebirth” and refers to the period that followed the Middle Ages in Europe. This movement began in Italy and eventually spread to other parts of Europe.

During the Renaissance, European rulers began to increase their power over the nobles in their countries. Fewer invasions from outside forces helped bring a period of order and stability to Europe.

Search for Knowledge

Love of art and education was a key feature of the Renaissance. As Turks conquered much of the Byzantine Empire in the East, scholars fled to Italy. They brought ancient classical writings with them. Some of the works were by Greek thinkers like Plato.

Excited by the discoveries brought by Turkish scholars, European scholars went looking for ancient texts in Latin. They discovered many Latin texts in monasteries, which had preserved works by Roman writers. As Italian scholars read these ancient texts, they rediscovered the glories of Greece and Rome.

The search for knowledge and learning spread to all fields, including art, literature, science, and political thought. The Renaissance emphasized the importance of people rather than focusing on religion. This new focus on human value and the study of humanities was called humanism. People’s interest in the humanities led them to respect those who could write, create, or speak well. During the Middle Ages, most people had worked only to glorify God.

Italian artists created some of the most beautiful paintings and sculptures in the world. Their art reflected the basic Renaissance idea—the value of human beings. **Michelangelo** and **Leonardo da Vinci** are two of the greatest Renaissance artists. They are known for their work in painting, sculpture, and architecture. Da Vinci was also an inventor, engineer, and mapmaker.

Italian writers also penned great works of literature. Dante Alighieri was a politician and poet. Before Dante, most authors wrote in Latin, the language of the church. But Dante chose to write in Italian, the common language of the people. This gave ordinary people the opportunity to read Dante’s work.

Many texts that Europeans rediscovered in the 1300s dealt with science. After reading these works, Renaissance scholars went on

to make their own scientific advances. They also studied ancient math texts and built on the ideas they read about. For example, they created symbols for the square root and for positive and negative numbers. Astronomers discovered that Earth moves around the sun. Other scientists used measurements and made calculations to create better, more accurate maps.

The development of the printing press was a giant step forward in spreading new ideas. In the mid-1400s, a German man, **Johannes Gutenberg** (GOOT-uhn-berk), developed a printing press that used movable type. This allowed an entire page to be printed at once. For the first time in history, thousands of people could read the same books and share ideas about them.

Economic Changes Affect Trade

The growth in trade and services at the beginning of the Renaissance sparked a commercial revolution. This also brought a rise in mercantilism. Mercantilism is an economic system that unifies and increases the power and wealth of a nation.

Four northern Italian cities, Florence, Genoa, Milan, and Venice, developed into important trading centers. These cities played two major roles in trade. They served as ports along the Mediterranean Sea. They also served as manufacturing centers and specialized in certain crafts. This economic activity made some families in these cities very wealthy.

As trade and commerce grew, the need for banks arose. Bankers in Florence, Italy, kept money for merchants from all over Europe. The bankers also made money by charging interest on funds they loaned to merchants. The greatest bankers in Florence were from the Medici family. Although Florence was already wealthy from trade, banking increased that wealth.

During this time, merchants began to create **joint-stock companies**, or businesses in which a group of people invest together. In

a joint-stock company, the investors share in the companies' profits and losses. Forming joint-stock companies allowed investors to take fewer risks.

READING CHECK **Drawing Conclusions** How did the Renaissance lead to trade and a commercial revolution?

THE IMPACT TODAY

The demand for more books led to improvements in printing and binding that have made modern books affordable.

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW Greek and Roman traditions provided new ways for people to govern themselves. In the next chapter you will read about how the Renaissance paved the way for exploration of the Americas.

Section 4 Assessment



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ONLINE QUIZ

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Identify** What is the difference between a direct democracy and a republic?
b. Elaborate What is the importance of having a written law code?
- a. Describe** What is the relationship between **knights** and nobles?
b. Elaborate How did the Crusades affect the feudal system?
- a. Identify** What does the term *Renaissance* mean?
b. Analyze What is the relationship among trade, banking, and **joint-stock companies**?
c. Elaborate What do you think was the greatest accomplishment of the Renaissance?

Critical Thinking

- Supporting a Point of View** Review your notes on the major changes that took place in Europe during the periods discussed in the section. In a chart like the one below, identify which period you think was most important, and explain why.

Most Important	Why

FOCUS ON WRITING

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- Organizing a Chronology** Make a list of important events in Europe during the time discussed in this section. Reorder them from earliest to most recent.