Introduction to the RENAISSANCE period

Definition of the word Renaissance

“Rebirth.”

The idea of rebirth originated in the belief that Europeans had rediscovered the superiority of Greek and Roman culture after many centuries of what they considered intellectual and cultural decline.

The past era, which began with the collapse of the Roman Empire around the 5th century, became known as the Middle Ages to indicate its position between the classical and modern world.

Renaissance can be described as series of literary and cultural movements in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries.

These movements began in Italy and eventually expanded into Germany, France, England, and other parts of Europe.

Renaissance ideology

The thinking or mentality of this movement was also influenced by the concept of humanism, which emphasizes the worth of the individual.

HUMANISM

Renaissance humanists believed it was possible to improve human society through classical education.

This education relied on teachings from ancient texts and emphasized a range of disciplines, including poetry, history, rhetoric (rules for writing influential prose or speeches), and moral philosophy.
Characteristics of the Renaissance period

The Renaissance revolved around five interrelated issues.

1. Renaissance thinkers often associate themselves with classical antiquity and dissociate themselves from the middle Ages.
2. Significant political changes were taking place.
3. The noblest ideals of the period were best expressed by the movement known as 'Humanism'.
4. Connected to Humanist ideals, was the literary doctrine of "imitation," which define how literary works should be created.
5. Shifts in religious movement known as the Reformation

Politics in the Renaissance period

POLITICS or Political can be understood as:
Relating to the government or public affairs of the country
Relating to decision making ideas or strategies of a particular party or group
Motivated or caused by a person’s belief or actions concerning politics

For many centuries after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire around 500 years, the only strong unifying political force in Europe was the Roman Catholic Church.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the Medieval world, the Holy Roman emperor held political control over large amounts of territory in central Europe and in Italy.

The pope, as head of the Catholic Church, has spiritual authority over all of Europe.

The ‘church’ and the ‘state’ were viewed as two different aspects of one Christian society, sometimes referred to as Christendom.

CHURCH vs STATE (SECULAR)

Popes and secular rulers frequently struggled with each other for control over church administration and secular lands.
Since the church was responsible for the souls of the people, including the emperor himself, the popes claimed ultimate supremacy over the state as well as the administration of the Catholic Church.

In the 13th century this struggle for dominance between the emperor and the pope was almost fatal to the authority of both

Significance of the English Renaissance
Queen Elizabeth’s Influences in English Renaissance
The Restoration of the Protestant church

After Queen Elizabeth’s Crowning ceremony, two important Acts were passed through parliament:

Act of Uniformity
Act of Supremacy

Establishment of the Protestant Church of England and creating Elizabeth Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

Elizabethan Religious Settlement
These acts, known collectively as the Elizabethan Religious Settlement, made it:

Compulsory to attend church services every Sunday

Imposed an oath on clergymen and statesmen to recognize the Church of England,

The independence of the Church of England from the Catholic Church,

The authority of Elizabeth as Supreme Governor.

Elizabethan Leisure

a. Feasts
A large, elaborately prepared meal, usually for many persons and often accompanied by court entertainment. Often celebrated religious festivals

b. Banquets
A ceremonial dinner honoring a particular guest

c. Fairs
The Annual Summer Fair was often a bawdy affair

d. Plays
Started as plays enacted in town squares followed by the actors using the courtyards of taverns or inns (referred to as Inn-yards) followed by the first theatres (great open air amphitheatres built in the same style as the Roman Coliseum) and then the introduction of indoor theatres called Playhouses

e. Mystery Plays

Re-enactment of stories from the Bible

f. Festivals

Celebrating Church festivals

g. Jousts / Tournaments

A series of tilted matches between knights

h. Games and Sports

Sports and games which included archery, bowling, cards, dice, hammer-throwing, quarter-staff contests, quoits, skittles, wrestling and mob football

i. Animal Sports

Included Bear and Bull baiting, and Dog and Cock fighting

j. Hunting

Sport followed by the nobility often using dogs

k. Hawking

Sport followed by the nobility with hawks (otherwise known as falconry)

5 Great Achievements of the **Italian Renaissance** in the world of Art

Naturalism

Organization of space

Invention of ‘parallel perspective’ by Filippo Brunelleschi:

the scientific use of a perspective based on lines that come together at a single vanishing point on the horizon

The use of classical motifs

The enlightenment of human dignity within an individual

RENAISSANCE ART

1300-1600 C.
Proto-Renaissance Italy: Renaissance artist
(Duccio, Giotto, Pisano [Sculptor])

Early Renaissance Italy: Renaissance artist
Donatello (Sculptor), Massaccio, Francesca,
Fra angeico, Fra Filippo Lippi, Brunelleschi
(architect), Da Vinci

Early Northern Renaissance:
(Modified by vestiges of Medievalism)
Netherlands: Van Eyck, Van Der Goes, Van de Weyden;
France: Limbourg brothers, Fouquet
Germany: Lochner, Moser, Witz, Pacher, Schongauer
(Printmaker)

High Renaissance Italy:
Giogione, Titian, Raphael, Michelangelo (Sculptor)
Tintoretto

High Renaissance in Western Europe
(Affected by Italy)
Netherlands: Bosch, Breughel
Germany: Durer (Printmaker), Grunewald
France: Master of Moulin
Spain: El Greco

Mannerism and Early Baroque Italy:

- Caravaggio, Bernini (Sculptor)

- Renaissance Paintings
Arts in the Renaissance period

Characteristics in Renaissance Art

Painting

• **Harmonious proportions** among all elements of a painting

• Reintroduction of **chiaroscuro**: the gradations of light and dark within a picture, especially one in which the forms are largely determined, not by sharp outlines but by the meeting of lighter and darker areas

• The **perfection of geometric or parallel perspective**

Sculpture

The reintroduction of **contrapposto**: the pose of the human form in which the head and shoulders face in a different direction from the hips and legs -- a spiral twist

The **systematic study of anatomy** and of the organic functions of the body

Free-standing **monumental statues**

Literature

Renaissance attitudes and philosophy had a **complex influence on the evolution of literature**.

The **humanist reverence** for the classics of ancient Greece and Rome affected the literary creation and this caused unimaginative imitation of **classical authors**.
Due to society’s growing interest in the world, and the exposure to urban influences, this created a demand for a **vernacular, or native, literature that expressed the new excitement and variety of contemporary life**.

Renaissance **ideas of individuality**, with its concern for **personal fame** encouraged writers to try daring experiments in order to win praise from the critics and support from influential patrons.

**Architecture**

A harmony of all parts with symmetry and order of geometric proportions and designs using Classical architectural elements.

**Performing arts**

**BALLET ‘ Ballo, balletti, Balli’**:

In the 15th century performing arts, **Europe plays, were incorporated with dance**.

**Domenico da Piacenza** was credited with the first use of the term _ballo_ instead of _danza_ (dance) for his _baletti_ or _balli_ which later came to be known as **Ballets**.

The first Ballet _per se_ is considered to be **Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx’s Ballet Comique de la Royne (1581)**

**COMMEDIA DELL’ ARTE:**

By the mid-16th century **commedia dell’ arte** became popular in Europe, introducing the use of **improvisation**.

**ELIZABETHAN MASQUE:**

In the Mid 16th Century also introduced the ‘**Elizabethan masque**’, featuring music, dance and elaborate costumes as well as **professional theatrical companies in England**

**SHAKESPEARE:**

William Shakespeare’s plays in the **late 16th century** developed from this new class of professional performance

**OPERA:**

In 1597, the first opera, **Dafne** was performed and throughout the 17th century, Opera rapidly became the entertainment of choice for the **aristocracy in most of Europe**.
The story of Apollo falling in love with the eponymous nymph Daphne, Jacopo Peri wrote Dafne for an elite circle of humanists in Florence, the Florentine Camerata, between 1594 and 1597.

Music

Innovations in music began in France

French composers such as Guillaume de Machaut in the 14th century and Josquin Desprez in the late 15th and early 16th centuries established the England

As contemporary innovations were taking place, music also grew increasingly secular and was enjoyed in many settings outside of the church.

Both men and women of the upper classes were expected to understand music and to perform it.