

# The Northern Renaissance

**TERMS AND NAMES**

- Utopia** An ideal place
- William Shakespeare** Famous Renaissance writer
- Johann Gutenberg** German craftsman who developed the printing press

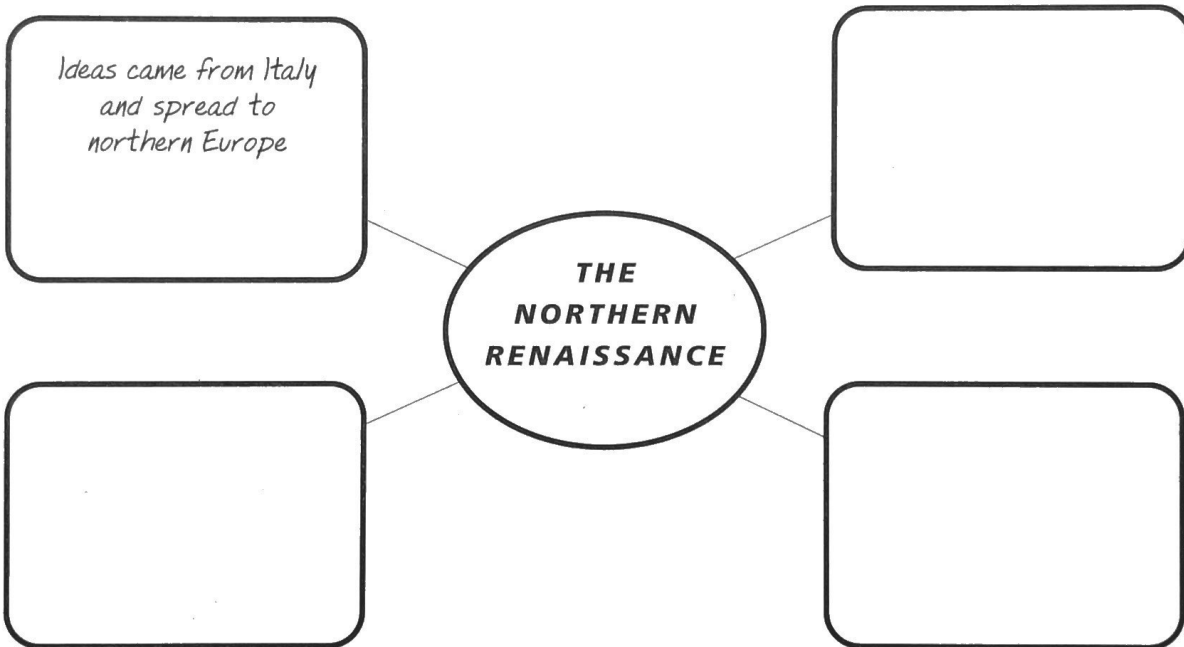
**BEFORE YOU READ**

In the last section, you read how the Renaissance began in Italy.

In this section, you will learn how Renaissance ideas spread in northern Europe.

**AS YOU READ**

Use the web below to show what happened during the northern Renaissance.



**The Northern Renaissance Begins** (page 480)

*Why was the time right for the northern Renaissance to begin?*

By 1450, the *bubonic plague* had ended in northern Europe. Also, the Hundred Years' War between France and England was ending. This allowed new ideas from Italy to spread to northern Europe. They were quickly adopted. Here, too,

rulers and merchants used their money to sponsor artists. But the northern Renaissance had a difference. Educated people combined classical learning with interest in religious ideas.

- 1. How was the northern Renaissance different from the Renaissance in Italy?**

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## Artistic Ideas Spread (pages 480–481)

*What ideas about art developed in northern Europe?*

The new ideas of Italian art moved to the north, where artists began to use them. Major artists appeared in parts of Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Dürer painted religious subjects and realistic *landscapes*. Holbein, Van Eyck, and Bruegel painted lifelike portraits and scenes of *peasant* life. They revealed much about the times. They began to use *oil-based paints*. Oils became very popular, and their use spread to Italy.

### 2. What did northern European artists paint?

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## Northern Writers Try to Reform Society; The Elizabethan Age

(pages 482–483)

*What did northern writers write?*

Writers of the northern Renaissance combined humanism with a deep Christian faith. They urged reforms in the Church. They tried to make people more devoted to God. They also wanted society to be more fair. In England, Thomas More wrote a book about **Utopia**, an imaginary ideal society where greed, war, and conflict do not exist.

**William Shakespeare** is often called the greatest playwright of all time. His plays showed a brilliant command of the English language. They also show a deep understanding of people and how they interact with one another.

### 3. Who were two of the most famous writers of the northern Renaissance?

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## Printing Spreads Renaissance Ideas; The Legacy of the Renaissance (pages 484–485)

*Why was the printing press such an important development?*

One reason that learning spread so rapidly during the Renaissance was the invention of *movable type*. The Chinese had invented the process of carving characters onto wooden blocks. They then arranged them in words, inked the blocks, and pressed them against paper to print pages.

In 1440, a German, **Johann Gutenberg**, used this same practice to invent his printing press. He produced his first book—the Gutenberg Bible—in 1455 on this press. The technology then spread rapidly. By 1500, presses in Europe had printed nearly 10 million books.

Printing made it easier to make many copies of a book. As a result, written works became available far and wide. Books were printed in English, French, Spanish, Italian, or German. More people began to read. The Bible was a popular book. After reading the Bible, some people formed new ideas about Christianity. These ideas were different from the official teachings of the Church.

The Renaissance prompted changes in both art and society. Artists and writers portrayed people in more realistic ways and celebrated individual achievement. In a larger sense, the Renaissance opened up a world of new ideas to people and led them to examine and question things more closely.

### 4. What effects did the printing press have on northern European life?

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