

Name: _____

Humanism

Humanism was a philosophy followed by writers that started in 14th century Italy. It was part of the Italian Renaissance. Humanists believed in the following ideas.

1. Writing about everyday life. During the Middle Ages: writers wrote about religious topics. Humanist writers and humanist artists were more interested in the world they lived in.
2. Studying about and copying ideas from the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. They were very interested in the Greek and Roman ideas that each person has **DIGNITY** and that life had more of a meaning than preparing for **HEAVEN**.
3. Getting a good education. Humanists also used common everyday language. During the Middle Ages, most books and all education were in Latin. Humanist writers wrote in national languages such as French, Italian and German. Universities started to teach in these languages. This made it easier for people to understand. It also meant that the Church, which used Latin in its services and which wrote the Bible in Latin, lost some of its power to control education.

Let's meet some humanist writers and read what they have to say about their works.

My name is **PETRARCH** I was a 14th century Italian writer who chose to write in Italian, rather than Latin. Some of my poems were about love and beauty. I wrote about life, not death. I wrote about beauty, love and nature on Earth. I did not write about Heaven and Hell or religion. Man should care about his, life on Earth before he thinks about life after death.

My name is **ERASMUS**. I lived in Holland in the early 16th century I agree with everything Petrarch said. I wrote a famous book called, In Praise of Folly. In that book I attacked the SUPERSTITIONS people believe in. I also attacked the power of the Church. It was also because of my work that the Bible was translated into common languages so that people could read it.

My name is **SIR THOMAS MORE**. I was an Englishman who lived at the same time as Erasmus. My most famous book was called UTOPIA. It was about a wonderful country where people were not poor, where there were no wars, and where everyone was free. There was no such country. By making one up, I was able to write about what was wrong with the world I lived in.

1. What was Humanism?
2. List three ideas humanists believed in?
3. Explain why each of the following writers were humanists.
A. Petrarch B. Erasmus C. Sir Thomas More
4. Why did writing in national languages make humanists more popular?
5. List three (3) superstitions people believe in today. What would Erasmus say about them?
6. Describe what a utopia would be like for you. How does it compare to what Sir Thomas More wrote about?