



THE NEW JERSEY ITALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



Introduction to the Italian Renaissance Artists

Grade Level: Second and Third Grade

Subjects: Art / Language Arts / Social Studies

Categories: Arts and Sciences / History and Society

Standards

Please see page 7 of the lesson plan for complete [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#) alignment.

Objectives:

The students will be able to:

1. recognize Italian Renaissance artists.
2. appreciate the artists' works.
3. explain why these artists are known as “masters” and why their works had such an impact on history.

Abstract:

Students will be introduced to the Italian Renaissance masters: Leonardo, Michaelangelo, Raphael, and Donatello, through the cartoon: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. The lesson starts with the turtles, and then introduces the Italian masters and their works to the students in four distinct lessons. Students will examine the genius, Leonardo da Vinci, and focus on a study of his most famous painting, the *Mona Lisa*. They will then explore the works of Michelangelo, with an emphasis on the painting of the Sistine Chapel. Next, they will examine Donatello and his sculpture *David*. Finally, students will study the great, Raphael and his masterpiece, *St. George Fighting the Dragon*.

Materials Required:

- World map or globe
- Access to the internet
- Access to a Library
- Hardening modeling clay
- Watercolors and brushes
- White construction paper
- Crayons and markers

- Writing paper
- Renaissance music
- Copies of artists' biographies
- Copies of coloring pages
- Masking tape
- Several large piece of presentation foam board
- Drop cloth
- Toothpicks

Background:

Italy was the center of the early Renaissance, the “rebirth” of Roman knowledge and culture.

- The Renaissance is the entry of civilization into modern times.
<http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/re/Renaissance>
- Famous Paintings for Students
<http://www.gardenofpraise.com/art.htm>
- Leonardo da Vinci – 1452-1519, Biography
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci
- Biography: Leonardo da Vinci
https://www.ducksters.com/biography/leonardo_da_vinci.php
- Leonardo da Vinci Facts for Kids
https://kids.kiddle.co/Leonardo_da_Vinci
- Raffaello Sanzio “Raphael” – 1483 – 1520 Biography
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raffaello_Santi
- Raffaello Sant Biography for kids
http://www.kids.net.au/encyclopedia-wiki/ra/Raffaello_Santi
- Donatello facts for kids
<https://kids.kiddle.co/Donatello>
- Donato di Niccolo di Betto Bardi “Donatello” – 1386-1466
 - Biography
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donatello>
- Michelangelo Buonarroti – 1475 – 1564, Biography
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo_Buonarroti
- Biographies for kids Michelangelo
http://www.kids.net.au/kidscategories/Kids_and_Teens/People_and_Society/Biography/Artists/Buonarroti,_Michelangelo

- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 - Background information
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teenage_Mutant_Ninja_Turtles
 - Coloring Pages
<http://afunk.com/ninja>

Procedures:

- I. Ask the students if they are familiar with the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.
 - II. Ask the students to give you the names of the Turtles.
 - a. Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello, Michelangelo.
 - III. If they are unable to name them, go ahead and say their names.
 - a. You may want to show them some pictures of the Turtles you had downloaded from the websites, as you give them a little background information.
 - IV. Explain to the students that these are also the names of very famous Italian Renaissance artists.
 - V. Explain to the students what the Renaissance period was and point out Italy on world map or globe.
 - VI. Explain to the students that they will be learning about these artists and their famous works of art.
- Note to the Teacher** - The following procedures introduce each artist individually and give an activity for your students to complete. Use them as time permits.

- VII. **Exploring Leonardo da Vinci**
 - a. Give your students some background history on Leonardo.
 - i. You may want to do this in lecture form or have your students do their own research on the “kid’s website.”
 - ii. This will depend upon your students’ ability levels and access to computers.
 - b. Explain to the students that one of Leonardo’s famous works was Mona Lisa.
 - i. You may want to show a downloaded picture or a picture from a Library book.
 - ii. Leonardo used an art technique call *sfumato*, which give the illusion of blurred outlines.
 1. Explain that Mona Lisa was a real person who posed for this picture.
 2. Leonardo hired musicians to keep her entertained while he painted her portrait.

- c. Have the students describe how they would paint Mona Lisa in a modern fashion.
 - i. What would her clothes look like?
 - ii. What would the background look like?
 - iii. Have the students try their hand at creating a modernized picture of Mona Lisa keeping her face recognizable.

VIII. Exploring Michelangelo Buonarroti

- a. Give your students some background history on Michelangelo.
 - i. You may want to do this in lecture form or have your students do their own research on the “kid’s website.”
 - ii. This will depend upon your student’s ability levels and access to computers.
- b. Explain to the students that one of Michelangelo’s most famous works of art was the paintings in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican in Rome.
 - i. You may want to show a downloaded picture or a picture from a Library book.
 - ii. It took him four years to complete his painting.
 - iii. He painted on wet plaster, which is called fresco, while lying on his back on scaffolding fifty feet in the air.
- c. Have the students try painting upside down.
 - i. Tape a large piece of foam board across the top of two desks.
 - ii. Lay a drop cloth underneath the foam board.
 - iii. Tape a piece of white construction paper to the underside of the foam board.
 - 1. Have a student lie on his/her back on top of the drop cloth.
 - 2. Using water colors have the student try to paint a picture upside down.
 - a. Instruct the students not to make their brushes too wet with paint or it will drip on them.
 - 3. The students may want to draw their picture with pencil first and then begin their painting.
 - iv. Allow the pictures to dry and then share them with the class.

IX. Exploring Donatello

- a. Give your students some background history on Donatello.
 - i. You may want to do this in lecture form or have your students do their own research on the “kid’s website.”
 - ii. This will depend upon your student’s ability levels and access to computers.
- b. Explain to the students that one of Donatello’s famous sculpture is “David” carved of marble.
 - i. You may want to show a downloaded picture or a picture from a Library book.
 - ii. Donatello was known for his sense of depth and detail of emotion and the human body.
 - iii. He not only carved statues but also panels of pictures for various cathedrals and chapels.

- c. Give each student a large amount of hardening modeling clay.
 - i. Have them create a life like sculpture. They may use each other as models if they like.
 - ii. Have them use toothpicks to reinforce their sculptures if needed.

X. Exploring Raphael

- a. Give your students some background history on Raphael.
 - i. You may want to do this in lecture form or have your students do their own research on the “kid’s website.”
 - ii. This will depend upon your student’s ability levels and access to computers.
- b. Explain to the students that some of Raphael’s famous works of art are of angels, cherubs, and St. George Fighting the Dragon.
 - i. You may want to show a downloaded picture or a picture from a Library book.
 - ii. Raphael is known for making the transition from formal, geometric shapes to a more animated, informal style of painting.
- c. Have the students look carefully at the painting of *St. George Fighting the Dragon*.
 You could download this picture from the website [Famous Paintings for Students, http://www.gardenofpraise.com/art.htm](http://www.gardenofpraise.com/art.htm)
 - 1. Discuss what they think the picture is about.
 - 2. Is there a story that could be written about it?
 - 3. What do you think the maiden is doing in the picture?
- d. Have the students create their own picture that would tell a story about a knight, a maiden, and some villainous creature.
 - i. After they have created their picture, have them write a short story to accompany their picture.
 - ii. You will need white construction paper, pencil, crayons, and writing paper.
 - iii. When the projects are completed, have your students read their stories aloud and present their pictures.

Assessments:

Teachers will evaluate each of the students’ four works.

Extensions:

Obtain and read to the class a copy of James Mayhew’s *Katie and The Mona Lisa*, which includes various Italian Renaissance artists such as Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, and Carpaccio.

Reference

(1) MCREL is the Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory, an educational research and development facility which has worked with many Universities, State and federal education agencies and scholars in validating and promulgating national educational standards for decades. Their sources for the standards cited in this document are the best state standards, research and scholarly comments and evaluations, and the outstanding work of Robert Marzano and John S. Kendall who are widely recognized for their work in this field. This citation was used here because no relevant indicator was found in the appropriate state document.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards

World History

Standard 27 (1) *Students understand how European society experienced political, economic and cultural transformation in an age of global intercommunication between 1450 and 1700.*

Level II Grades 5-6

Students understand significant contributions of the Renaissance and Reformation to European society including major achievements in literature, music, painting, sculpture and architecture in 16th Century Europe; and the life and accomplishments of select figures from the Renaissance to the Reformation.

English Language Arts

RI.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

RI.2.3 Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

RI.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

RI.3.3 Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

SL.2.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL.3.2 Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.