CHAPTER 3: The Humanist Approach

Something to think about…
**Worldview Inquiry:** In what ways can shifts in ideas affect a society’s worldview?
- it can change the society’s way of thinking

Write about a time when you stood up for something that was important to you when you knew your action might not be popular with some of your friends. Think about why you did this.

SECTION #1: Rebirth of Ideas
NOTES:

**Classical Writings**
- Latin, the language of the Romans, remained the language of scholars and the Church.
- The Renaissance worldview was a result of **intercultural** contact with earlier civilization:
  - The Greek and Roman civilizations that form what we call **Classical civilization**
  - The Islamic civilization that preserved the knowledge of Classical civilization and further developed it.
- **Humanist** ideas spread mainly among the **wealthy** people in society. Reading and discussing **ancient writers** became a kind of fad among the new merchant and business class.
- The **Code for Long Life and Wisdom** was like a set of rules or commandments that guides people's behaviour. It told people how to live a good life.

**Humanism and the Individual**
- The classical concept that was most important to Renaissance thinkers and artists was the belief in the **dignity and potential of the individual**. They believed that people could shape their lives through their own **efforts** and **talents**. These new ideas were easily integrated into the Christian worldview: To develop one's talents was to serve **God**, because God had provided you with those talents. The Humanists believed that:
• Human beings can use the power of reason, that is, thinking to find truth for themselves
• It is important for a person to have an open, curious, and questioning mind
• People can achieve great thing through learning
• Individuals should be skilled in many different areas. They should develop not just their minds but also their bodies and spirits

The medieval world was known as the dark age. The Renaissance when the ideas and values of ancient times were reborn.

1) Read page 60-61, make a list below of the ways that classical ideas influenced the humanists.

2) Read the Zoom In on page 62 and answer the following question:
What aspects of Roman and Greek civilization still influence our society today?
- the Olympic tradition, democracy, aspects of our legal system, drama, the ideas of great thinkers like Plato and Aristotle, and the importance of the humanities (literature, history, drama, the arts) in school.

3) Read page 62-63, consider the list of humanist ideas about the individual. Write each one down and rate each idea to the extent it is part of your own worldview with 5 being very much a part of your worldview and 1 being only a small part of your worldview. Explain.
• Human beings can use the power of reason, that is, thinking to find truth for themselves
• It is important for a person to have an open, curious, and questioning mind
• People can achieve great thing through learning
- Individuals should be skilled in many different areas. They should develop not just their minds but also their bodies and spirits.

4) Looking at page 60-61, what is similar between classical ideas to ideas in “Code for long life and Wisdom”

5) Examine Exploring Sources on page 64 and answer the following questions:

a. What objects do you see in this painting? What do they suggest about the interests and abilities of the two young men?
- the objects include a globe, musical instruments, mathematical instruments, and books.
- they have a wide variety of interests and abilities

b. How does this double portrait illustrate the humanist ideas about the individual listed on page 62?
- The two men represent the following ideas about the individual:
  - they seem to have open, curious, and questioning minds as shown by the globe and other instruments
  - they are interested in learning as shown by the books, globe, and mathematical instruments
  - they seem to be interested in many different areas – music, geography, mathematics, reading
  - all of these factors point to their being interested in finding the truth for themselves

c. In the top left corner of the painting, there is a religious object, a tiny crucifix. What might its size and position suggest about the young men’s attitude toward religion?
- It is not the most important thing in their lives. It is there but not in a ventral prominent position.

6) Skim this section (Section #1) in the textbook or notes and make jot notes of the classical ideas that were part of the Renaissance worldview.
SECTION #2: Thinkers & Society

NOTES:

Civic Humanism

- Renaissance humanists were interested in what classical authors had written about good government. Cicero's idea that public service was the duty of everyone in society was very influential.
- Civic humanists believed that being a responsible citizen meant educating yourself about history and political issues and working to improve society.

Humanist Education

- One of the most important ways that the humanists influenced Renaissance society was in the emphasis they put on education. Many humanists were dedicated teachers who ran their own schools. They believed that it was important to train young people's characters and bodies as well as their minds. This approach to education is sometimes called educating the whole child. Many rulers and wealthy people hired humanists as tutors for their children.

Humanism and Religion

- Renaissance thinkers emphasized ideas and values such as individual achievement and importance of history and the arts.
- Religion continued to play an important part in their lives, just as it had during the Middle Ages.

1) How can thinkers and philosophers bring about changes in society?

2) Examine Exploring Sources on page 65 and answer the following question:
   How does it express his civic humanism?
   - the quotation shows that his family has given a large sum of money for the public good. He has no regrets about it and feels it is money well spent

3) Do you think responsible citizenship is a goal in our society today? Write a statement that expresses a way that citizens can be responsible in our society.
4) Read Voices on page 68 and answer the following questions:
    a. What do the phrases “under their control” and “in charge” suggest about human beings’ relationship with the Earth and the other things that live on it?
       - they suggest that human beings have control over the Earth and other things that live on it
    
    b. What do the words “interconnectedness” and “dependent” suggest about the First Nations’ view of the relationship of human beings with the Earth and with other living things?
       - these terms suggest that humans, the Earth and everything on it are all part of a common system. No one part of this system is more powerful than the other.
    
    c. Below are three quotations about nature from Renaissance thinkers and scientist. For each quotation restate your understanding of each of the quotes.
       - Let us permit nature to have her way. She understands her business better than we do.
       - Nature to be commanded, must be obeyed.
       - Nature uses as little as possible of anything.
       
       Now, decide which of these passages is closest to your own worldview regarding the relationship between human beings and the Earth. Explain your thinking.

5) What role did religion play during the humanist era?
    - the same role it played in the Middle Ages
6) 3-2-1 focus. From what you have learned so far in this chapter list:
3 statements agree with.

2 statements that you want to learn more about

1 statement you disagree with.

SECTION #3: Society and the Arts
NOTES:

Painting
- Many artists found inspiration in the art of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Most art had religious themes continued through from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. The Renaissance also saw a growing interest in portraits and landscapes. Most portraits reflected the humanist interest in the individual the present world, beauty, and human excellence.

Architecture
- Renaissance architect raised the status of their profession from skilled labourer to artist.

Sculpture
- Sculptors in the Middle Ages were seen as craftspeople rather than artists. They were part of the construction team for cathedrals, carving figures and other decorations that told biblical stories. But during the Renaissance their role changed dramatically. They became celebrities with international reputations.

Literature
- In early Renaissance, writers focused on translating the works of Roman and Greek writers and copying their styles. At the same time, books or texts written in the vernacular. That is, the language that people spoke.
- Humanism influenced writers to focus on expressing their thoughts and emotions.
- Pisan was Europe's first professional woman writer. In her writings, she protested the way women were portrayed in medieval literature.
1) What do the arts tell about a society?

2) **Read page 70** and answer the following question: What roles does artists play in your society?

3) Look at the **Skill Power on page 72** and answer the following question: How is Renaissance painting different from medieval painting? Use the chart below to help you answer the question.

- the Renaissance painting is more colourful. It reflects life more than medieval paintings. Both have religious themes but Renaissance paintings have a landscape background and include more about the secular life of the times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medieval</th>
<th>Renaissance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
<td>indoor</td>
<td>landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotions</strong></td>
<td>less facial expression</td>
<td>more facial expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pose</strong></td>
<td>more stylized</td>
<td>more lifelike</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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4) Examine **Fast Forward on page 75** and answer the following questions:

**a.** Think about how many popular songs are written on the subject of love. Why do you think this is so?

- love is a universal emotion that we all can experience. This makes it a very popular theme
- it is also an intense emotion that can bring great joy and sorrow. People want to express their feelings about it

**b.** Compare the emotions expressed by Petrarch in his sonnet with the emotions expressed in Cohen’s poem. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? Compare the forms each poet used to express those emotions. What similarities and differences can you identify?

**Similar**
- They both focus on the impact of the sweetheart’s eyes
- both express feelings and emotions rather than describing facts or events

**Different**
- Petrarch glorifies the “pain” of being afflicted with love (“bound,” “agony,” “arrows that have pierced me,” and “wounds.”)
- Petrarch implies that his sweetheart is still in his life (“Oh blessed be the day...”)
- Cohen’s sweetheart is gone, but he does not compare his feelings with physical pain