Carolina Renaissance Festival

Student Day
Study Guide
This study guide is a useful key to unlocking the many educational aspects of the Carolina Renaissance Festival. Language, customs, mannerisms, commedia theatre, artist demonstrations, and music are just some of the learning opportunities that await your students. At the Renaissance Festival we provide students with a chance to do more than just read about history. We give them the chance to experience it.

## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Carolina Renaissance Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Differences between Medieval and Renaissance Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Facts Regarding Life During the Renaissance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Customs and Mannerisms of the 16th Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sports and Pastimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Falconry – the sport of kings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tournament Jousting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Clothing of the Renaissance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Suggested Projects and Classroom Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Interesting People of the Renaissance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Additional Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Carolina Renaissance Festival

The Carolina Renaissance Festival began in 1994, and offers its visitors an opportunity to step back in time to a magical, enchanting fantasy land that has been created to represent an authentic European village.

The Festival’s educational viability is due to the wide array of unique presentations that are available to students. The Festival features over 200 performers, representing various entertainments of the time – including jugglers, knights in armor, jousting, ropewalkers, dancers, villagers, peasants, historical characters and a variety of musicians. Over 100 artisans fill the village, working in mediums such as glass blowing, pottery, leather work, blacksmithing, sculpture, and candle making, just to name a few. The crafts and entertainment combine with thematic games and foods to create a glimpse of marketplace celebrations and life in the 16th century.

The Village

The village of the Carolina Renaissance Festival is a theatrical facsimile of a 16th century European village. The premise of the Festival is this: The year is 1533 and the King is touring England with his Queen, their family & court. On this beauteous day, the Royal Family has come to visit the small village of Fairhaven.

Villagers, crafts-people, musicians, performing troupes and food vendors have gathered together to create a marketplace Festival. The village is radiant with color and celebration rules the day. Why, even a Jousting Tournament will take place to honor the Royal Family.

Our Renaissance Festival is a re-creation of the celebrations that took place when a King visited a village in his Realm. The Royal Family is not based on actual historical personages.
Differences Between Medieval and Renaissance Times

The Renaissance affected different aspects of life in England at different times. The humanistic approach to life started in the 1470's, whereas the parliamentary renaissance did not happen until the 1530's. To simplify matters, here are some examples of the differences between Medieval and Renaissance viewpoints.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIEVAL</th>
<th>RENAISSANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collectivism mentality, guilds were strong.</td>
<td>• Exaltation of the individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pre-occupations with the soul and death.</td>
<td>• Appreciation of life; art, dance and music blossomed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feudalism.</td>
<td>• Nationalism.</td>
</tr>
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<td>• In wars, knights were rarely killed; foot soldiers made up the bulk of the fatalities.</td>
<td>• Gunpowder was used in warfare; it killed knights and foot soldiers alike. It did not kill by class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Church in England; the Pope was involved with its politics.</td>
<td>• Church OF England; England became a sovereign state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parliament’s primary usage was to grant funds to the King.</td>
<td>• Parliament was utilized to enact laws that helped enforce government policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classroom discussion:
Discuss the words in bold and their definitions. Discuss our world today and how it has changed, and not changed, since the 16th Century.
The economy in Renaissance England was agriculturally based. Since there were only around forty-five nobles (and their families), most English people were farmers in some capacity. The chief livestock was sheep. In fact, there were approximately three sheep per person, but folks didn’t seem to be frightened of being outnumbered three to one!

In Elizabethan England, there were really only two, very rigidly observed social levels – the nobles and the peasants. There were very few noble families, making the vast majority of the population peasants. Part of what made this time a Renaissance (new beginning) was the budding of the new middle class. They consisted of wealthy merchants, lawyers, clerks and master craftsmen. These people, while not recognized officially as a new class, were becoming wealthy and powerful enough to begin making an impact on the economy and the general view of society. Below this new class were journeymen and apprentices to craftsmen, independent traders and domestics, as well as traditional agricultural occupations.

The belief of the times was that one’s social status was ordained by God, and therefore it was foolish and heretical to complain about it. However, much snobbery existed, and one always felt called on to lord over anyone “lower” than oneself.

**Commerce**

Shopping was possible in four venues:

- The market. This was usually sponsored by the local lord or squire and dealt mostly with foodstuffs. They were usually held on a weekly basis.
- The fair. Fairs were more rare than markets and offered a wider variety of goods. Fairs were commonly held in conjunction with a Festival (religious holiday).
- In-town shops. On a daily basis, people could obtain goods from these shops and occasionally a traveling peddler would drop by.
- Bartering. This was by far the most common form of commerce of the period. Simple bartering among neighbors.
Customs and Mannerisms of the 16th Century

By Libby Siegling

Customs and mannerisms in King Henry’s time were dictated by fashion, flirtation, survival and superstition. Listed below are some examples of customs and mannerisms of the time.

Men Greeting Men
As they mucked about on the street, people would often run into acquaintances. If they were upper-class men, they might grasp each other’s right wrist with their right hand. This not only was a form of greeting, but it also served two other purposes: to occupy the other’s hand, thus rendering him unable to draw or attack and to check to see if he had any weapons up his sleeve. The custom of patting each other on the back further protected the men from any undisclosed weapons. If they were peasants passing on the street, they might simply nod at each other and call out “God ye good den” or “God go with you.” The important thing to remember was that no matter what the class, people would expect to be treated according to their stature or station in life. Therefore, one had to be very careful not to offend ones betters. However, calling a peasant a lord might ensure that he would try his utmost to help you along. The rule of the day was “Speak well, speak long, but don’t say anything important.”

Women Greeting Women
Women greeted other women with the latest craze from the Continent - the “French Kiss”. Women would face each other and lightly grasp each other by the shoulders. Then they would kiss the air on either side of the other woman’s cheeks three times. One would never actually touch the other’s cheeks, for reasons of courtesy as well as fear of contracting an illness. As always, compliments and flattery were a part of any good greeting.

Men Greeting Women, and Vice Versa
When a gentleman would greet a lady, it was very important to make a good impression. Therefore, he would bow to her in Renaissance style. He would present his right leg forward and put his left leg behind. Then he would bend his back (left) leg, and bend at the hips, keeping his right leg straight. He would sweep his arms open as he bowed, making sure to keep his head raised, maintaining eye contact with the lady. The proper response to this bow would be for the lady to curtsey. First she would place her left leg slightly behind her. Then she would lightly grab her skirts and bend at the knees, keeping her body straight. She would raise her skirts only high enough to keep them off the ground. It was not considered proper for a lady to show her ankles or legs. She, too, would keep eye contact with the gentleman. An especially dashing or romantically inclined man might then proceed an attempt to kiss the lady’s hand. He would offer his hand, palm facing down. If the lady welcomed the kiss, she would place her fingers lightly on top of his hand. then the gentleman would ever so lightly kiss the lady’s middle finger, between the first and second knuckle, making sure to maintain eye contact.
Making a Leg
The calf of a man’s leg was a very important focal point in Renaissance fashion. Men took every opportunity to show off this physical attribute. Men wore stockings and short pants. They would often stand and “present” their leg forward, turning the foot outward so as to show off their calf. This practice was called “making a leg”. If a man was especially proud of his calves, he might stand with a foot on a chair, table, or rock, so his calf would be that much more prominent.

Escorting
It was considered a great scandal to show affection in public. However, gentlemen frequently escorted ladies whenever they were out walking in public. As with everything, there was a proper way for this to be done. Men and women would never walk around holding hands, palm to palm, as they do today. This was considered quite scandalous. First of all, they believed the germs that could be spread by rubbing palms with someone could prove fatal. Secondly, if one was willing to risk such a health hazard, they must surely be quite intimate with that person, and such a bold and public display of affection was not considered respectful of each other’s reputation. Therefore, the proper way to be escorted would be for the man to offer his right hand, palm facing downward, then the lady would lightly place her left hand on top of his. Then, side by side, the lady on the right, they would proceed wherever they were going. It was very important for the lady to be on the right side. A gentleman always carried his sword on his left side, because he was right-handed (see “Men Greeting Men” previous). If the lady was on the left side and the gentleman was forced to draw his sword to protect the lady, he would slice her in two. Also, it would show disrespect to the lady for her to be on the left because that might mean that the gentleman did not think enough of her to defend her honor. A simple saying to help remember this rule is, “A lady on the left is no lady at all.”

Food & Drink
People of this day knew nothing about sanitation (they’d never heard of germs, nobody had ever seen one!) The water was dangerously polluted, so most people drank a very low alcohol brew called “small beer”. Much milk was consumed, especially skim and buttermilk – cream was needed for other things. Ale was consumed on special occasions and only the royalty and the very wealthy drank wine.

In this time, people thought that the proper foods for humans were meat, bread, dairy, eggs and a few varieties of fruit. Meats were preserved with salt, sugar or spices, but meat, which we would consider spoiled, would be gratefully eaten. Usually, meat came from elderly animals and was tough, so no on expected the best cuts. In spite of these drawbacks, Elizabethans are still famous for their skillful use of herbs, spices and their slow stewing methods. But only the very rich could afford meat regularly in their diets and they considered vegetables, which grow from the Earth, to be beneath them.
Many were even suspected of producing ill humors. Peasants couldn’t afford to be picky. Their diets consisted MAINLY of vegetables, plus lots of eggs and cheese, which they referred to as “white meat”.

In spite of economic differences, peasants were the better nourished of the two classes.

**The Fork**
Another new trend from France was the use of the fork as an eating utensil. The fork was fairly common among the nobility but was not very widespread among the peasant class. Peasants continued to eat with their fingers, as they feared the fork’s tines were some sign from the devil (perhaps they were afraid to put the devil’s pitchfork in their mouths).

**Education**
Common people of this time were usually illiterate, so there was a need for someone who could read and assist in matters of business. The church was about the only non-noble group who routinely educated their people so most villages were provided with a clerk (or Clark) to fulfill this function.

**Renaissance Men & Women**
Both men and women provided functions in the society of the day. While the culture was essentially male-dominated, a woman carried the clout of a “dowry”, or the goods, lands and money she brought to the marriage. These she controlled herself, to benefit the household. The dowry was also an insurance policy against ill treatment, for if she were mistreated, she could leave and take the property with her and leave her husband much poorer! Besides managing the household, one of the woman’s duties was to provide as many free farm laborers, in the form of children, as possible. Between a high infant mortality rate and unreliable birth control, she usually managed to oblige. Boys were always easier because girls had to be provided with dowries and that could get expensive!

**Evil Spirits/Good Luck Charms**
Both peasants and nobles alike firmly believed in evil spirits and the power of good luck charms to ward them off. People often sewed tiny bells or coin-like metal disks (known as bezants) to their clothing in the belief that the noise would scare away evil spirits. People also wore crosses or carried Bibles to ward off evil.

**Witches/Possessions**
People readily believed in witches and in possession by evil spirits. There were various signs that one could use to ward off the evil that emanated from such evil persons. One sign was to make the sign of the cross when passing by an evil person. Another was to cross your fingers (making a small cross) and point them at the person as they passed. This is most likely where the custom of crossing one’s fingers for good luck comes from.
Language

The people of the Renaissance LOVED language. A quick wit was highly prized. Everyone, from the lowliest peasant to the loftiest nobleman, played with words. No self-respecting person would say in two words what could be said in six or seven. Below are some common words and phrases to help you understand the language and speak to the various people at the Festival.

Titles
Social standing and proper etiquette were very important during the Renaissance era. You could tell a lot about people’s social standing by how they addressed one another. The following are appropriate titles for addressing our villagers.

- M’lord or M’lady (respectful)
- Sir or Madam, Gentleman or Gentlewoman, Cousin or Cuz (Equal birth or social standing)
- Your Majesty or Your Highness (King and Queen)
- Your Grace (Members of the Royal Court)
- Master or Mistress Artisan (Craftsperson)
- Wench (Common or lower-class woman);
- Knave (Common or lower-class man)

Hellos and Good-byes
Renaissance language was very specific. People did not use the all-purpose greeting of “hello” or “hi”. There were different greetings depending on the time of day. Also, etiquette might call for one to ask permission before leaving. One could also express one’s feelings or regards for another by leaving them with a blessing or good wishes.

- Good Morrow (Good Morning)
- Good day (Afternoon greeting or parting)
- Good eve or eventide (Good evening)
- God ye good den (God grant you a good day)
- I bid you adieu (Good-bye)
- By your leave (With your permission)
- Fare thee well (Good-bye - wishing them well)
- God save thee (A blessing)

Compliments
- Thou are most beauteous this day (You look pretty today)
- Thy voice is sweeter than that of an angel (Your voice is beautiful)
- By my troth, mine eyes are blessed by your very visage (In truth, the sight of your face is a blessing)
- Thy beauty eclipses the sun (You are dazzlingly beautiful)
Insults
- Thou are lily-livered (Calling someone a coward)
- Thou slop-jar of ineptitude (A slop jar is similar to a chamber pot. People also spit or threw garbage in it.)

Other Helpful Words
- Privies (Bathrooms)
- Zounds (Exclamation of astonishment)
- Fantastical (Amazing)
- Knotty-pated (Thick headed, stupid)
- Buffoon (Fool)
- By my troth (Exclamation of truth)
- HUZZAH! (Hurrah!)

Classroom Discussion:
The language expressions in William Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets. Write a short outline of a Shakespearean play; including characters.
Sports and Pastimes

Bear-Baiting
The practice of bear baiting was quite cruel but extremely popular. A bear was tied by one hind leg to a tree or post, and hunting dogs were turned loose to taunt and attack it. The “game” went on until the bear was killed, and spectators placed bets on the longevity of certain dogs and the bear.

Archery
Archery was compulsory. Every Englishman between the ages of 16 and 60 was compelled by law to own a longbow, and target practice areas were set up (also by law) in every village. Another law required that every father give his son a bow upon his seventh birthday. Like jousting, the sport of archery was intended to prepare men for battle.

Hunting
Nobility enjoyed hunting as a sport. Game included hare (rabbits), hind (deer), wolf, wild bear and fox. Shooting was done with bows and arrows, or the prey might be pursued by greyhounds (a favorite practice of the ladies who often accompanied their lords on a hunt). Another popular form of hunting among the upper classes was falconry. These birds of prey were considered so valuable that they were protected by a Royal edict. Anyone found guilty of killing a falcon could be put to death.
Embroidery/Tapestries
Women of all classes practiced needlework as a pastime as well as a necessity.

Theatre
There were no movies or television shows. Therefore, theatre was VERY popular. Traveling troupes of male actors (women were not allowed on stage) would visit villages and perform on makeshift stages. The actors depended on the generosity of the villagers for their incomes. A very popular form of theatre was the Commedia d’el Arte, which was a very broad, slapstick style of performing (similar to the Three Stooges).

Other Games
Many games that are popular today were also popular during the Renaissance. Adult games included dice, chess, backgammon (called “tables”), bowling, bocci ball, and cards. Children’s games included skipping, leap frog, marbles, and blind man’s bluff.
Falconry – The Sport of Kings

Falconry, as defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services is “the field sport of hunting with a trained raptor.” Those who practice this time-honored sport are some of the most dedicated of sportsmen, devoting hours a day to the care and training of their birds. Exactly where and when falconry originated is still unknown. There are depictions in drawings of people hunting with hawks that date back some 4,000 years. It became popular in Asia around 400 B.C. and made its way into Europe by the mid 800’s. It was then practiced by kings and noblemen where it became known as “the sport of Kings”.

The greatest impulse that was ever given to the sport in Western Europe was derived from the returning crusaders, many of whom, in the course of their travels to the east, had become acquainted with the Asian falconers and the Asiatic methods of training and flying hawks. Amongst such Crusaders was the Emperor Frederick II, who brought back with him some Asiatic hawks and their trainers. He even declared that falconry was the noblest of all arts. From that time (early in the thirteenth century), for more than four hundred years falconry flourished in Europe as a fashionable sport amongst all classes. Falconry reached its peak during the Renaissance period in Europe, and was practiced by every class and society. However, your social standing greatly influenced the bird you were allowed to possess, with eagles and the peregrine falcon reserved only for the King. Meanwhile, the yeoman enjoyed the less aristocratic goshawk and sparrow-hawk as suppliers of wholesome delicacies for the table. Even the serf was not forgotten, and was allowed to train and fly the small but graceful kestrel.
Some became so enthusiastic in their love for the sport that they hired large staffs of men to train and care for their birds. Edward III was accompanied on his warlike hunting expeditions with a whole train of falconers.

Some rulers had their favorite birds brought with them into battle, taking breaks from the war to go hunting. You may have read the story of Henry VIII who was thrown into a ditch and nearly drowned when his leaping-pole broke while trying to follow his hawk. Catherine II of Russia was as great at falconry as at most other things, and she especially delighted in the flight with Merlins.

Hawks were considered to be so valuable that they were often used in bartering for goods or paying off debts. Eagles and falcons were thought to be the greatest gift a king could bestow upon the ruler of other lands. Lower class people could even pay their taxes in pigeons to help feed the King’s stock of hunting hawks.

Falconry was struck with a devastating blow with the introduction of the shotgun. It was found that you could bring much more game to the table in far less time and with less upkeep. Falcons were still kept around by a few dedicated enthusiasts for a peaceful afternoon on the grouse moor.

Falconry returned to Europe years later with far less popularity, only practiced by those with a love of birds and the sport of the chase. These people with a love of falconry have found that witnessing a stooping (diving earthwards) falcon from 2,000 feet is still one of the most impressive sights in nature.

BE SURE TO WATCH THE BIRDS OF PREY SHOW AT THE CAROLINA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL!
Words like “pomp, pageantry and chivalry” serve to evoke the romantic aspects of jousting. When you get close to see the dull glow of chain mail next to bright armor, you begin to grasp how tightly woven the joust is with its history. An understanding of today’s combats is impossible without the tracing of their ancient roots.

The origins of jousting are believed to be in classical Rome, but the “sport” rose to its greatest popularity in Europe by the 1400’s. It all evolved from mock battles in which knights on horseback, assisted by foot soldiers, formed into teams and charged at each other in some wide meadow. The result was a “melee” (the word hasn’t changed in a millennium) of shattered lances, clanging swords, flailing arms and legs - astride and afoot - that went on all day and into the night. The earliest recorded melee was in 1066 A.D., though mock combat had probably been around for at least a century by then.

At first, the battles served more to hone fighting skills than to provide popular diversion. But in peaceful times, a knight needed a way to retain his skills. The Jousts were great moneymakers for the victors; instead of claiming mere points, the winning team held the losers for ransom, often accepting their horses and armor as payment.

The many deaths which resulted from such “sport” led Popes and English kings to ban jousting tournaments, though English subjects often persisted and were repeatedly excommunicated. The tournaments had become a featured attraction at any kind of market faire or other significant gathering. At the height of their popularity, jousts rivaled a state fair, Super bowl, rock concert and Octoberfest all rolled into one.
By the middle 1200’s, the joust emerged as the favored way to prove which of two (or more) knights was better. Most contests were a “Joust a Plaisir” (for pleasure) in which a winner was declared on the basis of points scored, though some were still conducted “a l’Outrance” (to the death). In the sporting version, the knights’ swords were dulled and their lances tipped with “coronals” (little crowns) to prevent their penetrating a joint in the armor. Some authorities believe that the lances were deliberately weakened, a precaution still in effect today.

The training of a knight included spearing small rings, some on stanchions and some tossed in the air, and quintain jousting. (Ring jousting is today the state sport in Maryland) In quintain jousting, the knight tilted with a mock opponent which sat on a revolving pedestal. If he was inaccurate or too slow, the jouster might get whacked by the sand bag on the other end of the contraption. These quintain devices are thought to be the precursors of Victorian carousels. Many turn-of-the-century carrousels had a variety of things to grab including a brass ring which entitled the bearer to a free ride.

The joust became very civilized and formalized, though severe injuries were common. According to the chronicler of an English tournament in 1256, many of the noble contestants “Never afterward recovered their health.”

Modern re-creations of Renaissance era jousting tournaments are depictions of historical events, coming from a time of high ideals, noble causes and grand chivalry.
The Clothing of the Renaissance

The Renaissance period was not only a great time of enlightenment of the sciences and arts but fashion was affected by these changing times as well. Clothing became extravagant, especially if you were wealthy or a nobleman. New shapes and bright colors were used, and “particolor” was the newest and hottest fashion trend. It certainly was easy to spot someone wearing particolor; with one leg green and the other red, or one arm blue and the other orange, and the body of their costume being a completely different color. The people who wore particolor could never be lost!

The male costume of the Renaissance consisted of a doublet (a close-fitting garment resembling a waistcoat) and hose. The sleeves were detachable and a white linen ruffle circled the neckline. At this time, the greatest sign of a man’s wealth was the clothing he wore: the finest fabrics, jewels, belt buckles, medallions and rings. Only the nobles could buy silk, wear jewelry or buy sable and ermine fur. It was the law! Even if you were a wealthy merchant, you couldn’t buy the clothes only a nobleman was allowed to wear.

Women’s clothing was extravagant too, with low-cut tops which held the rest of the body pinched in. Women’s skirts swelled out like tents. The wider the band of fur trimming the bottom of her dress, the higher her rank in society. The high headdress (hennin) had a veil flowing from the peak and trailing to the ground. Noblewomen tried to wear outrageously high hats and long veils in order to outshine other women. Some women’s hats were so high; they couldn’t fit through their own castle doorways!

Armor worn by knights changed during the Renaissance as well. Bars of iron and steel were hammered into flat plates shaped to cover the body. The plates were curved to fit the body exactly, and were then polished and decorated. There were at least nineteen main parts to a suit of plate armor. This gave more freedom of movement, not to mention maximum defense. Some suits of armor weighed so much that it actually took a crane to hoist the knight onto his horse!

Peasant clothing of the Renaissance was much different from the clothing of the wealthy and noblemen. These lower-class citizens were often dressed in dull-colored clothing made from natural fibers like cotton, wool or flax.
Parliament

During Henry VIII’s reign, Parliament and the Crown developed a level of cooperation that set the tone for future parliaments. Cooperation between these two parties really developed in the 1530’s when Thomas Cromwell entered the scene. When Cardinal Wolsey was in power, there was a lot of friction with Parliament. On two occasions (1522 and 1528), Parliament refused to grant taxes to fund wars to which Wolsey had committed England. Although Henry VIII and Wolsey created foreign policy, it was Parliament that held the purse strings.

Parliament was (and is) made up of two sections called Houses:

The House of Lords - consisting of Church officials, lords and other nobles
The House of Commons - consisting of knights of shires and burghers (prosperous, solid citizens) or boroughs

Parliamentary powers:

- Only Parliament could pass new taxes (often referred to as grants)
- If the King wanted the force of law to support one of his proclamations, he had to get the law passed by both Houses (Lords and Commons) and embodied into a law.
- The House of Commons was represented by a Speaker. The Speaker, while representing the House of Commons, could speak openly to the King and either praise or criticize royal policies with impunity.
- Parliament, like most governments, would give advice on a wide range of subjects.
- Parliament enforced the King’s policies, but it was the responsibility of the King to actually form the policies.

Examples of Parliamentary Usage During the Reign of Henry VIII

It is important to realize that, in Henry VIII’s time, there was no annual meeting of Parliament. The King would call for a meeting of Parliament only when he wanted one. Consequently, Parliament could go for years without meeting.

1510 First Parliament meeting called under Henry VIII

This meeting was noteworthy in that it claimed the first of two persons to die under the charge of treason during Henry VIII’s reign. John Dudley and Richard Empson (the ministers responsible for collecting government revenue during the reign of Henry VII) were charged not only with treason but also with subverting the laws and impoverishing the King’s subjects. Historians view these executions as a popularity move by Henry to solidify his public standing. (A present-day example of such a move would be if a new President declared the abolishment of the IRS). At any rate, Parliament readily endorsed the executions.

1512 Request for funding for a war against France

Parliament agreed to new taxes/grants to support England’s war.
1523 Wolsey requests funding for a war against France
Parliament sat in meetings for over four months (a very long time for 16th Century Parliaments) and spent almost all of that time refusing Wolsey’s requests for taxes/grants to support England’s war with France.

1530's Cromwell's effect on Parliament
With the rise to power of Thomas Cromwell, Parliament changed forever. Cromwell’s presence marked the end of the medieval political system and the beginning of the modern workings of Parliament. Primarily, the changes concerned the way in which Parliament was utilized. The main differences were as follows:

- Parliament was used to spread information throughout the realm
- Parliament was manipulated to illustrate the show of support by the Commonwealth for the King’s policies via laws and statues. By using a series of laws, Parliament was able to make radical changes like the Church Reformation, relatively peaceful. By creating statutes that legally enforced the Church Reformation, Parliament demonstrated its power not only over the government but over the Church itself. This demonstration of the power of Parliamentary statutes is the cornerstone of modern English government.
- Parliament unified the government through representation.

1536 Parliament reacts to judicial system changes
Parliament supported Cromwell’s policy, which stated that only the King could appoint judges and justices. Also, only the King could grant pardons for those charged with a felony or treason. For the first time in England’s history, the judicial system was centralized, and this centralization gave the nation a sense of unity. Most importantly, it brought Wales and Northern England under the rule of the King. Another important thing established by Cromwell and Henry VIII to ensure the unity of England was the representation of all England and its territories in Parliament. Even Calais (which was located in France) had members in Parliament. This nationwide representation ended the situation of “kingdoms within a kingdom” and allowed the creation of a true national government.

One good illustration of Parliament’s role in Henry VIII’s reign is found in a speech Henry made to Parliament in 1543:

“We at no time stand so highly in our estimate royals as in the time of Parliament, wherein we, as head, and you, as members, are conjoined and knit together as one body politic.”
Suggested Projects and Classroom Activities

1. Hold a special complimenting contest in your classroom. Students create their own compliments, then select an opponent. The more elaborate the compliment, the better, and the last person to run out of compliments wins. (Renaissance style compliments compare the subject to beautiful things. One of the richest sources for inspiration is Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet)

2. Design and build a model of a castle. Due to the utilization of gunpowder and cannons during the Renaissance, castle design was radically different from medieval castles. They were circular or semi-circular. Medieval castles were, for the most part, square or rectangular. Rounded walls gave Renaissance castles a more deflective surface against cannon fire for the guns and cannons inside the castle. Castles also had a low profile (less of a target for a cannon) and thick walls.

3. Research and create a menu for a King’s banquet. Discuss table manners, utensils, etc.

4. Create your own raiment (clothing). Have your class design and/or make their own 16th century clothing.

5. Coats of Arms were symbols that families, towns and even governments rallied around. Create a coat of arms for your class or your school. Or, do research to see if your family has its own coat of arms. If not, create one. (An excellent resource is A Complete Guide to Heraldry by A.C. Fox-Davies).

6. Have your class practice greeting one another in 16th Century style.

7. Write a letter or a journal entry from the point of view of a historical figure.

8. Create a newspaper for your class and include stories regarding various political, military, religious, theatrical or scientific happenings.
9. Have students develop characters that would have existed in a Renaissance village. Character development can include costuming, language, research into duties that person would have performed, social status, etc. Then, when students come into Student Days they can come in costume, or at least in character.

Some ideas are:

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<tr>
<th>Peasant</th>
<th>Sheriff</th>
<th>Poet</th>
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<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<td>Tailor</td>
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<td>Ironworker</td>
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<td>Architect</td>
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<td>Butcher</td>
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PLEASE NOTE: The Festival has a policy of not allowing students to bring in swords or daggers on Student Days, so please do not make them a costume necessity.

10. One of the most famous stories to come out of the Renaissance is that of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. They lived by a high code of honor, called chivalry. Create a high code of honor for yourself and your classmates.
Christine de Pisan (Writer)

Born 1364; Died 1430. De Pisan’s father, Tomasso de Pizzano, was a famous physician and astrologer who was invited to the court of King Charles V of France when Christine was five years old. She remained in France all her life. De Pisan received an excellent education. She spoke French and Italian and possibly Latin. In 1380, she married Etienne du Castel, a court secretary. The marriage was exceptionally happy. Unfortunately, King Charles V died that same year, and the new king reduced Tomasso’s favorite status at the court, as well as much of his income. Etienne’s income was reduced at the same time, and the family found itself in difficult circumstances. Tomasso died after a prolonged illness and in 1390, Etienne also died suddenly. Christine was left a widow at the age of twenty-five with three small children, her mother and a niece to support. The small amount of money left to her by Etienne was the subject of dispute and Christine was involved in a series of lawsuits in an attempt to recover it.

De Pisan decided to earn her income as a writer. Her poems, songs and ballads were well received and soon she was able to support her family. Christine de Pisan became popular and her work was later supported by many lords and ladies in Europe, including King Charles VI and his wife Queen Isabella of Bavaria. Much of her work contains a great deal of autobiographical information, which was unusual for writers of that time. Her early works include The Changes of Fortune, The Epistles of Othea and The Road of Long Study. In 1404, the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Bold commissioned her, to write a biography of his deceased brother, King Charles V. She wrote a very flattering first-hand account of the king and his court in The Book of the Deeds and Good Manners of the Wise King Charles V. The autobiographical Visions of Christine was written in 1405. This volume was written partly to silence her critics in a somewhat heated literary debate on the subject of women. She followed this up with The Book of the City of Ladies in 1405, a collection of stories about heroines of the past and The Treasure of the City of Ladies in 1406.

Christine de Pisan was very devoted to France and was horrified by the civil strife that erupted after the assassination of Louis of Orleans. In 1410 she wrote Lamentations on the Civil War and then The Book of Feats of Arms and Chivalry, which was one of the first books to be translated into English. She was devastated by the hostilities with England and the Hundred Years’ War. In 1418 she retired to live in a convent. Encouraged by the early successes of Joan of Arc, she dedicated her last known poem to Joan in 1429, titled Hymn of Joan of Arc.
Johann Gutenberg (inventor)

Born around 1400; died 1468. Could you imagine a world where no one could read except the very elite, where the latest news had to come by word of mouth? This is the world in which a German man, Johann Gutenberg, found himself, and he decided to do something about it. So he invented the moveable type printing press, an invention so important that he became known as the father of modern printing. And as a result of his printing, an age of information we are witnessing now with today’s computers. Ordinary people could have access to books and they could learn to read. His printing press gave people the opportunity to better themselves and better their lives with the joy of reading.

However, as with all new inventions, people didn’t see the advantage of printed books, at first. But in 1454, when Gutenberg and his assistant printed the Bible, it became well known around the world for its beauty and artisanship. People discovered the value of printed books and no longer wanted to imagine a world without them.

Although Gutenberg is often credited as being the inventor of printing, he wasn’t the first to come up with the concept. Printing began in Egypt and China. They displayed hand-printed designs made possible by carved wooden blocks which were stamped on paper. Even though the idea of printing wasn’t completely his, Gutenberg incorporated these ideas and perfected them. He used metal letters and locked them together in a “chase”, a flat frame. The letters were then linked evenly with an inkball, making it possible for perfect impressions on paper, which could be printed over and over again.

Gutenberg continued trying for years to make his invention even better and faster. The results of these attempts were things like a Latin Dictionary, an encyclopedia and an astronomical calendar. He continued printing until his death in 1468.

By the year 1500, there were more than one thousand printers in Europe. And the number of printers continued to increase when the people of the Renaissance demanded more reading material; a result of the rise of the prosperous and literate middle class.
Leonardo da Vinci (Artist & Scientist)

Born April 15, 1452; Died May 2, 1519. Born near the town of Vinci, not far from Florence, da Vinci was the illegitimate son of a Florentine notary, Piero da Vinci, and a young woman named Caterina. His artistic talent must have revealed itself early, for he was soon apprenticed (c.1469) to Andrea Verrocchio, a leading Renaissance master. He entered the painters' guild in 1472 and his earliest extant works date from this time. In 1478 he was commissioned to paint an altarpiece for the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.

Three years later he undertook to paint the Adoration of the Magi for the monastery of San Donato a Scopeto. This project was interrupted when Leonardo left Florence for Milan about 1482.

Leonardo worked for Duke Lodovico Sforza in Milan for nearly 18 years. Although active as court artist, painting portraits, designing festivals, and projecting a colossal equestrian monument in sculpture to the duke's father, Leonardo also became deeply interested in non-artistic matters during this period. He applied his growing knowledge of mechanics to his duties as a civil and military engineer. In addition, he took up scientific fields as diverse as anatomy, biology, mathematics, and physics. These activities, however, did not prevent him from completing his single most important painting, The Last Supper.

With the fall of his patron to the French (1499), Leonardo left Milan to seek employment elsewhere: he went first to Mantua and Venice, but by April 1500 he was back in Florence. His stay there was interrupted by time spent working in central Italy as a mapmaker and military engineer for Cesare Borgia. Again in Florence in 1503, Leonardo undertook several highly significant artistic projects, including the Battle of Anghiari mural for the council chamber of the Town Hall, the portrait of Mona Lisa, and the Lost Leda and the Swan. At the same time his scientific interests deepened: his concern with anatomy led him to perform dissections, and he undertook a systematic study of the flight of birds.

Leonardo returned to Milan in June 1506, called there to work for the new French government. Except for a brief stay in Florence (1507-08), he remained in Milan for 7 years. The artistic project on which he focused at this time was the equestrian monument to Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, which, like the Sforza monument earlier, was never completed. Meanwhile, Leonardo's scientific research began to dominate his other activities, so much so that his artistic gifts were directed toward scientific illustration. Through drawing, he sought to convey his understanding of the structure of things. In 1513 he accompanied Pope Leo X's brother, Giuliano de'Medici, to Rome, where he stayed for 3 years, increasingly absorbed in theoretical research. In 1516-17, Leonardo left Italy forever to become architectural advisor to King Francis I of France, who greatly admired him.
King Henry VIII

Born June 28, 1491; Died January 27, 1547. Henry VIII was the very model of a strong king. Not only was he physically impressive (standing over six feet tall at a time when the average height for males was only 5'4, but he was also highly intelligent. He had a very good memory, an excellent eye for detail, and was a shrewd judge of men. He could also be quite ruthless and selfish at times. However, these latter qualities did not bring themselves to light until later in his life.

In spite of all his qualities, Henry was not the first in line for the English throne. He was born the second son to Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. His other siblings included an older brother, Arthur, and two sisters, Margaret and Mary. As the second son of the King, Henry was destined for the Church; specifically, he was expected to become the Archbishop of Canterbury. As a young lad, Henry divided his time between theology studies, artistic endeavors and sports.

As a musician, Henry was quite accomplished. He played several instruments, among them the lute, recorder, flute and harp. He composed many songs, his most famous being “Greensleeves”. He was also quite a dancer and poet. It should also be noted that with his red hair, fair complexion and muscular build, Henry was considered to be quite desirable. In addition to his social accomplishment, Henry was an outstanding athlete. He was an extremely fine jouster and enjoyed falconry, hunting and tennis.

In contrast, Henry VII (the father) was cold, calculating, and conservative and guided his foreign policy by matrimony rather than war (which was the common practice of the time). When Arthur died in 1502, leaving a widow (Catherine of Aragon), all eyes turned to Henry as next in line for the throne, and the stage was set for England’s next great King.

Henry VIII was crowned on April 22, 1509, at the age of seventeen. He brought to the throne his zest for life, and the early part of Henry’s reign was looked upon as a time of celebration by all of England. As a leader he was inspiring; even ambassadors from other countries sang Henry’s praises.

Two months after he was crowned, Henry married his brother’s widow, Catherine of Aragon. Because the Bible warned against such a marriage, Henry had to gain a special dispensation from the Pope, which declared Catherine’s first marriage annulled and cleared the way for Henry. Although young, Henry was in love with Catherine, who was the daughter of King Ferdinand of Spain. Their marriage also created an important political alliance, which would forever influence Henry and his reign. As a young king, Henry was ready for the glories of war. He had his sights set on France, whose history of feuding with England was ancient and well known. In 1511, Henry joined the Holy League, which united Pope Julius II, England, Switzerland, Venice and Spain against France.

In 1513, Henry led an army into France. In August of that year, the Battle of Spurs occurred. This battle, so named because of the hasty retreat of French troops, gave Henry his first victory of note. Also, the French towns of Tournai and Therouanne were captured by the English in July and August.
Henry VIII, Con’t
Meanwhile, back in England, on September 7, 1513, a battle took place between England and Scotland (a long
time ally of France). This battle shaped the relationship between these two countries for most of Henry’s reign.
This was the Battle of Flodden Edge, where a vastly superior Scottish army lead by King James IV was defeated
by English troops led by the Earl of Surrey. During that battle, more than ten thousand Scotsmen were killed
including King James IV himself and several Scottish lords. King James’ widow, who was King Henry’s sister
Margaret, became Regent; their son, a young child at the time, would later become King James V.

In 1514, Henry signed a treaty with France. In this treaty, France agreed to give the town of Tournai to England
and to pay a large pension. To cement this agreement, Henry betrothed his younger sister, Mary, to King Louis
XII of France.

The 1530’s witnessed Henry’s growing involvement in government, and a series of events which greatly altered
England, as well as the whole of Western Christendom: the separation of the Church of England from Roman
Catholicism. The separation was actually a by-product of Henry’s obsession with producing a male heir;
Catherine of Aragon failed to produce a male and the need to maintain dynastic legitimacy forced Henry to seek
an annulment from the pope in order to marry Anne Boleyn. Wolsey tried repeatedly to secure a legal annulment
from Pope Clement VII, but Clement was beholden to the Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and nephew of
Catherine. Henry summoned the Reformation Parliament in 1529, which passed 137 statutes in seven years and
exercised an influence in political and ecclesiastic affairs which was unknown to feudal parliaments. Religious
reform movements had already taken hold in England, but on a small scale: the Lollards had been in existence
since the mid-fourteenth century and the ideas of Luther and Zwingli circulated within intellectual groups, but
continental Protestantism had yet to find favor with the English people. The break from Rome was accomplished
through law, not social outcry; Henry, as Supreme Head of the Church of England, acknowledged this by slight
alterations in worship ritual instead of a wholesale reworking of religious dogma. England moved into an era of
"conformity of mind" with the new royal supremacy (much akin to the absolutism of France’s Louis XIV): by 1536,
all ecclesiastical and government officials were required to publicly approve of the break with Rome and take an
oath of loyalty. The king moved away from the medieval idea of ruler as chief lawmaker and overseer of civil
behavior, to the modern idea of ruler as the ideological icon of the state.

The remainder of Henry’s reign was anticlimactic. Anne Boleyn lasted only three years before her execution; she
was replaced by Jane Seymour, who laid Henry’s dynastic problems to rest with the birth of Edward VI.
Fragmented noble factions involved in the Wars of the Roses found themselves reduced to vying for the king’s
favor in court. Reformist factions won the king’s confidence and vastly benefiting from Henry’s dissolution of the
monasteries, as monastic lands and revenues went either to the crown or the nobility. The royal staff continued
the rise in status that began under Henry VII, eventually to rival the power of the nobility. Two men, in particular,
were prominent figures through the latter stages of Henry’s reign: Thomas Cromwell and Thomas Cranmer.
Cromwell, an efficient administrator, succeeded Wolsey as Lord Chancellor, creating new governmental
departments for the varying types of revenue and establishing parish priest’s duty of recording births, baptisms,
marrages and deaths. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, dealt with and guided changes in ecclesiastical policy
and oversaw the dissolution of the monasteries.
The Six Wives of Henry VIII

Catherine of Aragon

Born 1485; died 1536. Catherine of Aragon was Henry's first wife. She was the daughter of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. At the age of 16, she was married to Henry's older brother, Arthur. Five months later, she was a widow, stuck in a foreign country whose language and customs were alien to her. King Henry VII refused to allow Catherine to return home to her parents, she was a royal pawn, and King Henry was unsure how to use her or of what value she might be. After spending almost eight years under extreme conditions (Henry VII reduced her staff of Spanish servants, constricted her ability to move about the court and to practice her Catholic religion as she desired, and reduced the amount of royal moneys spent for her personal support), she married her late husband's younger brother Henry. Theirs was a marriage begun in true love, but Henry grew tired of her and exasperated with her failure to produce a living male heir to the throne.

In the twenty-four years of their marriage, Catherine endured six pregnancies resulting in only one living child, a daughter named Mary (who later reigned as Mary I). In order to marry his brother's widow, Henry VIII had been required to get a special dispensation from the Pope. After Catherine proved unable to bear a son, Henry became convinced that God was punishing him for the marriage. He was also, at this time, enamored with one of Catherine’s Ladies-in-waiting, Anne Boleyn. The process leading to the royal divorce became known as “The King’s Great Matter.” Out of this conflict (the Pope refusing to nullify the marriage he had previously blessed), England broke ties with the Roman Catholic Church. Henry declared himself head of the Church of England and granted himself a divorce. Catherine, an extremely devout Roman Catholic, refused to accept the dissolution of her marriage. She spent the remainder of her life in forced seclusion, but considered herself the true queen until her death.

Anne Boleyn

Born around 1507; died 1536. Anne Boleyn was not popular among her English subjects. They were loyal to Catherine of Aragon, and many believed Anne had bewitched their King. Pope Clement VII had refused to annul Henry’s marriage to Catherine, leading to the break with Rome and the establishment of Henry as Supreme Head of the Church of England. Meanwhile, Henry and Anne were secretly married in January of 1533. Henry’s archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, pronounced Henry’s first marriage null and void, and Anne Boleyn was crowned queen in June. In September, she gave birth to her only living child, who later ruled England as Elizabeth I. However, the King’s desire for a son led him to grow weary of Anne. After only three years of marriage, Anne was charged with adultery and treason (historians agree the charges were probably false), and she was beheaded in May of 1536.

Jane Seymour

Born around 1509; died 1537. Jane Seymour had, like her predecessor, been a lady-in-waiting to Catherine of Aragon and had also served Queen Anne. Less than two weeks after Anne’s execution, Henry married the quiet, gentle Jane. In October of 1537, she died giving birth to Henry’s long-awaited son, Edward, who would later rule England as Edward VI. Although she was only queen for one year, Henry considered her his favorite queen. That may have more to do with her bearing a son, than with her personality, though.
Anne of Cleves

**Born 1515; died 1557.** Anne of Cleves was a political bride. Henry needed allies in Germany, so he agreed to this marriage after seeing a rather hastily produced (and flattering) portrait of the woman. Their first meeting, however, revealed that Anne's portrait was none too accurate. Comments from the court at the time claimed that Anne of Cleves bore a rather horse-like visage. Henry married her however, but the marriage was declared null and void after six months. After the divorce, Anne was granted a pension and remained on friendly terms with her royal ex-husband and his children.

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Catherine Howard

**Born 1521; died 1542.** Catherine Howard was quite young at the time of her marriage to Henry, who was approximately thirty years older than she. Catherine's past contained numerous rumors of intimate relationships with various men, and she was secretly engaged to another man when the King took an interest in her. The relationship was encouraged by the Conservative party in an attempt to further discredit Henry's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, who had arranged Henry's previous marriage to Anne of Cleves. The plotting worked, and Henry married Catherine on the very day Cromwell was executed. Henry was aging and in poor health while Catherine was young, flirtatious and quite spoiled. In 1541, Henry's archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, was compelled to reveal to the King the numerous rumors of his young wife's infidelity. Catherine was charged with unchastity before marriage and with adultery. Both charges were probably true. She was beheaded in February 1542.

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Catherine Parr

**Born 1512; died 1548.** Catherine Parr was more of a nurse and companion than a wife to the elderly, sickly King Henry. She had been twice widowed before her royal wedding. Although she was secretly engaged to Sir Thomas Seymour (brother of Henry's third wife, Jane), Catherine married the King instead in July of 1543. She proved to be a good influence on the King, she was a devout Protestant who spent much of her time discussing theology with the King (much to the dismay of Henry's clergymen) and was successful in mitigating the King's excessive acts of cruelty in religious persecution of the time. She was instrumental in restoring favor to the King's daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. During Henry's absence from court during the Siege of Cologne in 1544, Catherine acted as regent. Just one month after Henry's death, Catherine married her true love, Thomas Seymour. She died during childbirth in 1548.
Galileo Galilei (Scientist, Astronomer)

Born, February 15, 1564; Died January 8, 1642. Born in Pisa, Italy. In 1581 he entered the University of Pisa as a medical student, but he soon became interested in mathematics and left without a degree in 1585.

After teaching privately at Florence, Galileo was made professor of mathematics at Pisa in 1589. There he is said to have demonstrated from the Leaning Tower that Aristotelian physics was wrong in assuming that speed of fall was proportional to weight. He also wrote a treatise on motion, emphasizing mathematical arguments. In 1592, Galileo became professor of mathematics at the University of Padua, where he remained until 1610. He devised a mechanical calculating device now called the sector, worked out a mechanical explanation of the tides based on the Copernican motions of the earth, and wrote a treatise on mechanics showing that machines do not create power, but merely transform it.

In 1602 Galileo resumed his investigations of motion along inclined planes and began to study the motion of pendulums. By 1604 he had formulated the basic law of falling bodies, which he verified by careful measurements.

Late in 1604, a supernova appeared, and Galileo became involved in a dispute with philosophers who held (with Aristotle) that change could not occur in the heavens. Applying the mathematics of parallax, Galileo found the star to be very distant, in the supposedly unchangeable regions of the cosmos, and he attacked Aristotelian qualitative principles in science. Returning to his studies of motion, he then established quantitatively a restricted inertial principle and determined that projectiles moved in parabolic paths.

In 1609, he was writing a mathematical treatise on motion when news arrived of the newly invented Dutch telescope. He was so excited at the possible scientific applications of such an instrument that he put all other work aside and began to construct his own telescopes.

By the end of 1609, Galileo had a 20-power telescope that enabled him to see the lunar mountains, the starry nature of the Milky Way, and previously unnoted "planets" revolving around Jupiter. He published these discoveries in The Starry Messenger (1610), which aroused great controversy until other scientists made telescopes capable of confirming his observations. The Grand Duke of Tuscany made him court mathematician at Florence, freeing him from teaching to pursue research. He was vigorously opposed in this belief, because the Bible was seen as supporting the opposite view of a stationary earth. Galileo argued for freedom of inquiry in his Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina (1615), but despite his argument that sensory evidence and mathematical proofs should not be subjected to doubtful scriptural interpretations; the Holy Office at Rome issued an edict against Copernicanism early in 1616.

In 1623, Maffeo Barberini, long friendly to Galileo, became pope as Urban VIII, and Galileo obtained his permission to write a book impartially discussing the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems. This became Galileo's famous Dialogue (1632), for which he was called to Rome for trial by the Inquisition on the grounds that in 1616 he had been personally ordered never to defend or to teach Copernicanism. In June 1633, Galileo was condemned to life imprisonment for "vehement suspicion of heresy." His Dialogue was banned, and printers were forbidden to publish anything further by him or even to reprint his previous works. Outside Italy, however, his Dialogue was translated into Latin and was read by scholars throughout Europe.
Galileo, Con’t
Galileo's sentence was swiftly commuted to house arrest, at first under custody of the friendly Archbishop of Siena and then at his own villa in Arcetri, near Florence. There Galileo resumed and completed his Paduan studies on motion and on the strength of materials, published at Leiden as Discourses and Mathematical Demonstrations Concerning Two New Sciences (1638). He rightly regarded this as containing the elements of a new physics that would be carried further by his successors.

William Shakespeare (Playwright)

A complete, authoritative account of Shakespeare's life is lacking, and thus much supposition surrounds relatively few facts. It is commonly accepted that he was born in 1564, and it is known that he was baptized in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire on April 26, 1564; a memorial records his death on April 23, 1616. His mother, Mary, was the daughter of Robert Arden of Wilmcote, near Stratford. His father, John, was a glover and leather merchant whose increasing financial success was marked by his appointment to a series of municipal posts during the first 10 years of William's life. In the mid-1570s, John Shakespeare's fortunes declined, and he no longer took a visible part in Stratford affairs. The family fortunes lost by John would later be repaired by his son.

Shakespeare probably attended Stratford's excellent free grammar school, although no record of the fact exists. On Nov. 28, 1582, church authorities gave permission for him to marry Anne Hathaway of the neighboring village of Shottery. On May 26, 1583, their daughter Susanna was baptized in Holy Trinity. Twins, named Hamnet and Judith, were baptized on Feb. 2, 1585.

No records have been found for the years between the twins' baptism and 1592. In that year a disappointed author, Robert Greene, referred cryptically to Shakespeare in his Groatsworth of Wit Bought With a Million of Repentance. He warned his fellow writers about "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes fac totum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country." Thus as early as 1592, Shakespeare was sufficiently well known to be recognized by the pun on his name and the parody of a line from his Henry VI, Part 3: "O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide." Greene's is the only hostile allusion to Shakespeare that exists. Its motive can be guessed from his description of Shakespeare as Johannes fac totum—"Jack-of-all-trades." Unlike Greene, Shakespeare was an actor ("player") as well as a writer, and he was associated with a group of other actors that included the day's leading comedian, Will Kempe, and a leading tragedian, Richard Burbage. They were known, after their nominal patron, as the Chamberlain's Men and (after 1603) as the King's Men. By 1592, Shakespeare was acting exclusively for this company. He held shares in the company's profits; he was part of a consortium that in 1599 built and owned its home theater, the GLOBE THEATRE; and he wrote his plays exclusively for this company, at the rate of about two per year.

In 1593-94 a plague epidemic forced the closing of the London theaters. In those years Shakespeare published two narrative poems, Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece. The circumstances surrounding another nondramatic work, the Sonnets of Shakespeare, are less clear. Scholars are not certain how long before their unauthorized publication (1609) they were written, whether they were all written in the same period, or whether the order in which they appeared was of Shakespeare's design.
Shakespeare, Con’t
Because the sonnets are the only works in which Shakespeare may plausibly be thought to write from a frankly autobiographical impulse, they have exercised a fascination beyond even their extraordinary value as poetry.

Shakespeare wrote his plays for performance, not publication, and apparently took no part in their printing. Nineteen plays appeared in individual quarto volumes before appearing in the First Folio. Some were printed from texts reconstructed from memory by the actors, whereas others were supplied to the printer by the company. Shakespeare's indifference to publication creates problems in dating and establishing accurate texts for the plays.

Shakespeare’s achievements were manifold. He developed dramatic techniques for conveying a sense of his character’s psychological identities. His are the first "modern," and endurably the most vivid, dramatic characters. His language, by turns dense and supple, extended the range of possibilities for prose and verse. In verse he perfected the dramatic blank-verse line explored also by his contemporaries Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Kyd. The richness of Shakespeare’s imagination, and the subtlety with which he revealed the implications of thought and action, have made his plays endlessly amenable to reinterpretation by succeeding generations.

Christopher “Kit” Marlowe (Playwright)

Born February 6, 1564, Died May 30, 1593. Eldest son of a shoemaker, Kit Marlowe decided he did not want to follow in his father’s profession. As the age of 23, he went off to London and became the dramatist for the theatre company owned by Lords Admiral and Strange. Marlowe’s plays include works such as The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta, Edward II and the infamous Dr. Faustus. He wrote one of the most famous lyric poems in the English language, The Passionate Shepherd to his Love. His most ambitious work was the heroic epic Tamburlaine the Great, a play in two parts of five acts each. This work was in poem form, as all plays were then, but it has the distinction of being the first play written in English Blank Verse. It was Marlowe’s pioneering use of Blank Verse that encouraged William Shakespeare to try it. Marlowe was also the first to write a genuine tragedy in English, again paving the way for Shakespeare.

Marlowe always seemed to be in trouble with the authorities. In the spring of 1593, a friend was captured and tortured by the Queen’s Privy Council. Based on evidence given during this friend’s incarceration, the Council was preparing to arrest Marlowe (charges were unspecified, but they probably had something to do with his being an Atheist.) Before this arrest could take place, Marlowe was killed in a brawl at a rooming house in the town of Deptford. He had been staying there with three “friends” of ill repute: Ingram Frizer, a con artist; Nicholas Skere, Frizer’s accomplice; and Robert Poley, an occasional courier/spy for Her Majesty’s secret service. On the night of May 30, Frizer and Marlowe argued over who would pick up the tab for the night’s dinner. Marlowe attacked Frizer with a dagger, but was soon disarmed and stabbed above the right eye. Marlowe died instantly. Many rumors surround Marlowe’s death, including the theory that the whole affair was faked and Marlowe took up a new identity to escape the Privy Council. Another theory has Marlowe’s new identity being William Shakespeare. Neither of these theories has been substantiated.
Maire de Gournay (Feminist, Writer)

Born 1565, Died 1645. While still in her teens, de Gournay discovered the writings of Montaigne and became his devoted follower. While in Paris with her mother in 1588, she learned that Montaigne was also there, wrote him a letter and was asked to meet him. Although their relationship remained platonic (he was about 32 years her senior), they were close and she became his “adopted” daughter. After his death in 1592, de Gournay edited his works. She also produced one short novel, translations from Latin, numerous poems, essays on the French language, poetry, theory of translation, education, morality and critical analysis of contemporary writers and two feminist tracts, “The Equality of Men and Women” (1622) and “The Ladies’ Grievance” (1626). Never married, Marie depended on the income from writing.

French women had been part of the debate on the woman question for two centuries, since Christine de Pizan (see above) had published “Book of the City of Ladies” in 1405. The defense of women had become its own literary form: list of exemplary women from antiquity to the present time, woman-friendly interpretations of scripture and logical reasons for supporting the inherent humanness of women. In “The Equality of Men and Women,” de Gournay pioneered a new approach to the debate by appealing to the authority of ancient and modern philosophers (Plutarch, Seneca, Erasmus, Politian and Castiglione) and the Church fathers, as well as scripture. Like other women before her, de Gournay attributes women’s apparent mental inferiority to lack of education.
Additional Resources

Biro, Lajos, *The Private Life of Henry VIII*

Coulton, G.G., *The Medieval Village*

Dopange, Jacques, *Bruegel*

Erickson, Carolyn, *Great Harry*

Fox-Davies, A.C., *A Complete Guide of Heraldry*

Gail, Marzieh, *Life in the Renaissance*

Gressieker, Hermann, *Royal Gambit*

Harvey, Nancy Lenz, *The Rose and the Thorn: The Lives of Mary and Margaret Tudor*

Ives, E.W., *Anne Boleyn*

McKee, Alexander, *King Henry VII’s Mary Rose*

Palidy, Jean, *Katherine of Aragon*

Rival, Paul, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*

**Video**

*A Man for All Seasons*, Rated G, 120 minutes

*The Virgin Queen*, Rated G, 92 minutes

*The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*, Rated G, 106 minutes

*Anne of a Thousand Days*, Rated PG-13, 145 minutes

*Mary, Queen of Scots*, Rated PG-13, 128 minutes