



## Exploring the Rebirth of Classical Ideas Through Art

We can trace the link between the classical world and the Renaissance by looking at art. Let's explore some of the characteristics of art from classical, medieval, and Renaissance times.

**Classical Art** The classical period lasted from about 500 B.C.E. to 500 C.E. The classical artists of Greece and Rome created sculptures, pottery, murals, and mosaics. The purpose of much of their art was to show the importance of people and leaders, as well as gods and goddesses. Here are additional characteristics of classical art:

- Artists valued balance and harmony.
- Figures were lifelike but often idealized (more perfect than in real life).
- Figures were nude or draped in togas (robes).
- Bodies looked active, and motion was believable.
- Faces were calm and without emotion.
- Scenes showed either heroic figures or real people doing tasks from daily life.
- In paintings, there was little background or sense of **perspective** (for example, showing people and objects bigger or smaller to make them look closer or farther away).

**Medieval Art** The medieval period lasted from about 500 to 1300 C.E. Medieval artists created stained glass windows, sculptures, illuminated manuscripts, paintings, and tapestries. The purpose of much medieval art was to teach religion to people who could not read or write. Here are additional characteristics of medieval art:

- Most art was religious, showing Jesus, saints, people from the Bible, and so on.
- Important figures in paintings were shown as larger than others around them.
- Figures looked stiff, with little sense of movement.
- Figures were fully dressed in stiff-looking clothing.
- Faces were serious and showed little feeling.
- Painted figures were two-dimensional, or flat.
- Paint colors were bright.
- Backgrounds were mostly one color, often gold.

**Renaissance Art** The Renaissance lasted from the 1300s to the 1600s. Renaissance artists created sculptures, murals, drawings, and paintings. The aim of much Renaissance art was to show the importance of people and nature, not just religion. Here are additional characteristics of Renaissance art:

- Artists showed religious and nonreligious scenes.
- Art reflected a great interest in nature.
- Figures were lifelike and three-dimensional, reflecting an increasing knowledge of anatomy.
- Bodies looked active and were shown moving.
- Figures were either nude or clothed.
- Scenes showed real people doing everyday tasks.
- Faces expressed what people were thinking.
- Colors were shown responding to light.
- Paintings were often symmetrical (balanced, with the right and left sides having similar or identical elements).
- Full backgrounds showed perspective.

Name:

Date:

Period:

DIRECTIONS:

Read and complete the chart on the back.

This is on pp. 316–317 of your textbook.

Directions: use the information from pp. 316–317 of your book (or the other side of this paper) to complete the chart. You DON'T need full sentences, but you do need as much detail as possible.

	Classical	Medieval	Renaissance
Religious or non-religious? Explain.			
How lifelike were they? Explain.			
How were they dressed? Explain.			
Did they look like they were moving or still? Explain.			
Facial expression? Explain.			
Subject (what do the scenes show, what are they about)? Explain.			
Background? Explain.			
Use of color? Explain.			
Anything else? Explain.			

