Leonardo da Vinci

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Summary

Chapter 1: Leonardo da Vinci was admired as an artist, thinker and inventor in his own time, 500 years ago, and he is still of great importance today. He was born in 1452 in Vinci, Italy, but moved to Florence as a young boy and began learning how to be an artist under the guidance of a painter and sculptor called Verrocchio. When he began to work for himself, he took on a number of young boys as pupils or assistants. The two most important were known as Salai and Francesco. Leonardo was reported to be a handsome, polite man and he was unusual for his time. He was left-handed and curiously most of his writing ran from right to left or backwards. Although Leonardo considered himself to be a Florentine, he moved around a great deal. He worked in Milan for a very powerful man called Ludovico Sforza, where he not only painted but also staged theatrical events, surveyed land and gave advice on engineering problems. Next he went to Mantua to paint for Isabella d’Este and then on to Venice before returning to Florence. At this time his mind was filled with geometry and some time later he started work as a military engineer and architect. He later spent another long period in Milan and finally a time in France, where he died in 1519.

Chapter 2: In Leonardo’s time, art and science were closely related and Leonardo was particularly interested in understanding the rules of nature. He studied the effect of light on the way we see things and this is reflected in his paintings and drawings. He also wrote about the sun, the moon and the stars and had a great interest in animals. He sometimes talked of the world as a living body and made notes and did drawings of different aspects of the landscape. He was fascinated by all kinds of water and he studied it in order to be able to paint it, but also to learn how to control it. People were also the subject of many of Leonardo’s paintings and he observed them carefully so that he could paint them as they really were. He also contributed to the growing field of anatomy by studying how a body moves or cutting up bodies to see what happens under the skin. For Leonardo, nature was both beautiful and clever and a source of inspiration for his art.

Chapter 3: Leonardo painted both independently and for other people throughout his life, but he often failed to finish his paintings. He was innovative in his techniques, and painted both on wooden boards and on walls, creating what is known as a fresco. Portraits were very popular at this time and Leonardo was famous for painting very life-like images of people. One of Leonardo’s earliest portraits is of Ginevra de’ Benci, the daughter of a very rich Florentine, who was much admired for her beauty and intelligence. Another portrait, The Lady with an Ermine, shows Cecilia Gallerani, who was the lover of Sforza, the most powerful man in Milan. Leonardo’s Mona Lisa is probably the most famous painting in the world today and it is surrounded by mystery. We are not sure who the woman is or whether she was real. Many people have wondered about the enigmatic smile she has on her face. Leonardo also began a number of religious paintings. One of these, The Virgin of the Rocks, he painted twice and today one version can be seen in Paris and the other in London. Another, The Last Supper shows Christ eating with his pupils the night before his death. It was repaired between 1977 and 1999 at a cost of $9 million.

Chapter 4: Many rich and powerful people supported Leonardo’s studies and work. In Milan, Leonardo worked on several theatrical events such as those held to celebrate the marriage between the daughter of the king of Naples and the governor of Milan and between Sforza and Beatrice d’Este. He was also asked to make a huge bronze sculpture of Sforza’s father with his horse. He did many drawings and spent years making the model from clay but unfortunately, it was destroyed by the French when they took control of Milan in 1499. Leonardo went on to work for Isabella d’Este at the court in Mantua. Although Leonardo made two portrait drawings of Isabella, she never managed to get the finished portrait or any other painting from him despite insisting. Leonardo then began work for the French in Milan and became known as Louis XII’s ‘painter and official engineer.’ Next
Leonardo moved to Rome to work for the Pope’s brother, Giuliano de’ Medici and finally he moved to France to the court of King Françoise I, where he was given lots of money and work to do, and a house at Clos Lucé.

Chapter 5: Leonardo wrote to Sforza in 1483 listing his talents and putting his skills as architect and engineer of military equipment above those of artist. This was not unusual at the time and Leonardo took on many projects in these areas. He worked on two churches, one in Milan and one in Pavia, and he was interested in making cities safer and more beautiful places for people to live in. He was involved in the design of comfortable, beautiful stables for horses and great houses and gardens for rich men. He studied the movement of water in order to control it and make rivers and canals more useful for farming, transport and military defence. In 1502, he also surveyed disputed land for Borgia, leader of the Pope’s army, which was at the time at war with Florence and later went on to advise the Florentines in their fight against the Pisans.

Chapter 6: Leonardo also liked making games and machines for people’s pleasure. Taking inspiration from his study of birds, he thought of different designs that would allow a person to fly. It wasn’t until hundreds of years after his death that anybody matched those ideas. He was also well before his time in his design of boats to move through water and equipment that would allow a person to stay under the water. He loved word, picture and number games too and invented machines to amuse people at court. He was always jumping from one subject to another and it was maybe because of this that he often failed to finish a project. Despite this, Leonardo was often paid great sums of money or given expensive gifts by the people he worked for, a reflection of the admiration they felt for him. Leonardo is often referred to today as a ‘Renaissance man’, a person who brought together diverse ideas in a clever, useful and beautiful way.

Background and themes

Art and science: Nowadays there is a tendency to separate the two areas, with people specialising in one or the other. In Leonardo’s time, the two were intrinsically interlinked.

Genius: Leonardo is often considered to be a genius due to his wide range of talents, the beauty of his work and his ability to design and invent things that others didn’t achieve until many years later.

Renaissance: Leonardo’s ideas and work clearly reflect this cultural movement, which meant an intellectual rebirth emphasising learning based on classical sources and a kind of revolution in education, art and science.

Discussion activities

Before reading
1 Research and discuss: Ask the students to look for information using the Internet about the Renaissance. Tell them to write five sentences about it, four of which are true and one which is false. In class, put students in small groups and get them to read out their sentences. The other students listen and guess which sentences are false. Now get them to discuss if they would liked to have lived in that period of history and why. Get feedback from the whole class.

2 Pair work: Ask students to talk about what they know of Italy in the past or now. Put the following categories on the board to guide them: history, famous places, climate, customs, food, government, people, films, music. Get feedback from the whole class.

Chapter 1
While reading (p. 1, after the paragraph about Bill Gates.)
3 Discuss: Put students in small groups to discuss the following questions: What things do people pay a lot of money for? Are they good value? What is the most expensive thing you have ever bought? Was it good value? What would you buy if you had a lot of money?

After reading
4 Write and guess: Refer students back to the timeline on page 4. Ask them to write a similar timeline for their own lives. They can include any events that seemed to be important for them. Collect the timelines and read out some of the events from some of the papers. The rest of the students listen and guess which student wrote it.

5 Pair work: Remind students that Leonardo travelled a lot through his life. Ask them to write down three places they have travelled to. Each student then looks at a partner’s paper and asks questions about each place. Prompt them with the following questions: When did you go there? Who did you go with? How long did you stay? What was it like? Did you have a good time? etc.

Chapter 2
Before reading
6 Discuss: Write NATURE on the board and explain that it was very important for Leonardo. Put students in groups to discuss the following questions: How important is nature for you? How are people changing nature? What can we do to stop the bad things that are happening in the natural world? Do you do things to look after nature?
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After reading

7 Write, ask and answer: Write What is affected by the brightness of light and the darkness of shadows? on the board and elicit the answer (Colour). Now tell students to write similar questions about Chapter 2. Students then talk to each other, asking and answering each other’s questions.

Chapter 3

Before reading

8 Research and guess: Ask students to look for information using the Internet about another painter. Ask them to write a short biography about that painter’s life and work. Then put them in groups and get the students to read out their biographies to each other without saying the name. Students must guess who the painter is.

While reading (p. 31, after the poem)

9 Discuss: Put students in groups to discuss the following questions: What famous people in history were thought to be very beautiful? Which famous people do you think are beautiful now? Has the idea of beauty always been the same? Is it important to be beautiful? How do people try to make themselves more beautiful? Do you agree with this?

After reading

10 Write and guess: Write It was traditional in Italy to make paints with milk. on the board. Elicit which word is wrong from the students (eggs not milk). Now students choose a sentence from Chapter 3 and rewrite it changing one word. Students walk around the class, reading out their sentences and the other students have to identify and correct the mistake.

11 Discuss: Remind the students that Leonardo and Michelangelo may have been in competition with each other and then ask them to discuss the following questions in small groups: Are you competitive? What competitions have you entered? Have you won any? Do you think competition is always a good thing?

Chapter 4

While reading (p. 41, after ‘The riders were dressed in beautiful clothes and the horses were covered in expensive cloths.’)

12 Discuss: Put students in small groups to discuss the following questions: Have you ever been to the theatre? Do you like going to the theatre? Do you prefer theatre or cinema? Why?

13 Discuss and write: (p. 45, after ‘Isabella did not give up.’) Ask students to talk in pairs about what Isabella might say in her letter to persuade Leonardo to do a portrait of her. Get feedback and then ask students to write the letter individually.

After reading

14 Role play: Put students in pairs to write questions that an interviewer could ask Leonardo about the people and events that occur in this chapter. Give them the following example to get them started: Who did you plan plays for? Monitor their work as they do this. Now have pairs exchange their questions and act out an interview with one student asking the questions and the other pretending to be Leonardo.

Chapter 5

While reading (p. 54, after the last paragraph)

15 Discuss: Put students in groups to discuss the following questions: Which buildings in your city and in other cities you know do you like and dislike? How is modern architecture different from architecture in Leonardo’s time? What kind of buildings do you think architects will design in the future? How well is your town organised? How could you improve it?

16 Pair work: (at the end of page 60) Tell students to draw a map of their local neighbourhood or another area they know well. Now put them in pairs and tell them to take it in turns to describe their maps to their partner, who has to draw it without seeing it. Students compare the two maps to see how accurate they are.

Chapter 6

After reading

17 Pair work: Remind students that Leonardo had many different skills and ask them to individually write a list of things they are good at. They then compare their lists with their partner explaining why they think they are good at these things and how they learned to do them.

18 Game (20 questions): Ask the students to think of another famous person from the past or present and from any profession and write the name on a piece of paper. Students now play the game in small groups. They take it in turns to ask a maximum of 20 questions with ‘yes’/’no’/’maybe’ answers to guess the name. You can prompt them with some questions (see Discussion activities key).
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While reading

Chapter 1

1 Find the right words in Chapter 1.
   a The most important person in a business. (p. 1) ………………
   b The natural place outside of the city. (p. 3) ………………
   c You give this when you tell somebody the best thing to do. (p. 4) ………………
   d The ability to do something. (p. 5) ………………
   e When you want something very much. (p. 6) ………………
   f Thought good things about somebody. (p. 7) ………………
   g Something you can see yourself in. (p. 8) ………………
   h The part of the land near to the sea. (p. 10) ………………
   i You are this when somebody invites you to their house. (p. 11) ………………

2 What’s first? Number the sentences 1 – 7.
   a Leonardo left Milan and went to work as an artist in Mantua and Venice before going back to Florence.
   b Leonardo died at his house in Clos Lucé.
   c Leonardo lived in the small town of Vinci.
   d Leonardo worked for Borgia, the Pope’s son and then for the French in Milan again.
   e Leonardo moved for the first time to Milan.
   f Leonardo was a student of sculptor and painter, Andrea Verrocchio.
   g Leonardo went to France to work for King Françoise I in Amboise.

Chapter 2

3 Finish the sentences with the right words.
   view drops fresh measurements figure signs curves shadows fear closely
   a In Leonardo’s time, art and science were ……………… connected.
   b Your ……………… of a tree is affected by the way light falls on it.
   c Leonardo did some careful drawings with ……………… of different parts of animals.
   d Leonardo felt both ……………… and desire at the entrance to a big hole in a hill.
   e Leonardo was interested in the smallest ……………… of water.
   f The ……………… and movements of water were like hair for Leonardo.
   g When Leonardo wanted to draw a ………………, he first thought about what kind of person they were.
   h Leonardo wanted to get the ……………… right to make his art look real.
   i In Leonardo’s time, bodies did not stay ……………… for long.
   j Leonardo was interested in how the body changed over time, and the effects and ……………… of those changes.

4 Put the underlined letters in the right place to make a word.
   a Mathematics included nevgsuriy ……………… land for making maps.
   b picexerene ……………… was more important to Leonardo than opinion.
   c Things get less rhpas ……………… if they are farther away from you.
   d Leonardo conedit ……………… that even a cat could not see in complete darkness.
   e Leonardo wanted to show feelings and uhtgstoh ……………… in his paintings.
   f Some of Leonardo’s drawings showed enormous rtsmos ……………….
   g Leonardo made drawings and iedtedla ……………… notes about what he saw.
   h Leonardo believed he would finish all his work on maynaot ……………….

Chapter 3

5 Put the words in the right place to make a sentence.
   a shows cannot Painting sculpture distance way a that in……………………………..
   b in egg with was Leonardo making instead interested paint oil of ………………
   c wrote Ginevra A poems of number about men ………………
   d the fur symbolic The of purity ermine’s whiteness is of ………………
   e Last complete of painted one Supper was The wall monastery a on ………………
   f allowed 400 see Last Only people are day The a to Supper ………………
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6 Put words on the left with words on the right.

bring and rivers
sense into view
move advice
living of blood
give a party
streams of smell
branches body
arrange of a tree
movement forwards

c What did people think that the crowded conditions in the cities spread?

Chapter 4

7 Circle the wrong word in the sentences.

a Leonardo made things that pleased to his employers.

b It took Leonardo the years to make the full-size model out of clay.

c Leonardo had perhaps already met meeting Isabella in Milan.

d Leonardo was still supposed to be work working for the Florentine government.

e Giuliano did everything to make do Leonardo comfortable in Rome.

f A big tent was built build next to Leonardo’s house for a party.

8 Underline the wrong word and put the right one.

a Plays were performed publicly in Leonardo’s time.

b One of Leonardo’s biggest jobs was to make a silver sculpture.

c Isabella d’Este was an enthusiastic collector of old pianos.

d In 1506, Milan was under control of the Spanish.

e Leonardo was working on ideas connected with metal doors in Rome.

f Leonardo built a big tent with a floor of blue cloth with gold stars.

Chapter 5

9 Answer the questions.

a What did Leonardo put last on his list of skills in his letter to Sforza?

b What did Leonardo start work on in Milan in 1487?

Chapter 6

10 Find the right words in Chapter 5.

a To give somebody a job. (p. 52) ……………

b The opposite of narrow. (p. 53) ……………

c When you are not healthy, you are suffering from this. (p. 54) ……………

d Things with water, which are used to decorate gardens and squares. (p. 56) ……………

e A person who works secretly for the enemy. (p. 58) ……………

f Areas or grass where you can grow things. (p. 60) ……………

11 Are these sentences right (✓) or wrong (✗)?

a Leonardo didn’t like to have fun. ✗

b Fixed wings meant that you could only fly from a high point to a low one in Leonardo’s time. ✓

c Leonardo thought of ways that would allow people to stay under water. √

d Leonardo drew a picture of a lion in a fire. ✗

e Leonardo only ever drew one thing on a piece of paper. ✗

f Sforza never gave Leonardo gifts. ✗

g The French paid Leonardo more money than the Italians. ✗

h A man threw a bottle at one of Leonardo’s paintings. ✓

12 Put the underlined letters in the right place to make a word.

a Leonardo had an idea for a npdetio cloth that could be used like a parachute. npedetio

b Leonardo had an idea for a boat with ehslew fountains. ehslew

c Leonardo had clever ideas for dnhide fountains. dnhide

d Sforza didn’t always pay Leonardo enough but he dewrarde him with gifts. dewrarde
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1 Are these sentences right (✓) or wrong (✗)?
   a Leonardo’s father and grandfather were lawyers. ✓
   b Leonardo learnt to paint on his own. ✓
   c Leonardo wanted to examine the world so that he could copy it in paintings. ✓
   d Leonardo thought about what people were like before he painted them. ✓
   e Three of Leonardo’s five portraits are of men. ✓
   f The word Mona doesn’t mean anything in Italian. ✓
   g We can still see the sculpture of the Sforza horse today. ✓
   h Isabella d’Este asked Leonardo to do something for her several times. ✓
   i Leonardo wasn’t the first person to think of using water for power. ✓
   j One of Leonardo’s paintings was damaged by a man with a gun. ✓

2 Finish the sentences with the right word.
   sold event annoy slightly path reminders managed connected vegetarian relationship
   a In 1516, Leonardo was unusual because he was a .................. .
   b In 2001, a small drawing by Leonardo was .................. for $12 million.
   c Some of Leonardo’s notes and drawings are terrible .................. of the power of nature.
   d A fresco is painted on a wall which is .................. wet.
   e In the Mona Lisa we can see a clear .................. through rocky hills.
   f Leonardo worked on a theatrical .................. for a double celebration in 1491.
   g Isabella d’Este was always careful in her letters not to .................. Leonardo.
   h Leonardo believed there was a perfect .................. between the smallest and biggest parts of a building.
   i Leonardo .................. his interest in birds with his interest in machines.
   j Leonardo only .................. to paint a small number of paintings.

3 Write the names to finish the sentences.
   Leonardo Andrea del Verrocchio Salai Francesco Cesare Borgia Ludovico Sforza
   Cecilia Gallerani Giuliano de’ Medici Isabella d’Este Charles d’Amboise
   a .................. was a famous sculptor of bronze and taught Leonardo about the skills of painting.
   b .................. was Leonardo’s assistant for many years. He often behaved badly.
   c .................. was the most powerful man in Milan before the French took control. He married Beatrice d’Este.
   d .................. married Francesco Gonzaga, who governed Mantua. She wanted Leonardo to do a portrait of her.
   e .................. was French. He governed Milan after Sforza and he gave Leonardo rooms in the Sforza Castle.
   f .................. invited Leonardo to work for him in Rome. His brother was the Pope.
   g .................. hoped to use his understanding of nature to invent and build machines that would improve the world.
   h .................. was another of Leonardo’s assistants. He thought of Leonardo like a father.
   i .................. was the subject of one of Leonardo’s portraits. Bellincioni wrote a poem about this picture.
   j .................. was the son of Pope Alexander VI. Leonardo worked for him, surveying land and making maps.

4 Circle the right words.
   a Leonardo spent much of his childhood in Rome / Vinci / Florence.
   b Leonardo normally wore a short rose-pink jacket / hat / shirt.
   c Leonardo noticed that if you shone a light in the eye of a person / cat / dog, it looked like fire.
   d Leonardo cut up bodies so that he could understand light / death / veins.
   e The Last Supper was painted on the wall of a monastery / castle / church.
   f Leonardo prepared the theatrical part of a formal military event to celebrate two births / birthdays / marriages.
   g After Rome, Leonardo went to work for the Pope / governor / king in France.
   h Leonardo wrote to Isabella / Sforza / Salai about his abilities as an engineer and architect.
   i Leonardo drew plans of cities with wide / dirty / crowded streets.
   j Sforza gave Leonardo a large horse / garden / castle as a gift.
### Leonardo da Vinci

**Book key**

1.1 Open answers (1 c 2 a 3 b 4 b)

1.2 Open answers (Florence, Vinci, Rome, Milan)

2.1 Vinci 2 Florence 3 Milan 4 Rome 5 Amboise

2.2 No 2 Yes 3 No 4 No 5 No 6 No 7 No 8 Yes 9 Yes 10 Yes

2.3 had left 2 had done 3 had gone 4 had made 5 had lost 6 had decided

2.4 Open answers (Possible answers: 1 How does the path of light cause shadows? 2 How do people’s clothes fall over their bodies? 3 What happens to the parts of an animal’s body as it moves? 4 What effect does weather have on the appearance of rivers?)

3.1 Open answers

3.2 ✓ 2 ✓ 3 ✓ 4 ✓ 5 ✓ 6 ✓ 7 ✓ 8 ✗ 9 ✗ 10 ✗

3.3 He said that leaves on trees were different colours because of their position and the way light falls.

He explained that the cat’s shape would change when it was picked up.

He wrote that he had felt both fear and desire in front of the hole in the hill.

He believed that painters had to/should leave their homes and visit the country.

[or, if it is a general rule that is still true: He believed that painters must leave their homes and visit the country.]

He told people that he had cut up bodies to look at the veins.

3.4 Open answers

4.1 Religious scenes; war scenes; rich, important people; beautiful women; animals; landscapes

4.2 F 2 B 3 D

4.3 such a 2 such a 3 so 4 so 5 such 6 so 7 such 8 so

4.4 Open answers

5.1 play / stage 2 clothes 3 model 4 bronze 5 drawings 6 finish 7 Milan 8 France / Amboise 9 water 10 party

5.2 ✓ 2 ✗ 3 ✗ 4 ✓ 5 ✓ 6 ✗ 7 ✗ 8 ✓

5.3 plays ↑ were 2 Leonardo ↑ was 3 horse ↑. 4 model ↑. 5 d’Este ↑ sent 6 Leonardo ↑ was

5.4 Open answers

### 6.1 Possible answers:

1 usual > common
2 disliked > liked
3 travelling > many different purposes
4 Correct
5 had little understanding of > understood
6 less useful to soldiers than > as important to soldiers as
7 Pisans > Florentines
8 built > didn’t build / began (but didn’t finish)

6.2 d 2 g 3 e 4 f 5 h 6 a 7 b 8 c

6.3 Leonardo must be given freedom of movement.

Ways of moving under rivers had to be found.

Artists might be used by rich people as architects.

Leonardo ought to be employed for the church roof.

Attractive cities would be visited by people from other towns.

Machines for cooling the air could be powered by water.

6.4 Open answers

**Talk about it** Open answers

**Write about it** Open answers

**Project** Open answers

### Discussion activities key

1–6 Open answers

7 Colour

8–9 Open answers

10 It was traditional in Italy to make paints with eggs.

11–17 Open answers


### Activity worksheets key

1 a head 2 a 3 b 4 b 5 c 6 d 7 e 8 f 9 g 10 h 11 i

2 a 4 b 7 c l 5 e 3 f 2 g 6
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3. a) closely  
b) view  
c) measurements  
d) fear  
e) drops  
f) curves  
g) figure  
h) shadows  
i) fresh  
j) signs

4. a) surveying  
b) Experience  
c) sharp  
d) noticed  
e) thoughts  
f) storms  
g) detailed  
h) anatomy

5. a) Painting shows distance in a way that sculpture cannot.  
b) Leonardo was interested in making paint with oil instead of egg.  
c) A number of men wrote poems about Ginevra.  
d) The whiteness of the ermine’s fur is symbolic of purity.  
e) The Last Supper was painted on one complete wall of a monastery.  
f) Only 400 people a day are allowed to see The Last Supper. / Only 400 people are allowed to see The Last Supper a day.

6. bring–into view  
sense–of smell  
move–forwards  
living–body  
give–advice  
streams–and rivers  
branches–of a tree  
arrange–a party  
movement–of blood

7. a) to  
b) the (first one)  
c) meeting  
d) work  
e) do  
f) build

8. a) publicly > privately  
b) silver > bronze  
c) piano > pots  
d) Spanish > French  
e) doors > mirrors  
f) floor > roof

9. a) Painting  
b) The main church  
c) Disease  
d) A country house  
e) The son of the Pope  
f) The areas and cities he controlled

10. a) employ  
b) wide  
c) sickness  
d) fountains  
e) spy  
f) fields

11. a) ✓  
b) ✓  
c) ✓  
d) ✓  
e) ✓  
f) ✓  
g) ✓  
h) ✓

12. a) pointed  
b) wheels  
c) hidden  
d) rewarded

Progress test key
1. a) ✓  
b) ✓  
c) ✓  
d) ✓  
e) ✓  
f) ✓  
g) ✓  
h) ✓

2. a) vegetarian  
b) sold  
c) reminders  
d) slightly  
e) path  
f) event  
g) annoy  
h) relationship  
i) connected  
j) managed

3. a) Andrea del Verrochio  
b) Salai  
c) Ludovico Sforza  
d) Isabella d’Este  
e) Charles d’Amboise  
f) Giuliano de’ Medici  
g) Leonardo  
h) Francesco  
i) Cecilia Gallerani  
j) Cesare Borgia

4. a) Vinci  
b) jacket  
c) cat  
d) veins  
e) monastery  
f) marriages  
g) king  
h) Sforza  
i) wide  
j) garden