

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# THE MEDICI FAMILY

During Renaissance Europe, families of rich businessmen sponsored artists and other creative people. The artists loved this because they were able to spend all their time painting, and were supported to do so. The sponsors, known as patrons of the art, also benefitted because they were able to spread culture in their city.

One of the largest sponsors during the Renaissance was the Medici family, who were wool merchants and bankers. They are sometimes known as the Godfathers of the Renaissance. They lived in Florence, Italy and made it and the land surrounding it, known as Tuscany, the center of Renaissance culture. The area has remained that way ever since.

The Medici Family began their rise in Florence in the 1200s. In the late 1300s, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici brought the family to its prominence. His banking business, the Medici Bank, prospered and his family became bankers for the pope. Giovanni was elected the ruler of Florence, and his descendants ruled for many years to come.



Cosimo de' Medici, Giovanni's son, was born in 1389. He was also a powerful ruler of Florence. By now, the Medici family was both rich



and powerful. Cosimo became involved in a rivalry between the Medici and the Albizzi family. At one point, Cosimo was even banished from Florence. However, he quickly returned and became a great patron of the arts. He sponsored many artists including Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Fra Angelico. Cosimo also opened the world's first public library.

In 1449, Lorenzo Medici was born. He was also a businessman, politician, and patron of the arts. He supported some of the most

Famous names of the Renaissance including Botticelli and Michelangelo.

In 1478, Giuliano Medici was assassinated by the Pazzi family in front of 10,000 people at the Easter church services.

Two members of the Medici family were elected as popes in the 1500s, Pope Leo X and Pope Clement VII. This time period was troublesome for the Medici family. The Medici popes, and other popes of the era, were accused of abusing the wealth and power of the church. A total of four Medici family members were popes.

In 1519, Cosimo I was born. He was trained in the family business and philosophy. He was one of the first people of the Renaissance to be called a Humanist, because of his belief in the value of individual human beings. He was crowned the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1569, after marrying into royalty.





Catherine de Medici was born in 1529 and married King Henry II of France. She became the Queen of France in 1547. She later served as regent for her son, King Charles IX, and played a major role in the reign of her third son, Henry III. Catherine supported the arts and brought ballet to the French court.

Marie de Medici, born in 1575, became Queen of France when she married King Henry IV of France. She acted as a regent for young son, Louis XIII of France before he became king. Her court painter was the famous Peter Paul Reubens.

These only cover a few of the rich and powerful Medici family. They are remembered for their patronage of the arts. They continued to support artists throughout the Renaissance period, allowing artist throughout the Renaissance period, allowing artists to spend time focusing on their art rather than earning a living. The Medicis also sponsored writers, philosophers, architects, and scientists. The Medicis supported Galileo Galilei, who was even a tutor for the Medici children. He named four of the moons of Jupiter after the Medici children, even though the names were later changed.

Tuscany became known for having the largest library in Europe, thanks to the support of the Medici family. Florence became the center of Humanism and culture. The Medici family ruled Florence for about 200 years.

**MULTIPLE CHOICE:** Choose the best answer from the choices provided.

- In which text structure is this article written?
  - Cause and Effect
  - Problem and Solution
  - Description
  - Compare and Contrast
- Who were patrons of the arts?
  - The artists
  - People who bought the paintings
  - The paintings
  - People who sponsored artists
- How did Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici MAINLY bring his family to prominence?
  - He was a successful banker
  - He sponsored artists
  - He was a ruler of Florence
  - He was a powerful man
- Why was Cosimo de' Medici banished from Florence for a period of time?
  - He let the pope's finances get out of order
  - He let the pope go into a great amount of debt
  - He was involved in a rivalry with the Albizzi family
  - He sponsored artists with taxpayers money

5. Which of the following was NOT an achievement of Cosimo de' Medici?
- A. Sponsored Brunelleschi  
 B. Sponsored Donatello  
 C. Opened the first public library  
 D. Sponsored Michelangelo
6. Why did the Medici family have trouble when two members were elevated to popes?
- A. Because they abused the wealth and power of the church  
 B. Because they were accused of abusing the wealth and power of the church  
 C. Because they spend all the church's money sponsoring artists  
 D. Because people were jealous of all their power and money
7. Why was Cosimo I considered one of the first Humanists?
- A. Because he believed strongly in sponsoring artists  
 B. Because he married into a royal family and was the Duke of Tuscany  
 C. Because he had a strong belief in the value of individual human beings  
 D. Because he believed in spending the Church's money to sponsor artists
8. How did the Medici family MAINLY contribute to the Renaissance?
- A. They sponsored artists so they could focus on their art instead of earning a living  
 B. They ruled Rome and made it very powerful  
 C. They provided money to the Church to make it more powerful  
 D. They started the Renaissance

**TRUE OR FALSE?** Identify each statement as true or false.

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| 9.  | Rome was the center of Humanism and culture during the Renaissance. |
| 10. | The Medici family were Patrons of the Arts.                         |
| 11. | Everyone loved the Medici family in Italy.                          |
| 12. | The Medici family opened the first public library.                  |
| 13. | The Medicis made most of their money through trade.                 |
| 14. | Cosimo was banished from Florence at one time.                      |
| 15. | Michelangelo was sponsored by Cosimo Medici.                        |
| 16. | Three members of the Medici family were popes.                      |
| 17. | Sponsors allowed artists to focus on their work.                    |
| 18. | A humanist values the individual human being.                       |

**MATCHING:** Match each person with their achievement or description. You will use some names more than once.

- A. Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici
- B. Cosimo de' Medici
- C. Lorenzo de' Medici
- D. Cosimo I
- E. Albizzi Family
- F. Marie de Medici
- G. Catherine de Medici



19. \_\_\_\_\_ Opened the world's first library

20. \_\_\_\_\_ Elected ruler of Florence and his descendants continued to rule for years to come

21. \_\_\_\_\_ He became one of the first people in the Renaissance to be called a Humanist, because of his belief in the value of individual human beings

22. \_\_\_\_\_ Brought the Medici family to prominence

23. \_\_\_\_\_ Became involved in a rivalry between the Medici family and the rival Albizzi family

24. \_\_\_\_\_ He sponsored artists including Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Fra Angelico

25. \_\_\_\_\_ His banking business prospered, and his family went on to become bankers for the pope

26. \_\_\_\_\_ Had a rivalry with the Medici family

27. \_\_\_\_\_ He sponsored some of the most famous names of the Renaissance, including Botticelli and Michelangelo

28. \_\_\_\_\_ He was banished from the city of Florence

29. \_\_\_\_\_ He married into a royal family and was crowned Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1569

30. \_\_\_\_\_ Her court painter was the famous Peter Paul Rubens

31. \_\_\_\_\_ She supported the arts and brought ballet to the French court