

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Why did the Renaissance begin in Italy?

#### 1. Why was Italy a **PRIME LOCATION** for the Renaissance to begin?

One major reason the Renaissance began in Italy is linked to **geography**. The city-states of Italy, located on a **peninsula** were positioned on the **Mediterranean Sea**, were centres for **trade and commerce**, the first stop for both **goods** and **new ideas**. Because Italy is surrounded by the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas, it was in the perfect place for trade to flourish. This encouraged cultures, ideas, and goods to spread and allowed Italy to become very rich.

#### 2. How was Italy a **REFUGE OF SCHOLARS**?

Secondly, Italy was at the centre of the old **Roman Empire**, and, at the collapse of the Byzantine empire in **1453**, became the **safe place** for the **intellectuals** of Constantinople who brought with them many of the great works of the **ancient Greeks and Romans**, works that had been lost to the **Western Europe** during the **Middle Ages**. Before this, scholars in Italy had been examining the works of the ancients, but they were of poor quality and often incomplete.

#### 3. How did the **VACUUM OF LEADERSHIP** help the Renaissance start in Italy?

The third reason was **political**. Due to various political **problems**, the **Roman Empire** had lost power in northern Italy, the **Papal States** were governed by various leading families within each region, and the city of Naples dominated the South. This **vacuum** of leadership allowed **trader families** to gain considerable power within each city-state and therefore changed the laws controlling banking, commerce, shipping, and trade to become more free. This **freer** atmosphere led to a **busy exchange** of both **goods and ideas**.

#### 4. What impact did the **INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH** have on the Renaissance in Italy?

The Renaissance was a **rebirth** of ancient **Greek and Roman** thinking and styles, and both the Roman and Greek civilizations were **Mediterranean cultures**, as is Italy. The best single reason for Italy as the birthplace of the Renaissance was the **concentration of wealth, power, and intellect** in the Church. In that time, the Church controlled so much of the **political, economic, and intellectual** life of Europe, that it gathered most of the best minds, wealthiest men, and most powerful leaders in **Rome**. The noble merchants (traders) of various Italian cities had built up so much wealth over the centuries that they could better afford to pay for and enjoy the arts and sciences than almost anyone else.

