

## Contrasting the Later Middle Ages and the Renaissance

The AP European History course starts with the Renaissance, the “age of rebirth,” but rebirth from what? The following chart is helpful for students at the beginning of the course.

Later Middle Ages	Renaissance
<b>Philosophy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religion dominates medieval thought</li> <li>Scholasticism: Thomas Aquinas reconciles Christianity with Aristotelian science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanism: Emphasis on secular concerns due to the rediscovery and study of ancient Greco-Roman culture</li> </ul>
<b>Ideal</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Man should be well versed in one subject: how to get to heaven</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtù: Renaissance man should be well rounded (Castiglione)</li> </ul>
<b>Religion</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dominates politics; seeks a unified Christian Europe</li> <li>Church is supreme to the state</li> <li>Inquisition starts in 1223; dissenters dealt with harshly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Monarchs assert power over national churches</li> <li>State is supreme to the church</li> <li>Rise of skepticism</li> <li>Renaissance popes are worldly and corrupt</li> </ul>
<b>Literature</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based almost solely on religion</li> <li>Written in Latin</li> <li>Church is the greatest patron of literature and arts</li> <li>Little political criticism</li> <li>Handwritten</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanism; secularism</li> <li>Northern Renaissance focuses also on writings of early church fathers</li> <li>Vernacular (e.g., Petrarch, Boccaccio)</li> <li>Covers a wider variety of subjects (e.g., politics, art, short stories)</li> <li>Focuses on the individual</li> <li>Increased use of the printing press; propaganda</li> </ul>
<b>Sculpture</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More gothic, extremely detailed</li> <li>Relief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greek and Roman Classical influences</li> <li>Freestanding (e.g., Michelangelo's <i>David</i>)</li> <li>Use of bronze (e.g., Donatello's <i>David</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Art</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gothic style</li> <li>Byzantine style dominates; nearly completely religious</li> <li>Stiff, one-dimensional figures</li> <li>Little emotion</li> <li>Stylized, generic-looking faces</li> <li>Use of gold to illuminate figures</li> <li>Lack of perspective</li> <li>Lack of chiaroscuro</li> <li>Patronized mostly by the church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased emphasis on secular themes</li> <li>Use of perspective</li> <li>Use of chiaroscuro</li> <li>Increased use of oil paints</li> <li>Brighter colors</li> <li>More emotion</li> <li>Depicts real people and settings</li> <li>Patronized largely by merchant princes</li> <li>Patronized by Renaissance popes</li> </ul>
<b>Architecture</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gothic style</li> <li>Pointed arches, barrel vaults, spires</li> <li>Flying buttresses</li> <li>Elaborate detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rounded arches, clear lines, Greco-Roman columns</li> <li>Domes (e.g., Brunelleschi's <i>Il Duomo</i>)</li> <li>Less detailed</li> <li>Focus on balance and form</li> </ul>