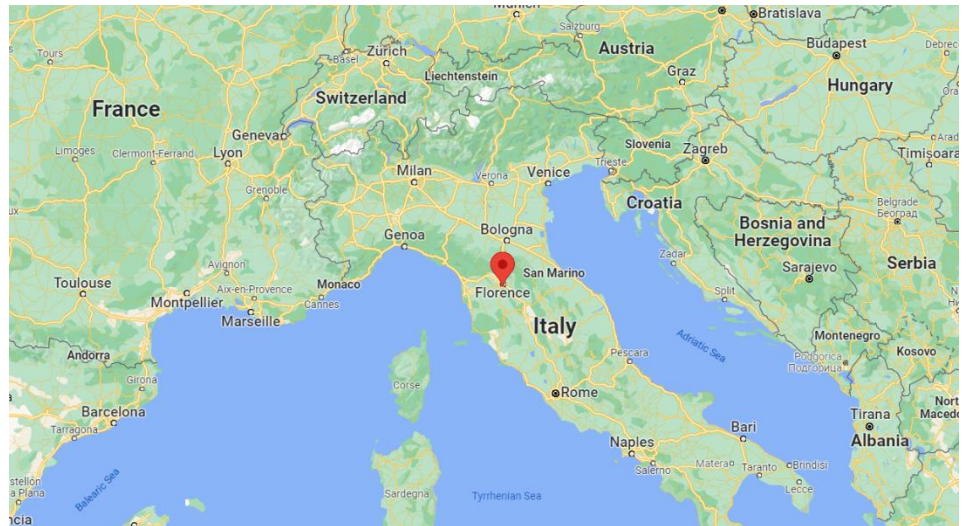**Leonardo DaVinci**

Who was Leonardo DaVinci?

Leonardo Da Vinci is probably best known as the famous artist who painted the **'Mona Lisa',** which has hung in the Louvre gallery in Paris for over 200 years. However, DaVinci is also famously known for his many other talents, being a: sculptor, an architect, a poet, a composer, a scientist, a mathematician and an inventor.

Find out more by using the link below.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/science-ks2-discovering-the-work-of-Leonardo-da-Vinci/zhn47nb

Early Years

Leonardo Da Vinci was born near Florence in Italy in 1452. This was known as the 'Renaissance' era, which was a period of time between the Middle Ages – also known as a dark age, which began with the fall of the Roman Empire – and the Modern era. This was a time where there was lots of advancement in art,

science and education. If you've ever heard the term 'Renaissance Man' (which is used to refer to someone, who is very good at lots of different things) it came from DaVinci's many talents in the world of art and science and is still used today to describe people with similar attributes. Would you consider yourself a 'Renaissance Man'?

DaVinci's parents were not married. His father, Ser Piero, was a wealthy lawyer and his mother, Caterina, was a young peasant girl, which meant she didn't have a very high status in society or was

from a poor background. He spent his early years with his mother, but then lived in the household of his father, grandparents and uncle. His father went on to marry four times.

At the age of 14, he worked for an artist called Verrocchio, under whom, he learned loads of technical skills including metalworking, leather arts, carpentry, drawing and sculpting.
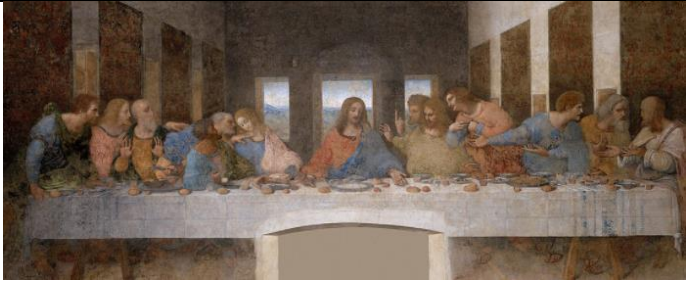
By age 20, he had qualified as a master artist in the Guild of Saint Luke, which was like a prestigious association for painters and artists, and now had his very own workshop.

Art and Invention

Leonardo showed a great interest in the world around him. He was inspired by people and nature and used what he saw to create his wealth of ideas. He studied the human body in great depth. Some considered him to be more knowledgeable than the doctors of his time.

Another area, which fascinated DaVinci was the idea of flight. This led him to design some of mechanisms we still use today, including: the bicycle, the aeroplane, the helicopter and the parachute. These inventions came from his interest in not only what things look like, but how they worked too.

Famous artwork

Mona Lisa (1503)	The Last Supper (1498)	Man, in red chalk portrait (1512)

Interesting Facts

Da Vinci was a huge animal lover and, because of this, chose to be a vegetarian, something that was very unusual in those days. He was said to buy animals from the market just so he could set them free from the cages they were kept in for sale.

Leonardo was left-handed, but as well as using his left hand to write, he also wrote back to front, from right to left across the page which meant that, for many years, people were unable to understand his notes. People started to believe his unusual writing-style was DaVinci's way of keeping his notes a secret from others.

Surprisingly, considering DaVinci's reputation of being a brilliant mind, he didn't actually attend school and instead was taught reading, writing and maths at home.

Because Leonardo's interests were so varied, he got distracted really easily and often wouldn't complete a project. Because of this, during the 17 years he spent working for the Duke of Milan (1482-1499) he completed only six works, including the famous picture "The Last Supper".

His remarks and inventions were recorded in 13,000 pages of notes and drawings, which included designs for the first parachute, helicopter, airplane, tank, repeating rifle, swinging bridge, paddleboat and motorcar.

Example Questions

1) As well as being an artist, what was Leonardo DaVinci also famous for?
2) What era was DaVinci born in?
3) Name three things DaVinci is known for inventing.
4) Name a piece of DaVinci's artwork he is famous for.

Challenge

During DaVinci's era, oil paints started to become popular. He used a lot of Earth tones, which are known as 'natural colours' or those colours found in nature. Could you create your own Mona Lisa-style portrait of someone special to you (this could be a family member, friend, or someone you admire) using only Earth tone colours?