


# Renaissance literature

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<b>Renaissance</b>

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**Renaissance literature** refers to that part of European literature which is influenced by the intellectual and cultural tendencies associated with the Renaissance. The earliest Renaissance literature appeared in Italy in the 14th century; Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Machiavelli and Ariosto are notable examples of Italian Renaissance writers. From Italy the influence of the Renaissance spread at different times to other countries and continued to spread around Europe through the 17th century. The English Renaissance and the Renaissance in Scotland date from the late 15th century to the early 17th century. In northern Europe the scholarship of Erasmus, the plays of Shakespeare and the writings of Sir Philip Sidney may be included in the Renaissance.

The literature of the Renaissance was written within the general movement of the Renaissance which arose in 13th century Italy and continued until the 16th century while being diffused into the western world. It is characterized by the adoption of a humanist philosophy, the recovery of the classical literature of Antiquity and benefited from the spread of printing in the latter part of the 15th century. For the writers of the Renaissance, Greco-Roman inspiration was shown both in the themes of their writing and in the literary forms they used. The world was considered from an anthropocentric perspective. Platonic ideas were revived and put to the service of Christianity. The search for pleasures of the senses and a critical and rational spirit completed the ideological panorama of the period. New literary genres such as the essay (Montaigne) and new metrical forms such as the sonnet (Petrarch) made their appearance.

The impact of the Renaissance varied across the continent; countries that were predominantly Catholic or Protestant experienced the Renaissance differently. Areas where the Orthodox Church was dominant as reflecting on its culture, as well as those areas of Europe under Islamic rule were more or less outside its influence. The period focused on self actualization and one's ability to accept what is going on in one's life.

The creation of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg encouraged authors to write in the local vernacular rather than in Greek or Latin classical languages, widening the reading audience and promoting the spread of Renaissance ideas.

## External links

- [General Resources in the Renaissance & 17th Century](#) <sup>[1]</sup>



Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch) a major figure of the early Renaissance



Giovanni Boccaccio, statue at the Uffizi gallery, Florence

## References

- [1] <http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=1163>
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