

# Review of the General Characteristics of 16<sup>th</sup> Century (The Renaissance)

- ▶ The Renaissance (or rebirth) as a movement originated in Italy in 14th century and spread across Europe moved then to Britain during the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- ▶ The Renaissance resulted in changes of tremendous importance for Western civilization



# General Context of Renaissance

- ▶ Geographical Discoveries (Christopher Columbus in 1492)
- ▶ Printing, first printing press in England by William Caxton (1475), (Gutenberg in the 1450s)
- ▶ Scientific discoveries (ex. The Heliocentrism system of Nicolaus Copernicus in Astronomy: the Earth and planets revolve around the Sun at the center of the Solar System)
- ▶ The Reformation: which called for restoring Christianity to its early purity as a simple religion based on the Bible. Ex. Martin Luther and Thomas Müntzer, The Church of England under Henry VIII.
- ▶ England: the defeat of Richard III in 1485 by the Tudor monarch Henry VII restoring power and stability, in this period England's population doubled; old social loyalties dissolved, and new industrial, agricultural, and commercial veins were first tapped (the merchant and the ambitious lesser gentleman profited at the expense of the aristocrat) a passage from feudal economy to an economy based on trade.



# Intellectual Context Renaissance

- ▶ Notable examples of Early Renaissance writers include Boccaccio (*The Decameron* a collection of novellas), Dante (*Divine Comedy*), Petrarch, Erasmus (*On Free Will*) and Machiavelli.
- ▶ New literary genres such as the essay made their appearance.
- ▶ Humanism which means a system of thoughts focused on the human rather than divine or supernatural matters. Specifically, the study of classical antiquity and the intellectual adoption of its philosophies, centered on the important role of humans in the universe.
- ▶ Revival of the Classical Latin and Greek literature.
- ▶ The emphasis on logic and reason rather than the sensation.



- ▶ Naturalism which means shifting the emphasis from the supernatural to the natural world, i.e. that everything arises from natural properties and causes, and supernatural or spiritual explanations are excluded or discounted.
- ▶ It also calls for man's ability to increase through wisdom and virtue, his power and knowledge with which to control the non-human supernatural spirits.
- ▶ Niccolò Machiavelli, often called the founder of modern political science, his writings were innovative because of his emphasis on practical and pragmatic strategies over philosophical ideals, exemplified by such phrases as "He who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation."

