

Name: _____

Core: _____

Date: _____

The Medici Family

https://www.ducksters.com/history/renaissance/medici_family.php

The Medici family ruled the city of Florence throughout the Renaissance. They had a major influence on the growth of the Italian Renaissance through their patronage of the arts and humanism.

Rulers of Florence

The Medici family were wool merchants and bankers. Both businesses were very **profitable** and the family became extremely wealthy. Giovanni de Medici first brought the family to **prominence** in Florence by starting the Medici Bank. He also was the leader of the Florence merchants. His son, Cosimo de Medici, became the Gran Maestro (leader) of the Florence city-state in 1434. The Medici family ruled Florence for the next 200 years until 1737.

Leaders of the Renaissance

The Medici are most famous for their **patronage** of the arts. Patronage is where a wealthy person or family sponsors artists. They would pay artists **commissions** for major works of art. The Medici patronage had a huge impact on the Renaissance, allowing artists to focus on their work without having to worry about money.

A significant amount of the art and architecture that was produced in Florence at the beginning of the Renaissance was due to the Medici. Early on, they supported the painter Masaccio and helped pay the architect Brunelleschi to rebuild the Basilica of San Lorenzo. Other famous artists that the Medici supported include Michelangelo, Raphael, Donatello, and Leonardo da Vinci.

The Medici didn't just support the arts and architecture. They also supported science. They supported the famous scientist Galileo Galilei in his scientific efforts. Galileo also worked as a tutor for the Medici children.

Bankers

The Medici owed much of their wealth and power to the Medici Bank. It made them one of the richest families in all of Europe. It was the largest bank in Europe at its peak and was very well respected. The bank made notable improvements in accounting **procedures** including the development of the double-entry bookkeeping system.

Important Members

- Giovanni de Medici (1360 - 1429): Giovanni was the founder of the Medici Bank which would make the family wealthy and allow them to support the arts.
- Cosimo de Medici (1389 - 1464): Cosimo began the Medici dynasty as the first Medici to become leader of the city of Florence. He supported the famous sculptor Donatello and the architect Brunelleschi.
- Lorenzo de Medici (1449 - 1492): Also known as Lorenzo the Magnificent, Lorenzo de Medici ruled Florence through much of the peak of the Italian Renaissance. He supported such artists as Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Sandro Botticelli.

- Pope Leo X (1475 - 1521): The first of four Medici to become Pope, Leo commissioned many works from the artist Raphael.
- Marie de Medici (1575 - 1642): Marie became Queen of France when she married King Henry IV of France. She also acted as **regent** for her young son Louis XIII of France before he became king. Her court painter was the famous Peter Paul Rubens.

Interesting Facts about the Medici Family

- Although the names were later changed, Galileo **initially** named four of the moons of Jupiter he discovered after children of the Medici family.
- The Medici Family produced four popes in total including Pope Leo X, Pope Clement VII, Pope Pius IV, and Pope Leo XI.
- The Medici Family is sometimes called the **Godfathers** of the Renaissance.
- In 1478 Giuliano Medici was assassinated by the Pazzi family in front of 10,000 people at the Easter church service.
- Ferdinando de Medici was a patron of music. He helped to fund the invention of the piano.

1) **Define** these terms from the passage, and then **re-read** the article for better understanding:

| Term | Meaning (in your own words) |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| profitable | |
| prominence | |
| patronage | |
| commissions | |
| procedures | |
| regent | |
| initially | |
| godfathers | |

2) How did the Medici family gain and use their wealth and power?

3) Why was the Medici family important to the growth of the Renaissance?