Name: _____ Date: _____

Renaissance Art Analysis

Objectives: Students will analyze Renaissance art by viewing a piece of art. Using the form, students will respond to the questions by writing complete sentences.

Directions:

1. Read the following **Overview of the Renaissance** and **Characteristics of Renaissance Art** list (below). You will need to use information from these sources to write your responses.
2. Look up and examine the artwork assigned to you. Discuss with your partner the questions on the ***Analysis Worksheet***. Then each partner will write their own response in their own words.

Overview: The Renaissance

The word "renaissance" means "rebirth," and as Europe moved out of the gloom of the Middle Ages, many people felt as if the world was indeed being born again. The Renaissance witnessed a remaking of nearly all of society's institutions: political, economic, social, and educational. It was also a time when leading thinkers revisited the great or classical ideas of ancient Greece and Rome and found new ways in which to apply these ideas.

One of the hallmarks of the Renaissance was a shift in the way people looked at the world and at themselves. In the Middle Ages, religion had dominated most people's lives, and they accepted without question what the church taught them: Earth was at the center of the universe, the Pope's edicts and laws were a direct expression of God's will and thus had to be obeyed, and preparing for the afterlife was more important than any material pursuits in mortal life. During the Renaissance, however, this view began to change. An artistic movement arose in Italy in which painters changed the way in which they depicted humans and the natural world. Much of medieval art had illustrated important biblical themes and events by creating fantastical scenes that bore little resemblance to the real world. Italian artists in the early renaissance began to include more realistic depictions of landscapes and showed people with individual faces that expressed emotions. Moreover, though most art still focused on religious themes, some new works centered on secular (non-religious) subjects. In fact, secularism in general became more widespread during the Renaissance and people began to focus more on life on earth rather than the afterlife to come.

The new emphasis on realism in art resulted in a variety of new techniques as well. Artists were quick to do anything in order to gain the support of patrons, andmany artists aimed to create works that were truly unique. Artists and architects used simple geometric forms like the square and the circle in combinations with mathematical principles to incorporate linear perspective in their works. Painters also strove for proportion as they tried to make the figures in their pictures seem to be the correct size in relation to one another. Sculptors and other artists also made intensive studies of human anatomy in order to make their representations of people seem more lifelike.

Much of what we today characterize as the Renaissance began in Italy in the 1400's (particularly in the city of Florence), then spread northward in the 1500's. It started as a movement among the intellectual and social elite, but eventually came to mean something more to the people of Europe as a whole. Today when we think of the Renaissance, we think of the era's spirit of innovation and creativity, of "Renaissance men" such as Leonardo da Vinci who excelled at a wide variety of things, and of its incredible rich artistic legacy of paintings, frescoes, sculptures, buildings, and literature.

Characteristics of Renaissance Art:

- Both religious and nonreligious scenes
- Figures look idealized, perfect
- Bodies may look active, moving
- Bodies may be nude or clothed
- Real people doing real tasks
- Faces express what people are thinking
- Colors respond to the light that falls on them
- Interest in nature, lots of natural detail
- Full, deep backgrounds with perspective (depth of the image or 3D appearance)
- Paintings are symmetrical (balanced on both sides)
- Influence of Greece and Rome (either in subject matter or architecture)

3. The Prompt: Write a paragraph in which you explain your piece displays characteristics of Renaissance art. Use your document analysis worksheet to form and support your opinion. Your responses should include specific evidence about Renaissance art from what you have read in the **Overview of the Renaissance** and **Characteristics of Renaissance Art** list above.

Document Analysis Worksheet

Name/Title of Piece: _____

Artist: _____

Date Created: _____

Style of Art: (Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Ceramic, Metal Work, other)_____

1. Take a close look at the image. In two or three sentences, describe what you see. Include people, objects, activities, places and anything else you see.

2. What in the image specifically demonstrates characteristics of Renaissance art?

3. Why might the image have been created? For example, was there a patron who commissioned it?

4. Who in the past would have come in contact with this source? How might they have been affected by it?

5. What other information would you need to help better understand the image?

6. List at least two things the source tells you about life in the time period and country in which it originated (place it was created)?

7. What questions would you ask the artist? Write at least two.