Document A

Sources: Text Theodore Rabb, THe last days of the Renaissance & the march of modernity, 2006.

IMAGE: Duccio Di Bouninsegna’s painting of Mary and Jesus next to Leonardo da Vinci’s Mona Lisa.

Note: Duccio Di Bouninsegna’s painting shows the Mother Mary on a throne with the baby Jesus on her lap. Leonardo da Vinci’s Mona Lisa is believed to be a portrait of Lisa Gherardini, the wife of a wealthy Florentine merchant.

The [clearest] evidence of the break with medieval culture comes from the visual arts. [It] was the essence of the renaissance…. One begins to know the names of the artists … feel stronger emotions in the subjects … see well-defined landscapes, natural folds in drapery, and three-dimensional figures; and one begins to notice the emphasis on symbolic representation giving way to depictions of recognizable scenes … the new artistic styles would echo broader movements and interest of the new age…. Neither the techniques nor the forms of artistic expression were to be the same again.

Document analysis

NOTE: These questions compare the painting of Mary and Jesus by Duccio Di Bouninsegna and the Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci. You do not need to see these pictures to compare them. Compare the subject matter of the paintings and consider how pre-renaissance art was primarily focused on religious figures while Renaissance art focused on ordinary pictures.

1. What two artists created these paintings and which would be considered a renaissance painter?
2. How do the paintings compare in terms of their subject matter?
3. In comparing the women in the two paintings, which image seems more generalized and which seems to reveal the special characteristics of the individual?
4. Using hints for the text excerpt, describe at least three ways in which the paintings are different.
5. How do changes in this art show that during the renaissance, man’s view of himself and his world was changing?